

## **Role of Preaching in the Christian Community & The Character of the Preacher**

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### **Outline**

Role of preaching in the life of the Christian community	Paul Harrington
a. The Preacher as theologian for the community	
b. The Preacher as pastor to the community	
c. The Preacher as bridge-builder for the community	
 The Character of the Preacher	 Ken Noakes

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### **Required Reading**

*None*

### **References**

- Peter Adam           *Speaking God's Words – a practical theology of preaching*  
                            (Leicester: IVP, 1996). Chapters 4 and 6.
- Christopher Green &  
David Jackman (eds.) *When God's Voice is heard – essays on preaching presenting to*  
                            *Dick Lucas* (Leicester: IVP, 1995). Chapters 5, 7 and 10.
- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching & Preachers* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971).  
Chapter 6-7
- John Stott           *I Believe in Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982).  
Chapter 7.
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### **Set-up:**

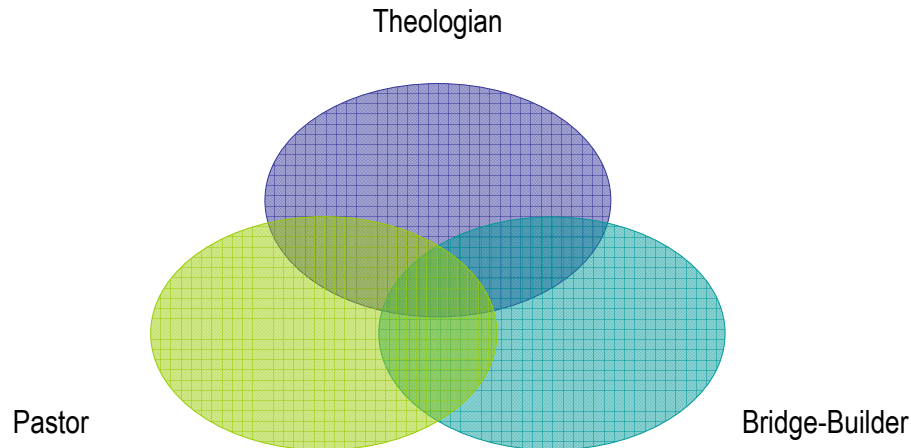
*Lecture outlines - Handouts*

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- *Pray to begin*
- *Interview Paul*
  - *Ministry role*
  - *How long preaching?*
  - *What has changed about your preaching over the years?*

### **Role of preaching in the life of the Christian community**

The Preacher as Theologian, Pastor, Bridge-builder are all interlinked – as sort of suggested in this Venn diagram...



It is hard to separate each out and in practice we don't. For the sake of teaching this, in this lecture we do separate them out. Don't let that create division in your head!

### A) The Preacher as Theologian for the community

#### Painting the Preaching Landscape

- Exercise – Quickly go through each preaching style – then ask what are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? [Give time in pairs to discuss].

Preaching Style	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Felt Need</b> <i>Preach to the desires of the congregation and find a passage that says something about it.</i>	<i>Real needs In touch with world</i>	<i>Miss God's agenda Answer wrong Bible Question</i>
<b>Topical</b> <i>(pick a topic – preach on it)</i>	<i>Builds bridges Relevance</i>	<i>Giving the right weight to any text Miss texts Preachers hobby-horse</i>
<b>Mis-expositional</b> <i>(True to Bible but not to the passage preached – a sermon in search of a text)</i>	<i>Can still preach truth</i>	<i>Relies on the Preacher getting it right. (e.g. Jer 29:4 about prospering city ministry – when this passage is about judgment of the exiles in the city. Better to go to 1 Peter 2)</i>
<b>Expositional</b> <i>(Work through the passage and the Bible)</i>	<i>God's Word and agenda</i>	<i>Boring and irrelevant in style</i>

- Debrief

## **1. What is Theological Preaching?**

Definition:

- Where systematic theology or doctrinal theology has a strong or dominant role in the sermon.

Expositional vs Theological

- There is a difference between preaching expositionally (exegetically) and theologically (doctrinally).
- Look at John 9:1-7 [READ]

### **Expositional?**

- What is it saying – exegetically?
  - People sin – but not in this case (to cause blindness)
  - Jesus came
  - Jesus heals

### **Theological?**

- What is it saying – doctrinally?
  - Suffering exists
  - Righteousness is not necessarily linked to suffering
  - Sinners suffer.
  - Righteousness can still be declared
- All preachers preach theologically – it is just a question of how well they do it.
- Theology will raise its head in any sermon which refers to the Bible, the preacher will decide whether he/she will choose to follow it.
- The context and purpose will help the preacher determine what you do. So will pastoral care (particularly if the congregation will raise questions about some point).

## **2. Why Preach Theologically?**

Ephesians 4:11-16

- The purpose of preaching and teaching is to equip God's people for maturity.

1 Timothy 4: 16

- Watch what you teach – because if you do, then people will be saved.

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Acts 20: 27

- Helping people to understand the Word and its implication for their lives.  
So that all would learn what they needed to about salvation.

2 Timothy 4:3

- People will not want to hear what the Bible is saying.
- Preachers have to work through that.

Impact of Doctrinal and Expositional Preaching?

- What are the benefits of the exegetical approach as opposed to doctrinal approach?
  - It is the difference between running on a tread mill (conditioning) as opposed to pushing weights (building strength)
  - Exegetical focus will condition and help people read their Bibles – critical for foundational Christian.
  - Doctrinal focus will build strength and equip people to think theological and dynamically with the world around.

Dangers with Theological Preaching?

- Too lofty – and you lose people.
- Hobby Horses of the preacher. (e.g. Don Carson spends a lot of time on Sovereignty, John Piper spends a lot of time on Joy)

### **3. How to Preach Theologically**

Preparation

- Read systematics and listen. Preachers who wrestle with the big picture systematics. People who do it well - Tim Keller, Don Carson, Phillip Jensen.
- Read more generally – what the world is reading. (e.g. current Issues: Financial crisis, Islam, asylum seekers, same sex marriage – they are the general concerns of the populace).
- Listen to the news, radio, buying habits and trends, and books on hot topics. People who do it well – Mark Driscoll (esp. on culture), Tim Keller (esp. on worldview).
- Understand your listeners – what are the personal issues (e.g. divorces, crisis, error, sickness etc.)

Theology in an 'Expositional' Series

- As you move through the Bible book – you can pick where you stop to focus on a particular theological issue. Address it as it comes up in the text.

A Theological Series

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- Think about the topics that might be helpful for the congregation but are also priorities of the Bible – e.g. Forgiveness, Worship, Holy Spirit, Greed, Guidance.

Don't Avoid Tough Topics.

- Expository preaching will mean you come across tough passages and topics – deal with them. Unapologetically.
- People will generally respect you as you do – as indeed they will be most helped.

### ➤ QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

## **B) The Preacher as pastor to the community**

### **What do we mean by Pastoral Preaching?**

- What are some of the big pastoral issues (felt-issues) that may come up as we preach?
  - *Same sex attraction – (why? – personal struggles)*
  - *same-sex marriage – (why? – miscommunication of the world)*
  - *death – (why? – it is personal and traumatic)*
  - *divorce – (why? – it has been experienced)*
  - *suffering – (why? – it is real)*
  - *idolatry (why? – a societal diet of materialism)*

Definition: Pastoral Preaching is - lovingly applying God's Word to God's people.

- Exercise – Look at 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 – it is a passage that raises the topic of authority and headship. What are the issues that will be raised in your congregation?
  - *equality of genders,*
  - *relevance,*
  - *oppressive,*
  - *emotions - hurt, anger.*

*Why? – past experience, wrong teaching, bias culture*

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### **- The Preacher as a Pastor**

1 Thess 2:6-8 - The preacher who is the pastor is someone who shares his life with those he preaches too. The Pastor preacher. But notice the two are not the same, but you should not have one without the other.

Acts 20:17-38 – Paul does not withhold anything that is helpful. He is burdened by the love and care he has for those he preaches too.

Col 1:24-29 – Paul suffers for the Colossians so they will hear.

1 Peter 5:1-2 – Serve as under-shepherds of the Shepherd Jesus. There is great responsibility. You care and preach to the sheep Jesus died for.

### **- Pastoral Preaching**

1 Thess 1:4-10 – Paul proclaimed the gospel, lived among them, and saw their response to the gospel. The nature of pastoral preaching has in mind the task of seeing people transformed by the gospel and Paul cites that transformation as proof of the importance of this role. We should have the expectation that it is God's Word who will bring about change in the lives of those who will hear.

### **1. Preaching/Teaching is central to Pastoral care**

- Trends in church can often follow the trends in society.
- *Church Growth movement* is an example (from the 80's on) – a Faith community influenced by secular business models.
- One of the recent trends is the idea of *Christian Counseling*. There is a risk that psychology or therapy will drive ministry and pastoral care. In doing so, theology can be minimized or forgotten.
- The core need of any person – is to have the Word of God to come to bear on them.

Col 1:28

- This is the task of pastoral preaching – to proclaim, admonish, teach – so that people will more mature. If you want to pastor people well you have to teach the Bible well. From the pulpit to the one-on-one.
- We have to pastor people so that they know that they can trust God in all ways and in all circumstances.

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### **2. Biblical Methodology of Pastoral Care**

- Paul's letter to the Ephesians is very helpful in helping us think through our approach to pastoral ministry.

Ephesians 1 - 3

- Sets up the theology and the need for the gospel.

Ephesians 4 - 6

- Sets forward the practical pastoral stuff – there are a whole series of pastoral truths.
- All of the pastoral suggestions in Chapters 4-6 the context of Chapters 1-3 needs to be considered – especially Eph 1:4 – we were chosen.

The Gospel Drives Pastoral Application

e.g. 2 Cor 8:1, 7-9 – it calls for generosity in the light of grace. That is, the generosity (not financial) shown to the Corinthians is the reason why the Corinthians should live generously. To correctly understand the gospel of Jesus should call us to transform.

Phil 1:15-18 – Paul talks about people preaching Christ out of wrong motivation – but the key concern is so that the gospel will be preached.

Rom 12:1-2 – Being transformed by the renewing of your mind.

The gospel constantly drives pastoral behaviour and so the preacher needs to preach pastorally.

### **3. Different Angles on Pastoral Care**

2 Tim 3:16-17 – the task of the Pastor. Pastoral preaching involves these things...

- Teaching
  - Rebuking
  - Correcting
  - Training in Righteousness
- The preacher as pastor offers the gentle word and the strong word as fits to the circumstance of those being preached too.

### **4. Tips for Effective Pastoral Preaching**

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- Know people – spend time with people and know their issues.
- Be willing to adjust the preaching program to care for the immediate and large issues (e.g. Sept 11).
- Be thinking pastorally about who you are preaching too. Preaching 1 Corinthians 11 (mentioned before) will look different to the elderly congregation as opposed to the Uni congregation.

### **5. Difference between Pastoral Preaching and Felt Need Preaching**

- Don't preach to the felt need – preach to the pastoral need. For example - When preaching on financial generosity, the person might feel that they do not have enough money. We don't preach that issue, we preach the gospel answer applied to their lives.

➤ QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

## **C) The Preacher as bridge-builder for the community**

### **What do we mean?**

- Preaching that assists God's people to biblical interpret and engage with what is going on in the/their world.
- You are trying to help God's people to think about the world.

What are the dangers?

- What is going on in the world can be so overwhelming that it overwhelms the preacher or the Bible – and so the relevance is lost or confused.
- To accommodate the world – where the world shapes our Biblical understanding (e.g. Hot topic at the moment: Materialism, Same-sex relationships. 30 years ago: Abortion (which is not so much of an issue now))
- That we yell at the world – and either take people with you in outrage and self-righteousness or you can turn people away. Further when you rage at the congregation, you are speaking to those not in front of you and you are training people who are in front of you to be angry at the world!



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- The issue is (always) driven by our sin – which of course our preaching speaks against!

What are the benefits?

- Gives a godly framework for understanding life.
- It trains Christians to be wise not just knowledgeable.
- We look out, rather than only in.
- It stops us moralizing the Bible.
- It helps us be appropriately relevant.
- It helps people to be critically aware of the idols that they are (or should be) grappling with. It will mean you help them to understand it and then deal with it in a godly way.

### **1. Understanding the World from a Biblical Perspective**

- How do you bring the Bible to bear on our issues?

X      The Key Framework

- Biblical Theology – the unfolding plan of God for salvation as fulfilled in Jesus.

X      The Key Conviction

- 2 Tim 3:16 – the truth and relevance of scripture in all things. It understands and shapes all things.

- For example: Ecology

Big issue: Save the whales.

Approach: God made the whales, we are in favour of whales. Why kill the whales? Is it wrong? What are the motivations? If the primary reason for killing whales is greed, then we should question it. Is it essentially wrong to kill a whale, no if it is providing in some way.

### **2. Understanding the Culture We Preach in**

- Missionaries do this when they go to work in other countries. We should be aware of that here.
- What are the forces:
  - Religious cultural forces – Islam, new Atheism, materialism
  - Social forces – same sex marriage, family
  - Economic forces – GFC

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- It is good to understand where there is common ground – find the ways that pagans do think christianly (e.g. Family – we love kids).
- And understand where there is Christian distinction (e.g. sport before Church therefore my family is more important than Christian family!)
- Why is it hard to critique the world – because we are sinful and we are shaped by the world around us.

### **3. Striking the Right Note**

- Yell at the world – a street preacher!
- Or say nothing and blend in – hopeless.
- Or huddle together – and become concerned with individual holiness and inward looking.
- The gospel calls us to be preachers of grace – confident to proclaim what saves. And we should do that in grace, rather than in jest.
- Critically engage with the world and preach appropriately into that world. Sometimes with compassion, sometimes with the strong word, but always confidently to save. (Of course that does not mean people will always accept it!)

### **4. Preparing Well**

- Give it time. Think through the real issues.

➤ QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

## **The Character of the Preacher**

- John Chapman passed away late last year. What a blessing from God was 'Chappo'. In the Briefing (Issue 404, March April 2013), Simon Manchester wrote this about John:  
*'The animation of John's preaching was the Spirit of God taking the word of God and working through a man of God in the service of God.'*<sup>1</sup>
- What a wonderful thing to say about a preacher – to be able to give credit to God for the work he has done through a mere soul. Chappo was in love with Jesus and he wanted everyone to know it, and he wanted everyone else to be in love with Jesus too – for the glory of God.
- This lecture is about making sure we have our head and priorities right. We look at the character of the preacher. You will hopefully notice that this 'topic' has throughout this course not been far from the surface of much of our discussion. It is fundamental and therefore should not be taken for granted.

### **The unfit preacher**

- Question: Can God work and bring blessing to others through an unclean vessel?
- If a preacher is immoral or greedy or proud, can God use him to bring salvation and growth to others?

Look at what Paul says to the Philippians (in Chapter 1):

*Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me [Paul] has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. (Phil 1:12-18)*

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Manchester, The Preaching of John Chapman in *The Briefing* Issue 404 March April 2013.

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- You can see in how Paul writes what he does here that he is not saying that his motivations have been questionable, but that of others with the result that the gospel is preached.
- None of this is to say that one's personal conduct is irrelevant – indeed, nothing could be further from the truth.
- Yes, God can bring blessing to others through the wrong motivations of others. Yet that does not give us permission to act with unclean motivations.

Look at what he says to his younger brother and minister in faith – Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:1-7

*Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. (1 Timothy 3:1-7)*

- Now I assume an overseer to be a leader (which includes his role as a preacher). What is striking in this long list of characteristics that should define an leader/elder, is that it only refers to his teaching ability once ('able to teach') – all the rest speaks of his manner of life.
- Appendix 1 works through this passage to unpack and define the many terms. For now, let it make the point that the preacher must be personally creditable.
- Few things are more important today in the eyes of the world than authenticity – a preacher must practice what they proclaim – and people can sniff out hypocrisy pretty quickly.
- The revelations about priests and the abuse of children – and the 'falls' of many high profile American preachers have done untold damage to Jesus Christ and his church.

### **The fit preacher**

So some points to keep clearly in mind:

#### **1. Be a Christian**

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- This may sound obvious (especially when at Bible College), but let's say it anyway. When you stand before others to preach what God wants said, make sure you are a Christian!
- If asked to preach, then you have a God-given responsibility both to the congregation you serve and to the doctrine you teach – both have been committed to you. As preachers, our prior responsibility is to ourselves, to guard our personal walk with God and our loyalty to him. No one can be a good preacher or teacher of others who is not first a good servant of Jesus Christ.

*'Preaching is incarnational communication, it's truth through personality – through personhood, the preacher is inescapably part of the message...'*<sup>2</sup>

- God's truth will be God's truth – it is fixed, it is certain, it is stable. The person preaching it is the variable!

### **2. Be Sincere**

- Sincerity to most is a self-evident virtue, yet how easily we fall into the trap of hypocrisy. Be warned. The reason why hypocrisy is particularly unpleasant in teachers is that it is inexcusable.
- Jesus rebukes the Pharisees often for this sin. Matthew 23:1-3 he passes judgment on them *'for they do not practice what they preach'*. James warns people not to presume to become teachers because they *'will be judged more strictly'* (James 3:1) – yet he still recognizes that no one is perfect.
- Hypocrisy causes great offence. If we make great claims for Christ and his gospel while preaching, but then step down from the pulpit and deny him or give no more evidence of being saved, then our message lacks credibility.
- Sincerity is real. People can smell it in the same way that they can also see when you are not. And real is attractive.
- The Apostle Paul was attractive in this way – he commended himself and Timothy *'to every man's conscience in the sight of God'* (1 Cor 4:2) and he did that by ensuring that he renounced secret and shameful ways, didn't use deception, and didn't distort the word of God.
- There are examples of more contemporary preachers who pagans were willing to listen too on the strength of their sincerity
  - Billy Graham – transparently sincere
  - John Chapman – humourously real and unashamed.

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<sup>2</sup> J.I. Packer, *The Preacher as Theologian*. in D. Jackman, *Preparing the Preacher in When God's voice is heard: Essays on preaching presented to Dick Lucas*. Edited by D. Jackman and C. Green. (Leicester: IVP, 1995). 84.

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- Phillip Jensen – SMH ‘Here is a man who truly believes what he is preaching’

John Stott helpfully observes:

*Hypocrisy always repels, but integrity or authenticity always attracts.*<sup>3</sup>

- Be sincere.

### **3. Be willing to suffer or be challenged**

- Be willing to suffer or be challenged – in the name of Christ this is not a bad thing.
- Recognize that there will be external challenges and internal challenges.

#### **External**

- You preach a real Word into a world which is forever pretending. If you are doing it well you will receive some push back. That is not a bad thing if you are ready for it. It is a bad thing if you water down the message as a result.
- If you are going to throw some rocks in the pond, be prepared to get some backwash! The larger the rock, the larger the backwash. Work out ways to endure or even enjoy the waves you create (some call it surfing!)

Paul told the Romans why he was so eager to preach the gospel:

*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. (Romans 1:16)*

He was not ashamed. Yet we know from many of his other letters that his preaching was met with strong opposition. Listen to what he tells the Corinthians:

*As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger...(2 Cor 6:4-5)*

- Now I would be surprised if Paul’s experience was your experience as you preach in Australia. I do know from friends and pastors in India that that is a very real experience for them. Be prepared to be opposed for speaking what is God’s truth.
- Be prepared to be opposed by those who don’t know the gospel – but also from those who do!

#### **Internal**

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<sup>3</sup> J. Stott, *I Believe in Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982), 271.

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- There are also internal struggles. I am sure in the preparation for your sermons in this course, you have experienced some of these.
  - Doubt
  - Insecurity
  - Anxiety
  - Maybe – Depression (hopefully only momentary)
- Preaching is hard work.
- It is said that in preaching, someone is always hurt. Either the listener because the preacher has failed to prepare, or the preacher because he has prepared!
- Anguish, pain, sweat, tears, sleeplessness will often accompany the stated truths that come from a preachers mouth.
- And it is worth it.
- Brothers and sisters, speak the truth in Christ. Speak with a clean conscience (by the power of the Holy Spirit) though great sorrow and unceasing anguish – for the sake of winning people for Christ. (c.f. Rom 9:1-5). And leave it to God to do the work.

### **4. Be prayerful**

- Talking to people about God means you have to talk to God about people!
- We have said this a few times – it is important.

Paul's prayer to open the letter to the Philippians, in many ways can be the preachers prayer:

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:9-11)*

- Be a preacher who prays.

### **➤ QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?**

### **Exercise – in groups of 3, let's pray together.**

- Pray for our role as preachers
- Pray for those who will hear
- Pray that God will get the glory.

**Conclusion**

Preaching is one means by which the Lord blesses his people so that they might grow to maturity in him—in knowledge and in love for one another.

Preaching is an important instrument of the Lord for forming and shaping his community – theologically, pastorally and evangelistically.

This important role of preaching reminds us that the person who does the preaching must be an example of maturity in Christ. As such, the preacher must be loving, skilled in relationship building and possess wisdom. The preacher must be captivated by Christ's desire for his people and thereby make the necessary commitment to deliver preaching which is gospel-centred and which is about *them* not about the *preacher*. Finally, the preacher must be someone who loves God in daily life.

Though we do not preach in our own strength we must put in the hard yards of preparation. Though we do not change people's lives, we are part of the message and must by God's grace do all we can to commend the gospel and the claims of God on the lives of the men, women and children to whom we speak.

*Pray to finish*



## **Appendix 1 – Analysis of Pauline Passages in relation to the Character of the Preacher.**

The Apostle Paul writing to his leader, primarily Timothy suggests several attributes necessary of elders/preachers. Those passages (especially 1 Tim 3:1-7) deserve a close examination.

### **1 Timothy 3:1-7 (NIV)**

*Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. <sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. <sup>7</sup> He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.*

The elders as a body were responsible for the teaching of the congregation (though perhaps not all elders actually preached). 1 Timothy 3:1-7 is one such list (here Paul uses 'overseer' (ἐπίσκοπος) as an apparently synonymous term for 'elder').

The selection of attributes in this passage, as in other contexts, was partly shaped by the particular challenges facing the leadership in the church. So, while the list is not exhaustive it is instructive. What follows are notes on various elements in Paul's list of qualities.

- 'above reproach' - probably the general term which is explained in what follows in verses 2-6.
- 'husband of one wife' - Paul is not specifying that the elder must be married, only that he be the husband 'of one wife'. It assumes that the preacher is male, but the intention of this passage is not to make that point.
- 'temperate' (sober) - of sound judgment and sometimes more specifically, judgement not clouded by drunkenness. The preacher must be someone who is not given to substance abuse (to use contemporary terminology).
- 'self control' - not driven by physical desires particularly by sexual impulses. Paul does not diminish our humanity nor deny the sexual desires but emphasizes that we are responsible creatures with will. The preacher must be someone whose life is chaste, marked by love for God.

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- 'respectable' - of good reputation within the community. Paul was particularly concerned that the false teachers had brought the Christian community into disrepute by their conduct. Anyone who was an elder had a responsibility to protect the standing of the church within society by his conduct. He does not mean that elders had to be of high social standing, rather, that they had to have good standing within the community. The preacher is someone whose prominence places him/her in a representative role in the local community.
- 'hospitable' - this may have been of particular relevance in the situation of the early church in which itinerant preachers, particularly the apostles, needed hospitality. Nonetheless, it had a broader significance: the elder had to care for fellow Christians by welcoming them into his home. This signifies a closeness that entails commitment and care and a desire to generously share God's gifts with 'family'.
- 'able to teach' (διδασκτικός)- having the knowledge and skill to teach. This was essential given the activity of false teachers in the Christian community (1:3-4; 4:1-8). It was vital that elders have a clear grasp of sound doctrine and believe it for that alone would be the basis for leading hearers into godly Christian living (see the contrast between those who deviate from the truth and the effects of that deviation in 6:3-5, with Timothy's public ministry of teaching and adhering to the gospel in 4:11-16).

From this point, Paul puts the foregoing in sharp focus by explaining what attributes the elder should *not* have.

- 'not given to drunkenness' - opposite to being temperate.
- 'not violent but gentle' - Elders were not to be physically abusive but rather be peace-seeking and gracious/considerate (not given to being injured or precious about personal rights or views).
- 'not quarrelsome' - Elders should not be people who stir up trouble and enjoy controversy and nitpicking because these undermine the unity of Christ's body about which Paul wrote to this church (Ephesians 4:1-5). Note that Paul does not mean that preachers should not contend for sound doctrine but they should not argue about irrelevant or distracting matters.
- 'not a lover of money' - though this was applicable to all of life, it was certainly important in a church situation where individuals might seek to financially exploit their roles (as had apparently happened, see 6:3-5). Elders desire to serve not to gain financial profit. Preachers do not preach because they want financial benefit.

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- Verses 4-5: the married elder needs to have demonstrated capacity to manage life in his own home well in respect to his children before being entrusted with the responsibility for overseeing the affairs of the Christian community. Not only is this logical, it also goes to the need for those in leadership to commend the church to the surrounding community.
- 'not be a recent convert' – this probably needs little explanation, suffice to say that if the elder is to lead others in faith then logically they need to be someone who is tested both by time and experience. The danger is expressed following – put into leadership too quickly they may become 'conceited' and fall into the same trap as the devil, that is to overstep their authority.
- 'good reputation with outsiders' - elders must be people whose reputation outside is blameless otherwise they would bring disgrace upon themselves and the Lord's people. Sometimes, the preacher's freedom in life choices might be restricted by the desire to uphold the reputation of Christ and of his people. At this point, Paul is closing with his opening thought, that elders must be above reproach.

You will recognise many of these attributes as expectations of Christians in general.

Paul's point is that elders should possess these qualities *in practice*, not merely have them as aspirational goals. In other words, elders were to be mature as Christians and therefore as role models for other believers.

Reflecting on this list, I note these features:

1. The qualities are highly relational in character. You cannot be a preacher unless you are in good standing with other people both within the Christian community and in the broader community.
2. Not only that, you need to be a person who knows how to sustain relationships in the face of controversy and conflict.
3. The preacher must be the model of Christian character (see too his directions to Timothy in 4:12). Without feeling the pressure to be perfect, the preacher must be willing to be observed as an example of how to live for Christ.
4. The preacher must be concerned to promote the gospel by his/her manner of life. That is, the preacher must be someone who seeks to promote our Lord's reputation and shapes his/her life choices accordingly.

### **2 Timothy 3:16-4:7 (NIV)**

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.<sup>4:1</sup> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his*

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*kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup> Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. <sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

This passage was examined in Week 1 of this preaching course.

Paul reminded Timothy of the need to be faithful in preaching in the face of disinterest and outright opposition. It would demand courage, patience and perseverance. Additionally, Timothy was to remain faithful to the Scriptures as the authority for correcting, rebuking and encouraging. It is important to appreciate that the opposition to faithful preaching would come both from within and from outside the Christian community.

### **2 Timothy 2:1-3 (NIV)**

*You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. <sup>3</sup> Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

Two points stand out in these instructions to the preacher, Timothy.

- Ensure that sound teaching is passed along to those who in turn will accurately pass it along to others. Within the limits of your role as preacher in your church, consider the need to invest time and effort into the instruction of reliable and mature men and women who will in turn instruct others.
- Serve hard. There is no short cut to faithful preaching. It takes time and commitment and must be driven by the right motivations (already considered briefly above).

### **Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)**

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him*

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*the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament,  
grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

This section provides Christ's purposes for certain ministries. There is debate as to whether or not 'pastors' are distinguished from teachers. Note that in this list, the roles mentioned are all 'word roles' (by that I meant people who have some concern to deliver God's Word). Nonetheless, we can agree that teachers contribute to the Lord's plan for His people that they reach unity (the context from 4:1-6) and to maturity in knowing Christ. By maturity, Paul has in mind a body of Christians marked by truthful teaching (he surely has in mind in respect to the gospel) and by divine love (c.f. 4:14-16).

From this, we may note these facts:

- Teaching (of which preaching is one mode) is Christ's ministry to his people. Our service is his service to his people. So, preachers rely on the empowering of our Lord (note that preaching is *Christ's gift* – 'Christ appointed...he gave') for their messages to build up the hearers. One obvious entailment is that our sermon preparation must be an encounter with Christ in prayer and study of the Scriptures. Another entailment is that preaching is powerful. The preacher must believe that preaching is worth it and not lose heart in the face of criticism and doubts about its usefulness.
- His goal is for his people to be strengthened with divine truths that will enable them to stand firm against falsehood. One entailment is that we must be committed in preaching to educating our fellow Christians with substantive teaching. Fairy floss teaching will not protect the faith of the Lord's people in the day of strife.
- Another goal of our Lord is that his people grow in love for one another. This reminds us that our preaching must have relevance to the congregation. Cognitive goals are insufficient because love is more than a cognitive activity!—it is affective and behavioral as well.