

Moving the Message Toward the Invitation

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A Definition of Preaching

Christian preaching is the **communication** of God's **revelation** in Scripture **through a God-called messenger**, with the aim of **pointing the hearers to faith in Christ** and encouraging believers to grow in Christ.

There are Four Elements...

Element 1: Communication

"Christian preaching is the **communication** ..."

1. Preaching is a form of communication
2. It is oral communication now often accompanied by visual support

Element 2: Revelation

"...of God's revelation in scripture..."

1. Al Mohler: "True preaching begins with the confession: We preach because God has spoken."
2. Biblical preaching is the only kind of Christian preaching
That needs underscoring in every generation

Element 3: Proclamation

"...through a God-called messenger..."

1. Proclamation is delivery
2. It includes the call and claim of God on the life of the messenger
3. It also includes a sense of urgency
4. It includes appropriate application

Element 4: Invitation

"...with the aim of pointing people to faith in Christ and encouraging believers to grow in Christ."

1. The invitation is the moment of truth when people can respond in faith to Christ

The art of preaching is to convince or persuade

1. Stephen Covey: "begin with the end in mind"
2. Leighton Ford: "the invitational edge"
3. Preachers point the hearers to faith in Christ and encourage believers to grow in Christ

Perspectives from Dr. Charles Carter

Giving the invitation has Biblical foundations

1. Matthew 22:42a: "What do you think of Christ?"
2. Matthew 16:13-16: "Who do you say that I am?"
3. II Corinthians 5:20: "Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ...Be reconciled to God."

Giving the invitation has historical illustrations

1. Simon Peter in Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you."
2. Edwards, Finney, Sunday, Graham emphasized the public invitation

Giving an invitation has practical applications

1. Give the invitation early (Identify early what you are asking them to do)
 2. Give the invitation personally (Connect with people)
 3. Give the invitation humbly (There is no place for arrogance in the pulpit)
 4. Give the invitation simply (Don't re-preach the sermon or add new material. Give simple, relevant instructions)
 5. Give the invitation honestly (The real inviter is God – not us!). See II Corinthians 5:20. Be honest with yourself. Be honest with the congregation.
 6. Give the invitation expectantly (Do you really expect people to respond each time you preach?)
- Giving the invitation is not an art form – it is an act of God. It is a blessing to be used of God in offering the message of the gospel and in appealing to people to respond in faith to Him and to grow in faith for Him. There is no higher calling!

Billy Graham responded to President Richard Nixon: "No, Mr. President, I don't want a job in your administration. I already have one and it is the greatest job of all!"