

The Priority of Preaching in Worship

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Date: 23 March 2014

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[0:00] We'll begin reading in 2 Timothy 3.10 and read through chapter 4 and verse 5.!

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

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 kingdom, I give you this charge.

[1:32] Preach the word. Be prepared in season and out of season. Correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.

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.

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations.

Endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Discharge all the duties of your ministry. Almighty God is seeking worshippers.

Right here. Right now. Boys and girls. Men and women. Who will worship him in spirit and in truth. Are you a boy?

[2:36] Are you a girl? God is seeking your worship right now. He wants you to adore him. He wants you to stand in awe of him. He wants you to listen to him.

To love him. To trust him. To obey him with all your heart. God the maker of all deserves and desires to be worshipped by all that he has created.

But ever since Adam and Eve turned away from God, their descendants have been born with a sinful heart that refuses to give worship to this God. And instead worships other things in his place. We have hearts that give greater importance to created things rather than to the creator himself. Do you know that's why many today are not worshipping God.

They value things, pleasures, ease, entertainments higher than they value the living God.

[3:37] And that's why God in his love sent his eternal son to become a man to die in the place of sinful idolaters. People who are not worshipping him.

So that he might reconcile them to God and make them true worshippers of him. And that's why on one particular day in the life of our Lord Jesus, he stopped at a well outside of Sychar and talked with an immoral Samaritan woman.

She wasn't worshipping God. She was rather giving ultimate importance to herself and to her cravings for male relationships. She had had five husbands and was now living with a man not her husband.

She was drinking from wells that never could satisfy her deepest desire. Indeed, the deepest desire of all created beings, all moral creatures, which is to be right with our maker.

To be in relationship with him. To worship him as we were created to do. Have you ever tried to do a job around the house with a tool that obviously wasn't created for that job?

[4:53] Maybe you've got a nail to pound and you go to the toolbox and you say, where did the kids put the hammer? It's not there. But you find a pair of pliers and so you go at it with a pair of pliers and after that painful experience, you have confirmed to you that a pliers was never created

to drive a nail.

But you've got a can of tar to touch the ends of pruned branches on an apple tree. And the last time you used it, a bit of the tar slid up around the mouth of it and you closed it and now it's all dried and hard and fast.

And it won't budge. And so you take those very same pliers and you put it on there and with ease you open the can and as you do you say, now, these pliers were made for this job.

And so after years of worshipping his own lusts and desires, Augustine trusted in Christ and became a worshipper of the living God.

and he wrote, you made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until we rest in you.

[6:08] And that's why on one particular day in the life of many of you, you were minding your own business, worshipping and serving yourself and created objects, created things, ignoring God, withholding your worship from him and he paid you a visit and he stopped the madness of your worship of this vain world and he showed you your sin and your guilt before God.

He showed you what a crime it is to ignore God, to neglect his worship and to value other things in his place and then he showed you the only way of forgiveness through the perfect obedience and the blood of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and he brought you to change your mind and to turn and to trust in that Savior and so he made you a true worshipper of the living God.

The object of your worship this morning has clearly changed from created things to the Creator, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and you instinctively feel now this is what I was made for.

I was made for this. I was created for this and you're not alone, are you? He's visited others by his word and spirit and saved us as well.

So here we are together worshipping God. The Father is seeking worshippers. He doesn't find them such but he makes them such through his spirit and through the blood of his Son.

[7:42] Well, we're just getting started on a series of sermons on the church of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said, I will build my church and that's what he is doing today.

That's the great activity of Christ in the world today. He is building his church and that's why this present age has not come to an end yet. It's why Christ has not returned to earth and judged the world because when the last living stone has been added to the church, he will come and he will judge all men and he will bring this present age to an end and he will usher in the eternal age.

The fact that he's not yet returned means that he's still building his church. One Samaritan woman at a time. One boy, one girl at a time.

Supernaturally converting them and then making them true worshippers of himself. And as he does so, he gathers them together into organized local churches.

That's his plan for building his church. Make disciples, baptizing and adding them to local churches where they are taught to obey everything that Christ commanded.

[9:01] We saw that's the command that he gave to his apostles and that's what we see happening in the New Testament church. But now, this morning, we ask why.

What's the purpose of the church of Jesus Christ in this world? What is it we're to be about as the church? And the Bible reveals a three-fold purpose for the church.

Remember the directional arrows? Up, in, and out. And we're looking at up. The purpose for the church in this world is to glorify the triune God by public worship.

To glorify the triune God in public worship. God wants his people to worship and to worship together. That's why he gathers them into local churches.

He's even given us a day to worship him. The Lord's day. And so the church is a community of Christ's disciples gathered in worship. worship. And that itself is one of the three purposes that the church exists for the public worship of God.

[10:09] Now that ought to get us out of bed on Sunday mornings. And it ought to get us out of our easy chairs on Sunday nights. That this is the plan of God for the church. This is what he wants done.

This is what glorifies him. This is what pleases him. But how? How is God to be worshipped?

And this he's not left up to men but from the very beginning he's always told men how they're to worship God. Obedience not originality is the key to man's worship of God.

Obedience not coming up with our own ideas and being original. of how we want to worship. No. Obeying God and worshipping him the way he wants us to be worshipped.

And in the New Testament God tells us how he wants his New Testament churches to worship him. And some of the elements of worship that we find in scripture are singing his praises praying to him baptizing new converts celebrating the Lord's Supper together.

[11:23] these are all important elements of worship. They all have an important place in the worship of the church but none of them have the primary place.

The primary place is given to the word of God read and preached. Now that's my task this morning to seek to demonstrate that to you.

Sadly in many churches today the Bible is used very little. I remember we were on vacation and visited a church and as we made our way in from the parking lot into the building where they were meeting I noticed that worshippers were no longer carrying their Bibles to worship.

And that struck me. And an hour later I understood why. Because it was not used. There was very little of the scriptures in the service the worship service.

The preaching of God's word has given way to lots of music and entertaining stories and other things of all sorts while the sermon has been shrunken and shaved down to sermonettes causing one writer to say sermonettes make Christianettes.

[12:38] And when what is called preaching is often drawn from the newspaper or from men's thoughts or the latest movie clip rather than the very words of God such superficial shallow preaching creates superficial shallow churches and Christians.

And this simply isn't the mind of Christ the head of the church. He himself was anointed to preach and went about everywhere preaching.

He said we must leave this place and go to the next place that I might preach there also for that is why I have come. And then he spent time with 12 of his apostles and ordained them and sent them out to preach and they went out and preached everywhere and they in turn ordained elders in every local church and charged them to preach the word.

You can see that in Acts chapter 20 where Paul met with the Ephesian elders and says you know how I've lived among you for three years preaching the whole counsel of God.

Now you shepherd the flock under your care in the same way. But turn with me to the text that was read 2 Timothy chapter 4 where we find a minister of the gospel Timothy receiving a charge.

[14:04] And I don't know of any text more plain that makes more plain the thesis of this sermon which is that the word of God preached is to have the primary place in worship.

So 2 Timothy chapter 4 takes us down into a dark dungeon and there's an old man chained a prisoner.

He spent his life preaching the word of God planting churches and training faithful men to do the same. He's the apostle Paul. He's just weeks away from having his head severed from his body by a Roman sword and he knows it and he's ready.

His work is over he says. He's fought the good fight. He's finished the race. He's kept the faith. And he's thinking of what is waiting for him the crown of righteousness.

But he's also thinking about the church. Left behind. The church on earth. And Christ's church must continue to be built. And so he writes a letter.

[15:12] The very last letter that we have from his pen and these are his last words sent to a much younger man, Timothy, his son in the faith who was not only converted under the apostle but for over 15 years served with him shoulder to shoulder in the work of the gospel.

The apostle Paul is about to depart from this life and he's clearly concerned about the health of the churches. Deceitful men are abroad spreading destructive heresies, making inroads into the church, causing some to turn astray from the truth as it is in Jesus.

And he wants Timothy to hold on to what he's been given, to continue in the truth of God's word that he learned from Paul and from his mother and his grandmother. father. And so the old apostle takes up his pen and he now gives a final charge to his son in the faith, Timothy.

And it's a charge that comes to all ministers of the gospel and the very heart of it is just three words. Preach the word. Preach the word.

Now there's an activity to be done and there's an object to be preached. Notice the activity first is preach. Preach. Not give some advice, preach.

[16:39] Now the word used here in the Greek for preach is a word that comes from the noun herald. A herald. We don't have heralds in society anymore unless it's the name of a man.

But a herald was a man who rode from city to city into the marketplace to deliver a message from the king. And so into the place where the people would be gathered.

He would ride and the royal banner would be unfurled and the trumpet would blow to gather everyone together. Hear ye, hear ye. And then the scroll with the royal seal on it would be opened and he would read the message from the king to his subjects.

Now the herald was not free to alter the message in any way. Oh, is that what the king wants to be said? That's not going to go well in this city so I'll just leave that out.

He wasn't free to alter the message in any way. No, he's a messenger. Nothing more. But he's a messenger of the king.

[17:51] Nothing less. And therefore, his words carry authority. The very authority of the king whose word it is. Now that is the activity of preaching.

Timothy herald the word. Stand as a messenger. As an ambassador of Christ. And proclaim the king's word to his subjects.

preach. It's to explain the word. It's to help men understand it. To apply it.

To call men to align their hearts and lives with it. To believe and obey it. And that is the main activity of the minister. To preach. Now notice the object.

What is he to preach? The word. And elsewhere it's called the word of God. Preachers are not at liberty to invent our message but we're called to proclaim God's.

[18:53] We're not to give our opinions on things but his. We're to add nothing, subtract nothing from his word to preach the whole counsel of God. That's our task.

Preach the word. Now where is this word of God to be found? Well, it's been written down in the holy scriptures, the sacred writings and we now have not only the Old Testament but also the New Testament.

And Paul has just talked to Timothy about this precious book of the scriptures, the holy scriptures. scriptures. And he's mentioned two things that show us its inestimable value.

First is its source. Its source. Where did it come from? Where did the scriptures come from?

Chapter 3 and verse 16.

All scripture is God breathed. This is not man's thoughts about God. This is God's thoughts given to man.

[20:06] It's breathed out by God. That's why it's called the word of God. Kids, when you speak words, what do you do? You breathe out. I don't want you to do it now but it's kind of hard to say words when you're breathing in.

You might try that later. No, we breathe out, don't we, when we speak. Then we get another breath and we breathe out some more words. This is the God breathed word.

God breathed it out. It came from inside of him. It's his mind. It's his thought. It didn't have its origin in any of the prophets who were his instruments to write it. Rather, it had its origin in God himself. And those writers, those human authors, were carried along by God's spirit so that what they wrote was exactly the very word of God.

What the Bible says, God says. What a book. I think that we sometimes take that for granted. That the infinite, eternal, unchangeable God has spoken.

[21:14] And we have his words in a book. What a book. book. So when it comes to time to worship God, to meet with God, who should have the center stage?

God's word or man's word? Well, to ask the question is to answer it, isn't it? The preaching of God's word must be the main thing in worship.

Timothy, it's the God breathed book. Preach it. Preach the word. But not only consider the scripture's source, consider its purpose.

What is scripture good for? What is it profitable for? What's the benefit of this book? And he has many things to say about this, but none more important than the first, which is salvation.

The scriptures are useful for salvation. Notice chapter 3 and verse 15, that from infancy you have known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

[22:18] This book is useful for salvation. The Bible addresses the most important question that could ever enter the mind of a human being.

The question of how can I be saved? How can I, a sinner, be saved from the coming wrath of God? How can I escape the eternal punishment that my sins deserve from this holy God that I've

dishonored and disobeyed?

You can't read the answer to that question in the stars. You can't read the answer in your own thoughts. No, if ever we are to know the way to be saved, God will have to tell us.

And glory be to his name. He has breathed out a book just for this purpose, to make us wise for salvation. What's that worth?

In a world full of damning lies, all claiming to be the true way of salvation. Here's a book from God that from beginning to end is telling us how to be saved.

[23 : 30] A book that from beginning to end is pointing us to Jesus Christ, God's eternal son. We're made wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

That's the message of the book. Not through your own works, but by faith in his works, in his perfect obedience, in his substitutionary death that paid the price for sinners.

We're saved by looking away from ourselves and what we have done to looking to the only God approved savior for sinners, Jesus Christ.

Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. What a book telling us to look and live, telling us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

John Wesley says, I am a creature of a day passing through life like an arrow through the air. I'm a spirit come from God and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf.

[24 : 40] Till a few moments hence, I am no more seen. I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing. The way to heaven.

How to land safe on that happy shore. God himself is condescended to teach the way. for this very end he came from heaven. He has written it down in a book.

Oh, give me that book at any price. Give me the book of God. I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book.

End quote. And let the preaching of that book ever be the priority in worship here. Because as this word is preached, it is useful for salvation.

And we have heard testimonies from some of you. He said, I was sitting there and I thought that the preacher was just talking to me. Well, God was talking to you through his preacher.

[25 : 45] It was his word. And he was showing you your sin. And he was convicting you of your sin. And you were feeling it. And you knew it to be true. And then you were wanting to have relief from your guilt.

And the same book shows you the way to be saved. By resting on what Christ has done for hell deserving sinners. And you trusted his word.

You took him at his word. And you were born again through the living and enduring word of God. This is the word that was preached to you, Peter says. And so the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.

But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. And so God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

And so we preach Christ crucified. It's useful for salvation, Timothy, so preach the word. But it's also useful for other things.

[26 : 50] Everything you need for life and godliness. four things are mentioned in chapter 3 and verse 16. And they cover both what to believe and how to behave.

You know, those two are related. What you believe affects how you behave. If you believe God is holy, you will behave in a holy manner. These two are related.

And the usefulness of scripture, what it's useful for, what its purpose is, it's useful for things to help us know what to believe. and how to behave.

Notice first, what to believe. The first two uses mentioned in verse 16 refer to what to believe. All scripture is useful for teaching and rebuking.

For teaching the truth and rebuking error. And we need both. We need the teaching, the doctrine that we are to believe.

[27 : 49] believe. This book tells us what we are to think about reality. What is real? This book tells us what to think about God, about creation, about man, about myself, about salvation, about judgment, about death and life after death and eternity.

reality. It tells me, it teaches me what to believe about reality. Here, God gives us his thoughts, his mind, his understanding of things.

And he tells us things that we otherwise would never know. So preach the word, Timothy. It's useful for teaching. rebuking. But it's also useful for rebuking.

Because people are not always believing the right things. The devil has spread his lies. And we incorrectly think about God. We think wrong things about salvation and about Jesus Christ and about ourselves and about death and judgment and everything else.

Therefore, we have a need to be rebuked. To say, John, you're not thinking straight about God. I had a man come to our door and he told me that Jesus is not God.

[29 : 13] Do you know that this book was written to rebuke such a thought? This book says, no, no, friend, you're wrong. Friend, this book says that Jesus is God and it comes to straight.

Do you know that's a damning error? That'll take that man to hell. What a kindness that God comes in his word and corrects our erroneous thinking.

Not all of our thoughts about God are worthy of him. We have such small thoughts of God. We sometimes have small thoughts about his love and we doubt his goodness and we doubt his faithfulness.

And this book says, no, no, that's not the way I am. This is the way I am. And it corrects, it rebukes our unbelieving thoughts about God's promises and about God's power.

And it rebukes our proud thoughts of self. And it rebukes our unloving and demeaning thoughts of our neighbor. Yes, it teaches, but it also rebukes our erroneous thoughts.

[30 : 19] It calls us to forsake our thoughts and to adopt his. So, Timothy, preach the word. What a kindness that in the preaching of the word.

God comes to us to rebuke our erroneous thoughts. The next two uses deal with how to behave. All scripture is useful for correcting and training.

Correcting wrong behavior and training in right behavior. Righteousness. First of all, it corrects us. It says, stop doing that.

That's wrong. That's sinful. That's displeasing to God. It corrects very specific things about our lives, about the way we're treating others, the way we speak to others.

How we use our time, our money, our bodies, what we do with our mouths, what we do with our eyes, with our ears, our hands, our feet. It comes and it corrects us.

[31 : 21] That's not the right way to use those things. God. And again, what a kindness of God to come to us and say, John, that is the road that leads to destruction.

You're going to reap some destruction if you keep walking on that road. And then there's the positive side, the training in righteousness. Not only correcting us, John, that's wrong, but here's the right way.

Here's the righteous way. The way that is right in God's eyes. And the word of God comes to train us in that way. Stop going this way and come this way.

Forsake your way and walk my way. And don't we drift. And don't we find ourselves straying out of the right way.

And in the preaching of the word, God says, back here, son. Back here, daughter. This is the good way. Walk in it. And so we have a book with all this useful material to correct our wrong behavior and train us in right behavior.

[32 : 38] So, Timothy, preach it. Preach the word. And lastly, we see in verse 17, it's sufficient to thoroughly equip both shepherd and sheep alike for every good work.

work. It's able to thoroughly equip the man of God, Timothy, the minister, for all he needs.

Everything you need in your ministry, it's here in the holy scriptures.

But it's also the same book for shepherd as for sheep. That which equips a shepherd for his good works is the same book that's equipping the sheep for every good work in their lives.

It equips us for the good work of worship. It equips us for the good work of your labor Monday through Saturday. How to labor is unto the Lord.

It equips us for how to be a good husband, how to be a good wife, how to be a good parent, how to be a good child, how to be a citizen, a neighbor, and so on.

[33 : 48] It's equipping us for every good work. John Calvin says this is the perfect rule of a good and happy life. It's equipping us to live that good and happy life.

So Timothy, preach the word. And then verse 2 goes on to give some supporting statements to preaching the word. Always prepared, in season and out of season, always ready.

Now if you have a gun and you're going through the woods and you see an animal, before you pull the trigger, you're supposed to ask, is it in season? Timothy, you never need to ask that question. Preaching the word is always in season. You're to always be at it, in season and out, whether it's welcome or not. Preach the word and apply it to the various needs.

Notice he goes on in verse 2, correct, rebuke, and encourage or exhort. Those are the very things that the scripture is useful for. In verse 16 of chapter 3, God's given you a book, Timothy, to fulfill your charge.

[34:55] Use it, preach it, and do so with great patience and careful instruction. The reason you're going to need great patience, Timothy, is because a time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine.

Verse 4, verse 3, that they'll have no appetite for the word of God that corrects and rebukes and commands them what to believe and how to live.

They won't like what's on the menu of scripture, and so they won't put up with preaching that tells them that they're so sinful, that only by God damning his own son can your sins be forgiven, that only by trusting in what he has done as a hell deserving sinner can you be right with God, that you must come with nothing good to say for yourself, just God be merciful to me, a sinner, and they will not have a stomach for such things.

They won't embrace Christ and crown him as master of their life. They won't come to his preached word to be taught what to believe and how to live. Instead, verse 3 goes on to say, 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, turning aside from truth, they will prefer myths.

There's always someone to tell you what you want to hear, isn't there? you usually know who they are and you go talk to them if you want them to tell you what you want to hear.

[36:45] There are preachers who will tell you what you want to hear, who will not hold up the unbending standard of what's right in God's eyes, but who will say to you, you know, you're okay and I'm okay.

We're all okay. And these people, Paul tells Timothy, they'll find those people, they'll find those preachers and they'll make them their teachers and preachers.

They'll gather around them these kind of preachers. So the qualification for the ministry, it's not who can bring us what God says and explain what God says and apply what God says, but who will tell us what we want to hear?

Who will be a good CEO, good with people and can fill a building? And they will surround themselves with a great number of such teachers and preachers.

You see, Paul here, I don't believe he's speaking of the way the world will become. The world has never had an appetite for the preaching of God's word. No, he's telling us what will be the state of affairs in the church where there are teachers and preachers and this is what's going to happen.

[38:05] And when it happens, Timothy, what are you to do? Punt? Retreat? Change strategy? Change your method from preaching?

Change your message from the word? No. Preach the word. These are not reasons to give up preaching the word. These are reasons to go on preaching the word.

So keep your head, Timothy. Hold the line. Endure the hard times coming for you when nobody wants to hear that kind of preaching. Keep evangelizing.

Don't let it move you one whit from the gospel. Discharge all your duties. Go on preaching, undeterred, unmoved by the times.

Because the things that scratch men's itching ears and please them will not save them on the day of judgment. Nor will it equip them for a life in this world of godliness.

[39:09] Nor will it prepare them for the storms of life here or for the judgment to come. Preach the word, Timothy. It's a sobering charge. You notice how he introduces it in verse 1?

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his coming, I give you this charge, preach the word.

Now that's not the only work of a minister, but it is the first and the greatest work of the minister.

Paul said the same in his first letter to Timothy, chapter 4, 13, until I come, Timothy was at Ephesus ministering there, until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and teaching.

Don't neglect your gift, be diligent in these matters, give yourself wholly to them, he tells them. And in this way you'll save both yourself and your hearers. Now you may be asking, John, what does all this have to do with our topic of worship?

worship? Well, just this, that the main work of the minister points to the main part of worship, the preaching of God's word.

[40 : 28] If this is the word of Christ, and the Bible says it is, and if we gather in his name to worship, and he is here by his spirit with something to say, then the number one thing in worship is to listen to him.

You remember when the disciples, just three disciples went with Jesus up to the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John, and the glory of Jesus was revealed to his disciples, his divine glory, so that his face shone like the sun.

And the disciples are awestruck, and Peter doesn't know what to say, but for some reason he often thought he needed to be saying something, and so he's running at the mouth, it's good for us to be here, let me build you three shelters, and he's interrupted by a voice speaking from the cloud of the divine glory.

That doesn't happen very often. I think you can remember at Mount Sinai, there was an audible voice of God speaking from the cloud. Peter hears a voice, an audible voice of God, and it sends him to the ground.

This is my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased. Listen to him. Listen to him. I say, if he's here with his gathered people by his spirit and has something to say to us, then we must listen to him.

[42 : 10] Remember how we've seen that God charges his ministers to preach his word, and where God appoints a man to preach his word, he also appoints the congregation to listen to his word preached.

If pastors are to devote themselves to preaching the word of God, then congregations are to devote themselves to hearing the preaching of the word of God, to being present that they might be there, and therefore we're told not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.

And we're told that those believers who trusted in Jesus and were baptized and added to the church at Jerusalem, that they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching.

Were the apostles devoted to teaching and preaching, they were devoted to receiving that teaching and preaching. And when they received the word of God which they heard from them, they accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is the word of God.

Remember the time when Peter went to Cornelius' house and he finds the place packed with people. And Peter asked, why did you send for me, Cornelius? And Cornelius tells how an angel told him to send to Joppa for a man named Simon called Peter.

[43 : 41] So I sent for you immediately and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.

And I say that captures the event of preaching. We are all gathered here together in the presence of God. To hear you tell us what God has told you.

Peter, we don't want to hear your opinions. We want to hear what God has told you. And I don't mean now as pastors that we wait for some voice.

No, I mean now we have all 66 books of what God has told us to preach. We're to preach the word. All scriptures. Because it's profitable for salvation, for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness, equipping us for life.

That's the preacher's task. What say of the scriptures? So if God is present in worship with something to say, then listening to him is of the greatest importance.

[45 : 02] There is no substitute in worship for his word read and preached. And when preaching God's word is given the central place in worship, God himself is given the central place.

You see that? Because it's his word and he's the main character of the word. word. And so the preaching of God's word keeps God at the center of worship, which is where he belongs.

the Bible makes plain in Hebrews 13 and verse 17 that those who God sends to preach his word are going to have to give an account one day for what they did with his word.

Even in this text, verse 1 tells us that Paul gives this charge to Timothy in the light of the return of Christ who's coming to judge the living and the dead.

And so Timothy is to preach the word in the shadow of the coming day of judgment. You know, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive what is doing for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

[46:22] And if I will be judged for whether or not I faithfully preach the word of God to you, you will be judged for whether you faithfully received the word of God and put it into practice.

Jesus says that very word that you heard will judge you. So we both have an accounting to give for the preaching of the word. Me for preaching and me and you for hearing and obeying.

If I take those words seriously, then I must come to this conclusion that one day I am going to stand before God and give an account for what I just did the last 45 minutes.

And one day you are going to stand before God, every one of you, and give an account for what you just did for the past 45 minutes. And we both will give an account for what difference the preached word will have in our lives from this day forward.

word. Were we only hearers of the word, only preachers of the word, or were we doers of the word?

[47:40] And the same word of God that shows us our need also shows us our all-sufficient savior. Why did Jesus come? He came in one sense to make worshipers.

We see that in John 4. He came to make us worshipers. How does he find us? A constantly distracted, strain. And so every week on the Lord's Day he comes.

He comes to win our hearts all over again by his word. And as his word is preached he is the chief subject of that word, the object of that word.

And we see our Lord Jesus and our hearts are drawn to him. And we hear the voice of the good shepherd. All my sheep hear my voice and they follow me he says.

And he corrects us and he teaches us and he rebukes us and he trains us and he equips us how to live. What a wonderful savior.

[48:37] And as he does rebuke us and correct us he doesn't just kick us does he? No he says that's why I came and lived the perfect life you can't.

And that's why I came and died on the cross to pay the price for your sins. And so the same preached word that convicts us of sins points us to the all sufficient savior.

Do you know he's plenteous in mercy? He's got a lot of mercy and he delights to show it. Do you know he's both willing and able to forgive you of any sins.

To forgive me of any sins in preaching and us in any of our sins in hearing and what we've done with the preached word. He's willing and able to forgive us if we'll just confess it to him and renounce it.

He gives grace to the humble gives power to the weak whatever you need come to this savior. He's full of grace for us. And let this word have its way with you.

[49:44] Put yourself under it each time we come put yourself under it to have its way with you. Saving you if that's what you need. And there's a sense in which we need to be saved every time we hear it.

Save from ourselves. Save from strain. Save from our pride. So we put ourselves because it's useful to save and it's useful to teach us.

Come wanting to learn. Lord Jesus what should I believe? Correct my wrong beliefs. And Lord Jesus teach me how to behave and correct me where I'm out of line and train me in the right way and please thoroughly equip me for everything that I will need as I go into my home, into my workplace, into my church relations, into the world, that I might there be equipped for every good work that you call me to do.

worship is a two way street, both receiving the word of God preached and then responding to it.

God has spoken to us through his preached word. We now have the opportunity to speak to him in song and in prayer as our response to his word.

[51:09] Let's take our grace hymns and make as our response to his word. speak, O Lord, as we come to you. Let's pray. Eternal Father, we thank you for stooping to speak to us and give us a Bible that's without error, fully, your word to us, a word that is so needed by us who are lost and it tells us how to be saved and often straying and needing to know what to believe and how to live and how to be equipped for life in this present evil world.

How kind of you to give us your word and to send preachers to us each week. Do forgive us for the way we've taken your word for granted.

Do forgive us that we have not given ourselves as we ought up unto you in the preaching of your word as clay on the wheel of the potter to be shaped and fashioned by you.
come and help us that we would make a fitting response to your word brought to us. Full obedience, holy reverence, true humility that we would learn to walk humbly with you our God to the end that you would be glorified in your church, in this church, and in our hearts, and in our homes.
We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.