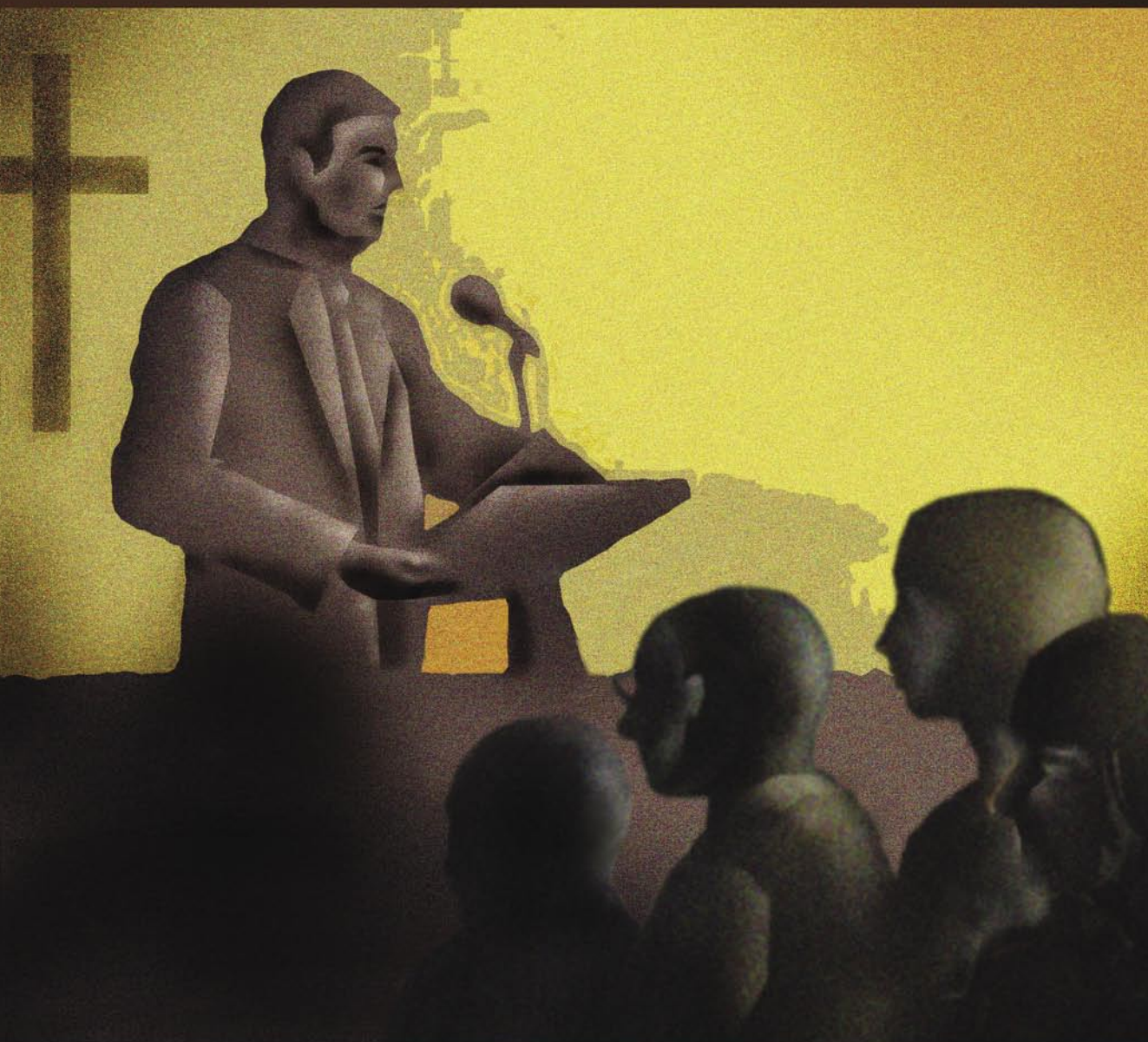
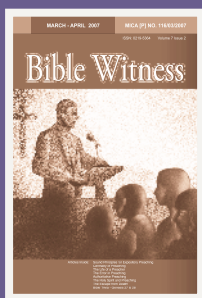


Bible Witness



Articles Inside:

- Sound Principles for Expository Preaching
- Authoritative Preaching
- Centrality of Preaching
- The Life of a Preacher
- Not Exposing Error: A Serious Error in Preaching
- The Holy Spirit and Preaching
- How Best to Present Your Sermon
- Be a Child of God



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Sound Principles for EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Quek Suan Yew

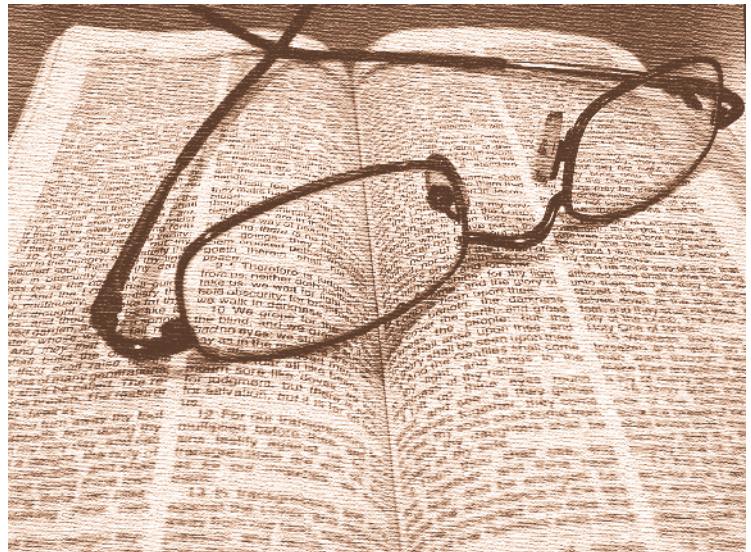
Introduction

Expository Preaching is different from Topical Preaching. In the latter, the preacher refers to a number of different passages pertaining to the topic and preaches from it. By this method, the topic might be understood by the congregation but the congregation might not know the Word of God in its particular context. Expository Preaching, on the other hand, is defined as preaching from a fixed text where the entire message will be based upon this particular text. It could be a few verses or an entire passage but at the end of the expository preaching, the congregation should know the Word of God better than before the preacher began.

Such expository preaching is grossly lacking today. The reason is that the mentality of the congregation is one of “help me fix my problem” rather than wanting to know God better. Such anthropocentric fixations are the bane of today’s sick society. The saddest part is that pastors, who are supposed to feed their congregation with proper spiritual meat, have bought into this man-centred phenomenon. They would scratch the itching ears of their members and pander to their every whim and fancy. After hearing the strong messages

preached by the invited speaker at the church camp, one present-day pastor testified that if he were to preach the same kind of messages his “rice bowl” in church would be broken! What a sad admission from a hireling! There was no fear of God in this admission. This pastor was there for money and nothing else. He is not the exception but the norm in our churches today. It is a sickness called “like pastor, like people!”

What churches need today is not to fix the problems of their members but to help them



fix their walk and relationship with God. To do that, there is only one way . . . the continuous and faithful expository preaching from God’s holy and perfect Word. One of the major benefits of expository preaching is that the preacher will never run out of materials to

preach from. Expository Preaching is a book by book and methodical exposition of God's Word. The pastor has sixty-six books of the Bible to cover in his lifetime.

Principles of Expository Preaching

1. Choose a Complete Passage

The Bible is made up of many different types of genres. They include narrative or prose, poetry, legal, epistolary, prophetic, eschatological, parables, and miracles. The first step to take is to recognise the kind of literature that one is interpreting. Different genres require slightly different approaches in exegesis. For example, one cannot interpret poetry the same way as one would interpret an epistle or a narrative. The way of writing is different. In poetry, parallelisms are used; in the epistles, every verse is pregnant with meaning where all the grammatical nuances of nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, etc. have great significance.

If one does not select a complete passage, then the main thrust of the message in that passage could be lost. A sub-point could be made the main point when, in fact, it is meant to be a sub-point to explain the main point.

2. Know the Context

Knowing the context of a passage involves knowing the chapter context and the book context. In some cases, it is also necessary to be familiar with the entire Old or New Testament and even the entire Bible context. The more one knows of the Bible, the better he is able to interpret the Bible correctly and not read into the Bible what it does not say.

When preachers have in their minds a point that they wish to make which requires biblical support, they tend to use verses without

proper consideration of the context of the passage they cite. This method of using the Bible is being unfaithful to the text - the interpreter has made the Bible his "support" or "slave". The interpreter has just abused the fundamental purpose of the Bible which is God's Word to man, not man's twisting of God's Word to suit man's fanciful ideas.

The context can be gleaned from Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopaedias, and books written on topics such as customs and manners of biblical times which will shed light on the way the people lived throughout biblical history. For example, the apostles lived under the Roman rule, whereas King David lived in Israel which was then a sovereign nation and at the height of its power. Also, the time that Joshua lived in was different from the time that Abraham lived. The former was living in a conquered land where the Promised Land was occupied by the nation of Israel. Abraham lived in the same land but he was only one family and the land was occupied by the Canaanites who dominated the entire land. These accounts are only a few books apart but separated by more than 500 years of history.

3. Hide the Passage in the Heart

The passage to be preached or taught must not become the pretext. Doing this would be an injustice to the Word of God. If an interpreter does not intend to preach from that text but from another, then stick to the correct text from which the preaching is to be based.

Once the passage has been determined and the context known, then read through the text over and over again until the entire passage is nearly memorized. This passage must be mulled over and over again until the passage is "inside the system" of the interpreter. He

meditates on the passage through the days until he finally teaches it. He must let the Word of God speak to his own heart first and allow his life to be transformed by it. Then he is ready to preach or teach it to others.

A preacher is more than just the person who stands behind the pulpit and delivers the Word of God using certain speech techniques and outlining a sermon. A preacher should also be sharing his life with the people he ministers to. His life ought to be a reflection of the message he preaches.

4. Exegete the Passage

Exegetical sermons (Exegesis) draw the message from the Word of God. The preacher declares, "Thus saith the LORD." On the other hand, "Eisegeisis" is to read into the Word of God what the preacher has already preconceived in his mind. The Bible has become nothing but a tool for him to hide behind and give his own words the semblance of God's Word.

The two methods are irreconcilable, one being enlightening and beneficial, the other misleading and damaging. The latter uses the Bible to present the word of man as if it is the Word of God. This method is deceptive. It is most misleading and must never be allowed

in God's church. The former delivers the Word of God and it would not be the word of man but the Word of God that the receiver accepts or rejects.

Different genres require different approaches in drawing out the meaning of God's Word. For example, when preaching from narratives, the passage is easy to understand but drawing the biblical principle to apply to today's readers is difficult to do. With regard to the epistles, the doctrines are directly presented. In the case of interpreting miracles and parables, it is important to separate the essentials from the embellishments which are present in the accounts for the purpose of completing the events. To interpret poetry in the Bible, we need to look out for parallelisms.

Conclusion and Application

What is at stake is the authority of the Word of God. A weak or faulty method of preaching the Word of God will result in wrong doctrines being taught. And even when the doctrine might be right, the authority of the Word of God could be compromised. The primary purpose of preaching the Word of God is not to fix people's lives but that sinners might know God better and that through this knowledge, their lives may be transformed.

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Authoritative PREACHING

Jeffrey Khoo

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2). Preachers are told to preach with authority. This authority comes not from the preacher but from the Bible. The preacher must not preach himself but “the word.” And this Word is described as “God breathed” or “inspired of God” and “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). A preacher can only preach with the authority of “Thus saith the Lord” only if and when he preaches from the absolutely authoritative words of God which are fully inspired and fully preserved.

When we say that the Bible is authoritative, what do we mean? The word “authority” means “the right or power to act, command, enforce laws, exact obedience, determine, or judge.” So, when we say the Bible is authoritative, we mean that the Bible has the absolute and supreme right or power to dictate or control our thinking and behaviour. In other words, whatever the Bible commands us to do, we must do. Obey the Bible, we live; disobey, we die. There are no maybes in the Bible. In the Bible, yes is yes, no is no.

Now, what makes the Bible authoritative? Why must we be under its authority? Why

should the Bible dictate or control our thoughts, words, and actions? There are two main reasons:

The Bible is Authoritative Because of What It is

The Bible is authoritative because it is the very Word of God itself (2 Timothy 3:16). “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The Scripture is God-breathed. The Bible is unique. It is the only book on earth that comes from heaven, from God Himself, and is perfect; it has no weaknesses, and makes no mistakes. The Word of God is sometimes called the Law of God. God holds every man, believer or unbeliever, accountable to His Law which is the Bible. God’s laws and decrees are absolutely binding. It comes from the King

of kings and Lord of lords. In old China, when the emperor issues a decree, everyone must bow down, and receive it without question. If the earthly kings and governments hold such authority, how much more the King of kings and Lord of lords!



Today, there are preachers who claim authority for themselves. The Roman Catholic pope, for instance, claims personal infallibility and authority as Peter’s successor. Many a charismatic preacher claims for himself absolute authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah prophesied of these false pastors and preachers, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD ... I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied” (Jeremiah 23:16, 21).

So what is the authority of the Scriptures? Let me quote the Westminster Confession of Faith: “The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.”

The Bible is Authoritative Because of What It Can Do

The Bible is authoritative because it is lively and it changes lives. The Bible is all that we need to live a successful and vibrant Christian life in this sin-cursed world. It can change our mind: it is “profitable for doctrine.” The age-old philosophic questions of where we come from, why we are here, and where we are going, are all found in the Scriptures. I know I do not come from the monkeys; I am a special, unique, beautiful creation of God. I am made in the image of God. I know the purpose of life. My purpose in life is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. I know who the one living and true God is. He is the God of the Bible who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ; who came to save me from my sins by being born of a virgin; lived a perfect, sinless life; died on the cross shedding His precious blood; was buried, and then rose from the dead on the third day. This is God’s good news to a bad news world. Romans 1:16 says, “For I am not

ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” The Gospel is the power of God. It is both destructive and constructive power. The Gospel has the power to destroy sin and to build up godliness.

The Bible is powerful not only to change our mind, but also our heart, our behaviour: it is profitable also “for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” When rebuking someone for sin and error, do not use your own words but the words of God. When protecting yourself from the evil darts of Satan, use the words of Scripture. Jesus when He was tempted by the devil quoted the Scriptures, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

Conclusion

As Christians, we are the happiest people on earth despite the gloom and doom that fill the world today. Why? It is because as Christians we have God’s Wisdom—the Word of God itself. From the Word of God, we know for sure where we come from, we know why we are here, and we know where we will be going. Life is not filled with uncertainties. In Christ, we have the victory over Satan, over sin, over the world. No matter what difficulty and hardship, we know our Saviour will carry us through.

The Bible is the most powerful book on earth. It is God’s saving Word to a dying world. Your life will change if you believe and study this book. Take the Bible seriously. Have confidence only in God’s authoritative Word. Know it and obey it, and your life will never be the same again.

Centrality of **PREACHING**

Ephrem Chiracho Ouchula

Why is preaching central in the life of the church? Here are the major reasons that demonstrate the centrality of preaching in the church of Jesus Christ.

Preaching the Word Leads Sinners to Salvation

The central mission of the church of Christ on earth is to preach the Gospel to all creatures that they may believe in Jesus and be saved from eternal damnation (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20). And preaching the Word is the ordinary means the Holy Spirit uses to convict sinners, produce faith in their hearts and give them spiritual birth, as it is written “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The Scripture says believing sinners are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23). As sinners come to the church and hear God’s Word being preached, they will be pricked in their hearts and be led to faith in Christ. Since the world could not know God by its wisdom, “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21). The Apostle Paul declared that he was not ashamed of preaching the Gospel of Christ, because “it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). Thus, to neglect preaching is to neglect the precious souls of men and forsake the highest duty Christ gave

to His church. Therefore, preaching must be central to all church activities.

Preaching is a Means to Achieve Church’s Spiritual Growth

Preaching of the Word is the divinely appointed means of grace that brings spiritual growth and maturity. The Holy Scripture says, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). As much as a baby needs milk to sustain his life, to develop healthy and good functioning body mechanisms and to grow in stature, the born-again Christian needs the pure milk of the Word to grow and have vibrant faith. Without a proper diet, it is impossible to see any growth in the life of a child; actually the lack of it ends in malnutrition and finally in death. This is the most graphic picture of the indispensability of preaching the unadulterated Gospel message to nurture God’s people in a life of righteousness and love of the Saviour. And this makes preaching central to church life and its ministry.

The Bible also exhorts us to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18a). But, how can we grow in grace (of prayer, obedience, worship, witnessing, service, etc.) and the knowledge of our Redeemer? These can only be attained through a diligent study of God’s Word as expounded by able and faithful ministers. That is why the early church was committed

steadfastly to the doctrine of the apostles, i.e., they gave priority to the preaching of the Word to nurture the new community of believers in Christ. Likewise, Peter exhorted church elders to “feed the flock of God” which was under their care (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-3).

The apostles of Christ refused to take up any responsibility that distracted them from this central duty of the Gospel ministry. They appointed other spiritual men to the logistic duties so that they may give themselves wholly and continually to prayer and to the preaching and teaching of the Word (Acts 6:1-7). Similarly, today, every minister of the Word must know that his primary duty is the preaching of the Word.

Preaching is a Means to Make Disciples of Christ in the Church

Christ commanded His church to make disciples of Him from all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). He charged us to nurture men and women who believe in His doctrines and imitate His life examples, that they may do His work on earth. But how can ministers of the Gospel achieve this spiritual task? Christ’s divine instruction to make disciples will be accomplished by “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever” He has revealed in His Word (Matthew 28:20). This makes preaching central to the life and ministry of the church of Christ. We see the same emphasis in the ministry of the apostles of Christ. For example, the Apostle Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, “I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,” and therefore, “I am pure from the blood of all men” because “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:20-27). Preaching was at the core of

the life and ministry of the early church (cf. Acts 6:1-7).

Preaching is a Means of Training and Equipping Godly Men in the Church

The Holy Scripture is God-breathed, and therefore, it is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17; cf. 2:2). The faithful preaching of the divinely inspired and preserved Word of God trains and equips believers to be mature, fitting servants of God in every good work. If we fail in preaching the Word, certainly, we will fail to produce godly and qualified men and women for the work of the ministry. Preaching provides believers with the impetus to walk in the path of righteousness, counsel for the disobedient to be repentant, and correction for the erring ones to walk in the way of the LORD. Preaching brings about the transformation of the mind and the heart (Psalm 143:10; Luke 24:25-27, 32-33).

Preaching Provides Spiritual Armour for Victory in Christian Warfare

The Holy Scripture exhorts us to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might by putting on the whole armour of God, so that we may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-17). One of the spiritual armours God provided us with is the truth, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (vv. 14, 17). To win the spiritual battle, believers need to be filled with the knowledge of the Word and be skilful in using it against the advances of the enemy. Thus the exhortation, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Colossians

3:16). This can be achieved through faithful preaching of the Word.

The knowledge of the Word enables the believer to discern truth from error so that he may not be carried away by the wind of false doctrines. The ministry of the Word furnishes believers with the knowledge of the cardinal doctrines of biblical Christianity that enables them to stand firm in their faith (Ephesians 4:11-15). Preaching provides the hearers with genuine gems of truth so that we can easily discern and expose error that is thrown to us from the enemy's camp (2 John 8-11).

Preaching Provides the Church with a Divine Yardstick for Morality

How can a believer walk worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How can he know what is right and what is wrong, what is righteous and what is sinful? Preaching the Word provides the believer with the divine standard to guide his decisions, conduct, relationships, thoughts, leisure and world view (Romans 12:1-2). The Word enables us to be wise and walk daily in the light of God's will (cf. Psalm 119:105). God's Word is the light that helps us to avoid every spiritual snare that causes us to stumble in our godly walk (Proverbs 2:1-22). The Psalmist asked, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" The answer is definitely clear: "by

taking heed thereto according to thy word." Therefore, he added, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:9, 11). Sound biblical preaching saturates our hearts with the Word of God.

That is why the Bible solemnly charges ministers of the Gospel to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). When we have the faithful preaching of the Word in our church, we have a sure knowledge of God's purpose for our lives, our families, our ministries and our church, and our society. Then, and only then, will we be able to walk worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be able to occupy and enjoy our station in life by God's providence and achieve what God has purposed for us to accomplish for His glory and for the good of mankind (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). May the gracious Lord help ministers of the Gospel to give themselves wholly to the preaching of the Word, faithfully and steadfastly, till He comes! (1 Timothy 4:13-16)



The Life of a PREACHER

Tan Kian Sing

“Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?” (Romans 2:21-23). The Apostle Paul was challenging the Jews if they were practising what they were preaching. They were like those scribes and Pharisees whom the Lord Jesus spoke of in Matthew 23:3, “For they say, and do not.” They could interpret the law almost correctly, but their lives did not correspond with their teaching. How could one

be an effective teacher and preacher unless his life is pure and fulfilling all righteousness?

Dear reader, if you are a called or ordained preacher whose solemn duty before God is to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, and warn and teach every man and in all wisdom that they may be presented perfect in Christ Jesus, how do you measure up in your own life as a preacher of righteousness?

A preacher ought to come often before the Lord Jesus Christ and cry like the Psalmist in Psalm 26:1-2, “Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.”

Do you measure up to Paul’s list of qualifications of an elder in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9? These requirements of a bishop are certainly also applicable to one who is called to be a preacher of God’s truth and righteousness. Note the focus is on moral and ethical behaviour, knowledge of Christian doctrine and skills, and family life. So let a preacher constantly examine, prove and know



himself as he reflects upon the following list of very stringent criteria for elders, and preachers as well, according to the Holy Scriptures:

- ☛ Must live a life which is above reproach, that is, to be blameless, and have a good reputation with non-believers, having nothing in his life for which he can be rebuked. This does not mean that he is sinless (1 Timothy 3:2, 7; Titus 1:6);
- ☛ Must be the husband of only one wife, a one-woman man and faithful to his spouse (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6);
- ☛ Must be temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, gentle, upright, holy, and well-disciplined, and one who loves what is good, not mixing himself with bad company (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8);
- ☛ Must be vigilant, spiritually stable, watchful and alert, and having a clear, biblical perspective of life (1 Timothy 3:2);
- ☛ Must be sober, that is, sober-minded or prudent, meaning to know his priorities and be wise and discreet in his ways (1 Timothy 3:2);
- ☛ Must not be given to drunkenness, or be violent, self-willed, quick-tempered, quarrelsome, but patient, not a pursuer of dishonest gain, or lover of money (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7);
- ☛ Must manage his own family well, see that his children, who are to be believers, obey him with proper respect and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient, keep his children and spouse under control with dignity, and be the head of the house leading the family to

follow and serve the Lord together (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6);

- ☛ Must be able to rule his own house so that he may thereby give a proof of his ability to take care of God's church and oversee God's work. The family of an elder ought to be a good example to all other families. An elder must have his children and spouse in subjection; and it is the duty of his children and spouse to submit to the instructions that are given them. A man who fails to exercise godly dominion in his family is unfit for public trust as a ruling official in the church (1 Timothy 3:5; Titus 1:7);
- ☛ Must not be a recent convert, not a newcomer in the faith, but be spiritually mature (1 Timothy 3:6);
- ☛ Must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught (Titus 1:9); and
- ☛ Must be able to teach and thereby to encourage others by sound doctrine, to refute those who oppose this teaching, and to preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9).

May the Lord help those who are preachers to ensure that their lives are consistent with their public instructions, for it is certain that a preacher is expected to set a good example of the righteous life that he upholds by his preaching. He ought to practise his own instructions so that he would not be guilty of both sin and shame. Let all preachers who preach and press upon others to observe the duties of Christianity be certain that they exemplify these teachings themselves.

Not Exposing Error: A SERIOUS ERROR IN PREACHING

Prabhudas Koshy

We have no shortage of “evangelical” pastors and preachers who preach biblical and helpful messages. But, in modern times, an erroneous trend is increasingly found among such preachers. The error is not that they outrightly teach false doctrines, but they do not preach truth explicitly so as to uncover the widespread sinful and worldly habits in their congregations or the apostasy and compromise in the modern Christian world.

A great number of preachers of our times prefers to leave the errors and evils among their flocks untouched in their preaching. Though they preach that repentance is a necessity, they will not rebuke immodesty, carnality and materialism in their congregations. They are only concerned about giving cosmetic beauty to their preaching. Their preaching seldom goes beyond surface; it hardly touches the raw nerve of the people’s conscience.

Why don’t Preachers Expose Error?

Popularity

Whenever a preacher stands up and preaches, he does so with the hope that his voice will be heard and that his message will be received in full by the congregants. Herein lies the danger. When people’s opinion becomes predominant in the mind of the preacher, he seeks to cater to their pleasure rather

than preach the will of God in its entirety, which is expected of him. The ultimate duty of every preacher is not to please the crowd but God. The preacher who is a man-pleaser is an entertainer, not a servant of the Lord, neither a faithful minister of His Word.

Another problem of a preacher who is preoccupied with the acceptance of the people is that he will be constantly under an irresistible pressure not to apply the truth of God’s Word in a way that would unsettle the “comfort” of the errant ones. A popularity-conscious preacher will be silent even when he is aware of the unrestrained sinful ways of his congregants. Such a man cherishes the comfortable relationship that he enjoys with the congregants rather than the holiness and glory of God. He feels more at ease with the abominable ways of the men and women of his



congregation than with the discomfort resulting from bold rebuke of their immodest, carnal and materialistic ways. So he develops a style of preaching which appears to be biblical but without full, appropriate and necessary application of God’s Word to the lives of his hearers.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is the mindset and principle of those who pursue fame and recognition.

It is the notion that meaning or worth is determined by practical consequences. Where pragmatism reigns, only visibly productive ideas and practices are pursued. All else, even biblical principles, are considered secondary. Pragmatism pushes aside holiness, faithfulness and the fear of God from their primacy in preaching and replaces them with bigger crowds, human appeasement, more money, more glamour, etc.

In so far as preachers and their preaching, ministry and life are concerned, the present pragmatism of modern Christianity is at odds with the Scripture. It is leading preachers away from being admonishers of sin and false doctrines to being their accommodators. The pragmatist's road to popularity is too often paved with deception and lined with vagueness. The sign posts on such a highway to acceptance are always indistinct. Pragmatic pastors are leading their flocks into puddles of sin and the devil's pastures. This has become an acceptable way of life for those on the way to the top of the ladder of success in the business of entertainment.

The world thinks little of using improper manoeuvres to gain its goals. A vast number of people has obviously determined that morality is no longer a needed asset in the social, political and spiritual fields. Immodesty and immoral lives are quietly overlooked.

Smooth-sounding professionalism of pastoral preaching largely turns a blind eye to apostasy and compromise. More and more preachers and churches are toning down and paring down their messages. Once in a while, this will be hinted at, but it will not be dealt with in a plain manner.

None of these should surprise us. The Spirit of God has already cautioned us in His Word:

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Personal Pleasure and Gain

To offend listeners means loss of income and influence. So, the pragmatic ideology of modern preachers has filled many church pulpits with “dumb dogs”, who refuse to bark and alert men of the spiritual calamities that encircle them. Pragmatism has produced a breed of “greedy dogs” who rather remain silent for their own gain, even at the expense of the souls placed under their guard.

This reality of modern preachers reminds us of Paul's words, “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

The Lord also spoke of such pastors in Isaiah 56, “His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to

morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant” (vv. 10-12).

As Isaiah said, one of the reasons for the silence of many pastors in the face of increasing sinfulness in their congregation is their own love for sinful pleasures, such as wine drinking, immorality and worldliness.

Exposing Error: Is It Worthwhile?

Exposing error is a very unpopular task. Objection is often raised even by some who are sound in the faith - regarding the exposure of error as being entirely negative and of no real edification. But from every Scriptural standpoint, it is most worthwhile. Proverbs 24:25 affirms, “But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.” A wise pastor will rebuke the sins of his congregation, and a wise congregation will gladly receive it with submission and obedience for its own blessing.

When a godly pastor or elder or a brother or a sister points out your errors, you ought to be thankful rather than resentful. Psalm 141:5 says, “Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.” You should not go against the loving act of the one who rebukes you. Neither should you smear his or her good intention with false accusations and with your own false self-exaltation. The Scripture says such angry responses belong to the scornful and the foolish ones. “Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee” (Proverbs 9:8).

God’s Word says, “Open rebuke is better than secret love” (Proverbs 27:5). And the next

verse reiterates, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” It is the duty of every loving pastor to rebuke and correct his flock, even if it causes some form of emotional hurt to the offender. If rebuke is necessitated by sin or a doctrinal error, then godly love demands the intense rebuke of it. Unfortunately, today, rebuke is a much neglected duty of love. (I do not advocate harsh treatment of an errant brother – cf. Galatians 6:1-2; though I fully agree that a church should take biblical disciplinary actions against unrepentant men and women in its congregation – cf. Matthew 18:15-20.)

At this juncture, I would like to bring to my readers’ attention the words of a famous godly preacher of yesteryear, A. H. Ironside (1876–1951), “Error is like leaven of which we read, ‘A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.’ Truth mixed with error is equivalent to all error, except that it is more innocent looking and, therefore, more dangerous. God hates such a mixture! Any error, or any truth-and-error mixture, calls for definite exposure and repudiation. To condone such is to be unfaithful to God and His Word and treacherous to imperiled souls for whom Christ died.”

I end this article with the advice of the Apostle Paul to all preachers, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2). He advised Titus concerning some malicious men, who infiltrated the church, “whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:11-13).

The Holy Spirit & **PREACHING**

Reggor B. Galarpe

The Holy Spirit's work in relation to preaching is one issue that is oftentimes misunderstood today. In the broad sense, the misunderstanding ranges from the total neglect to the extreme view of the Spirit's involvement in the preaching ministry.

On the one hand are preachers that undermine the work of the Holy Spirit. They believe that preaching is basically a human effort that can be effectively accomplished by diligent study and preparation coupled with eloquence and charisma in the actual delivery of the message. On the other hand are those who "overstretch" the Spirit's role in preaching. They believe that if they simply pray, the Holy Spirit will give them the text to preach a "spirit-filled" and "anointed" sermon. They are convinced that the Holy Spirit gives them "new revelations" every time they stand behind the pulpit. Others consider today's "tongue-speaking" and "prophesying" as the active work of the Holy Spirit.

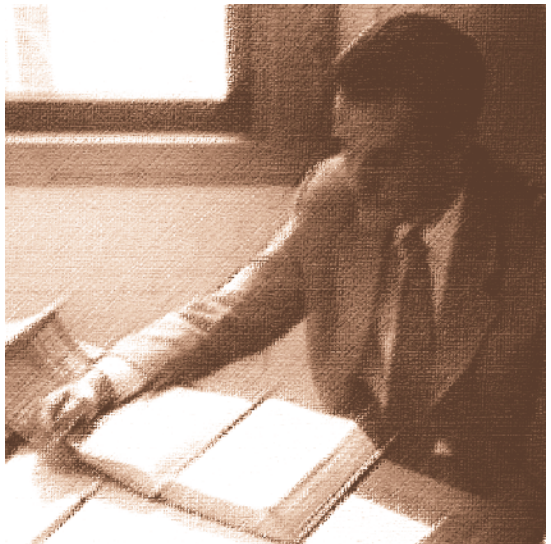
Considering all these, indeed, there is a lot of confusion on this issue. While the Holy Spirit plays an active role in the ministry of preaching, it is very important to have a clear biblical perspective about His role so that we may not end up in utter ignorance or in extreme excesses on the matter.

In this article, we shall briefly consider the Holy Spirit's work in relation to the preacher, his sermon preparation, and the actual proclamation or preaching of the Word.

The Holy Spirit's Work in the Life of the Preacher

This particular aspect of the Spirit's work is more of a partnership with the preacher. I say partnership, as it requires the preacher's sensitivity and wilful yielding to the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is manifested in the preacher's conscious "walking in the Spirit" and not fulfilling the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

To be effective in his ministry, the preacher must live a spirit-filled life; one that is set apart and separated from sin unto God. The preacher that is not totally yielded to the Spirit and dabbles with the work of the flesh will not be able to fully discern the Word. He would even be prone to make inaccurate interpretations and applications because his heart and mind



are not in harmony with the Spirit. Carnality and other sins hinder the preacher's ability to understand and progress in the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Unless the preacher lives his life under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, he will not be effective and will have no moral authority in his preaching. Worst of all, he could even become the greatest stumbling block behind the pulpit.

The Holy Spirit in the Preparation of the Message

The Holy Spirit makes Himself available to help the preacher in his sermon preparation (John 14:16, 26; 15:26). He guides the preacher into all truth. John 16:13 - "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." And He enables the preacher to understand the truth. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:12; "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

One important aspect of the Spirit's work is illumination. It is the Spirit's work on the heart and mind of believers that enables them not only to discern the truth but also to receive and apply it. In his sermon preparation, the preacher is aided by the Spirit in his study of a passage. Accompanied by prayers and diligent study of the text (and other relevant passages), utilizing the principles of interpretation, the preacher is on his way to a well-prepared sermon.

In the book "My Homiletic Swimming Pool", Rev. Timothy Tow wrote: "To prepare a sermon

one is all at sea until one has hit on a theme and an appropriate text...Without a theme, you will fumble around when you preach. You will reel to and fro like a drunken man. Did I hear you retort, "With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will open my mouth and preach". If you do that without serious preparation, He will fill your mouth with sand" (p. 21).

While we acknowledge the Spirit's role in sermon preparation, it is not to say that one can do away with the serious and diligent study of the Scriptures. It is through the efforts of reading, studying, meditation and prayers that the Holy Spirit works upon the preacher. Thus, he must take effort to engage himself in all necessary preparations. It is part of the preacher's responsibility to do so as steward of the Word.

The Holy Spirit in the Proclamation of the Word

From the sermon preparation, the Spirit's role continues in the actual proclamation of the Word. In addition to illumination, the Spirit empowers the preacher in the actual delivery of the sermon. It is the enabling work of the Spirit upon the preacher that allows him to preach with power, passion and conviction.

Many preachers today have undermined this work of the Spirit, in favour of so-called human factors like eloquence, diction, personal charisma, the ability to persuade, etc., thus ending up having a pragmatic and a low-view on preaching. All these so-called human factors (which are actually spiritual gifts) would not be effective without the Holy Spirit's enabling and empowering upon the preacher.

The Apostle Paul stressed this specific work of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel ministry when

he wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:4, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." And in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."

Far from putting down the importance of the elements of effective speech, the preacher must carry on with preaching, relying not on human prowess but in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit! The appropriate use of illustrations, testimonies as well as clear and simple language enhances the sermon. Likewise, good delivery is important so that people will listen and understand what is said. Nevertheless, it is the Holy Spirit that makes preaching effectual. Quoting the answer to WSC Q. 89: "The Spirit of God maketh the

reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation." Without the work of the Holy Spirit, people may hear what the preacher says, and may even enjoy it; but they will never be convinced and be converted!

Conclusion

The Spirit's role in relation to preaching is one that is invaluable and indispensable. For the minister of the Word to be effective in preaching, he must acknowledge the Spirit's work in its fullness, for without an understanding of the work of the Spirit, the task of preaching is robbed of its power.

Praise and honour be to our Triune God for the Spirit's effectual work in the ministry of the Word!

Holy eloquence is a gift of the Holy Ghost.

Thomas Brooks



*No one is a true pastor
whom the Lord does not rule by His spirit.*

John Calvin



*It were better to speak six words in the power of the Holy Ghost
than to preach seventy years of sermons without the Spirit.*

C H Spurgeon



*Everytime the gospel is preached it is as if God Himself came
in person solemnly to summon us.*

John Calvin



How Best to Present YOUR SERMON

Timothy Tow

The best way of presenting your sermon is be yourself. You, like David, having been brought up on the sling. Use your sling to slay Goliath! David wearing Saul's armour would be totally bogged down.

After the John Sung Revival in Singapore, 1935, several zealous converts of his suddenly appeared like John Sung, dressed in a white Chinese gown. They almost would let their hair down, and they went about aping the great evangelist. They tried also to preach like John Sung. They only made themselves monkeys, to say the least. The lesson: Be Yourself.

Now, while it is my weekly custom to preach from an envelope's back of brief notes, it is also my exception to preach from a fully written sermon at International Conferences. Especially when the message is to be translated. In that case there is no fear of losing eye contact. Your translator or interpreter gives you enough spare seconds, so that reading your sermon is no different from preaching verbatim. A good interpreter is no "interrupter" but a great booster to the preacher.

In Korea where I went about preaching in 1960, I had a most wonderful interpreter who not only translated, but preached it with double energy. In that campaign, we brought several hundred hands in surrender to the Lord.

Preaching is a high mystery. You have to be like a boy scout prepared for any situation. According to a Chinese proverb, you must adapt yourself to changing circumstances. Sometimes you have to abandon a prepared sermon for an

impromptu one to meet with an unexpected turn of events. I had an experience of being called upon to preach when I had served barely a year at our mother church at Prinsep Street. The invited preacher phoned up 20 minutes before time to say he could not come. I had to do it whether I liked it or not. "God is a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

To be an instantaneous speaker, one must have the love to preach. And that was Spurgeon. When he was still a boy after he found salvation, he immediately felt the call to preach. His first preaching experiences took him to some thirteen villages. His joy was deep and abiding, as he walked out to these preaching points. He usually sang. He said of himself: "How many times I enjoyed preaching the Gospel in a farmer's kitchen, or in a cottage, or in a barn! Perhaps many people came to hear me because I was only a boy. In my young days, I fear that I said many odd things, and made many blunders, but my audience was not hypercritical, and no newspaper writers dogged my heels; so I had a happy training school, in which, by continual practice, I attained such a degree of ready speech as I now possess."

In order to be ever ready to speak, we must be in constant touch with the Lord. That is the hidden power of homiletics. We should be ready to preach at even the shortest notice, for are we not the proclaimers of the Good News? A graduate student of mine who returned with a degree from America said, "You must give me two weeks' notice, at least, before I can accept your invitation." How does it sound to you?

a special invitation for children



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starting on
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every saturday,
4pm-6pm

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Transport can be arranged.

for children aged 4 to 12

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Games
Crafts
Singing

Jesus said,
"Suffer the
little children
to come unto me"

Mark 10:14



For more details,
please contact
Bro. Kelvin Lim at 82682828 or
our church office at 67411910.

Be a Child of God

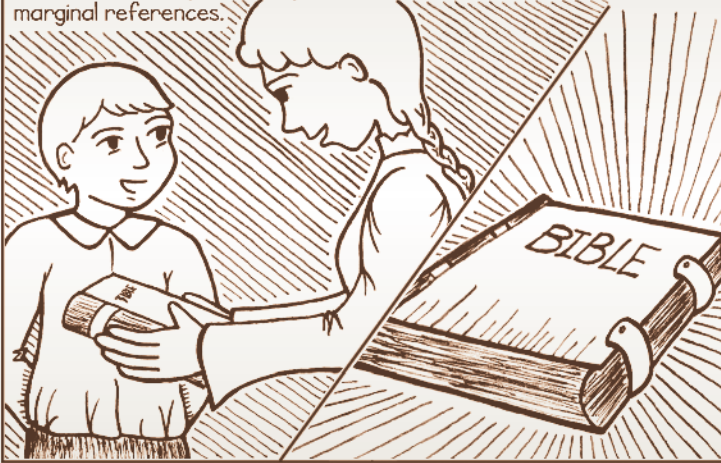
The following story is Jonathan GoForth's own narration of his childhood experience.

Bibliography: "GoForth of China" by Rosalind GoForth. The stories are retold by Rev. Dr. Prabhudas Koshy. Illustrations are done by Sis. Sharon Ng.

"One thing I look back to, as a great blessing in my later life, was mother's habit of getting me to read the Psalms to her. I was only five."



"From those earliest years, I wanted to be a Christian. When I was seven years of age, a lady gave me a fine Bible with brass clasps and marginal references."



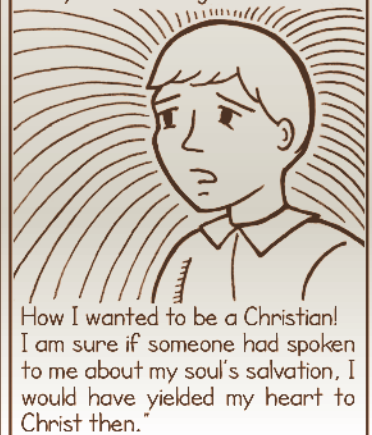
This was another impetus to search the Scriptures.



One Sunday, at ten years old, I was attending church with my mother. It was Communion Sunday, and while she was partaking of the Lord's Supper, I sat alone on one of the side seats.



Suddenly, it came upon me with great force that if God called me away I would not go to heaven.



How I wanted to be a Christian! I am sure if someone had spoken to me about my soul's salvation, I would have yielded my heart to Christ then."

Dear child, if you, like young Jonathan, hope to become a child of God, please do not hesitate to approach your Christian parents, or relatives or a teacher in your church and tell him/her about your desire to be a child of God. Ask them to help you.



If no one is around to help, then follow this advice because if you really want to go to heaven, your sins ought to be forgiven. Jesus died to save you from sin and judgment in hell. So trust Him as your Saviour and Lord.

Please pray like this,



"Gracious God, I am a sinner. Please have mercy on me. I am thankful for Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who died to take away my sins and judgment. I trust the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord. Please forgive me and make me your child.

Thank you for the promise that you will forgive ours sins when we confess them to you. I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen."

Dear child, if you have sincerely prayed, believing on Jesus Christ, you are now saved. So thank God for making you a child of God. Heaven is yours now and for ever.



Don't forget to tell others that you have trusted in Christ and that the Lord has saved you.

Answers to Vol. 7, Issue 1 -

Bible Trivia - Genesis 25 & 26

Pg. 23 -

	Wrong Word	Correct Answer
1	fourscore	threescore
2	sister	brother
3	Joseph	Jacob
4	drought	famine
5	Edom	Egypt
6	Noah	Abraham
7	wife	sister
8	Egyptians	Philistines
9	thirty	hundred
10	rivers	wells
11	house	tent
12	three	two

*Election demands evangelism.
All of God's elect must be saved.
Not one of them may perish.
And the Gospel is the means by which
God bestows saving faith upon them.*

R B Kuiper



*The Gospel does not fall from the cloud like rain, by accident,
but is brought by the hands of men where God had sent it.*

John Calvin



BIBLE TRIVIA - GENESIS 27 & 28

Sarah Yong

READ THE RELEVANT CHAPTERS FROM YOUR BIBLE. LOCATE THE ANSWERS AND FILL IN THE BLANKS. THEN USE THE BOXED LETTERS TO UNCOVER THE SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR EASTER.

1. When Isaac was old, he called _ _ □ _ to prepare some savoury meat for him, that he might eat and bless him.
2. Rebekah overheard this conversation and □ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Jacob to bring her two good kids from the flock that she also might prepare the dish.
3. Then, she took the goodly _ _ _ _ □ _ _ of Esau to put on Jacob.
4. She also put the skins of the goats on his □ _ _ _ _ and neck.
5. Jacob went unto his father and lied that he was the _ □ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .
6. Isaac felt the skin and smelled the raiment, and knew not that it was _ _ _ □ _ .
7. He blessed Jacob and told him that he would be _ _ □ _ over his brethren.
8. When Esau returned with his dish of □ _ _ _ _ _ _ meat, he discovered that Jacob had taken away his blessing.
9. He pleaded for a blessing, and his father said that he would live by the _ _ _ □ _ and he would serve his brother.
10. Esau hated his brother and threatened to □ _ _ _ him after their father's death.
11. Rebekah sent Jacob away to _ _ _ □ _ to stay with his uncle, Laban.
12. Isaac charged Jacob not to marry the daughters of Canaan, but to take a wife from the house of _ _ □ _ _ _ _ .
13. He blessed Jacob with the blessing of □ _ _ _ _ _ _ , for the Lord had promised to multiply his seed and he shall inherit the land.
14. Meanwhile, Esau took to wife a daughter of _ _ □ _ _ _ _ .
15. Later, □ _ _ _ _ had a dream about a ladder that reached heaven, with angels of God ascending and descending on it.
16. The LORD spoke from heaven, assuring Jacob that He would be with him and _ _ □ _ him, and bring him back into the promised land.
17. He set up a pillar and called the place Bethel, which was formerly called _ □ _ .
18. He vowed to return to the Lord a _ _ _ _ □ of all that the Lord would give him.

Hint: The numbers below the blanks match the question numbers above.

_ _ L L _ L _ _ _ _ ,	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	_ _ _ _ _ _ !
4 13 3 17 15 1 14	2 18 9 5 8 12	11 7 6 10 16

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*For the Word of God,
and
For the Testimony of Jesus Christ*
Revelation 1:9

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- TO FOSTER FELLOWSHIP AMONG LIKE-MINDED MINISTERS OF THE WORD
- TO EDIFY AND UNITE THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD
- TO ENCOURAGE THE MISSION CHURCHES AND THEIR BELIEVERS

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