

1. Preamble

a. Talk about membership class...

**b. New mission statement and information graphic**

i. "GCF exists to glorify God through gospel centered worship, evangelism, discipleship, and community."

c. This morning is worship part 2... preaching.

i. Gospel centered worship includes at least two things...

1. Worship through singing (last week)

2. Worship through preaching (this week)

2. Prayer for illumination.

a. Join me in prayer...

3. Introduction...

a. Let's face it... preaching has never been popular

i. In 1857, Novelist Anthony Trollope wrote, "There is, perhaps, no greater hardship at present inflicted on mankind in civilized and free countries, than the necessity of listening to sermons"; later he describes the "preaching clergymen" as "the bore of the age." (Anthony Trollope, Barchester Towers, 52ff)

ii. Webster's Third International Dictionary defines preaching as "exhorting in an officious and tiresome manner." (Larsen, 12)

iii. Even Madonna weighs in on preaching...

1. "Papa don't preach, I'm in trouble deep

2. Papa don't preach, I've been losing sleep

3. But I made up my mind, I'm keeping my baby,

4. Oh, I'm gonna keep my baby, mmm...."

iv. When we don't like someone's tone we say, "stop preaching at me."

b. If preaching is so unpopular, why do pastors keep preaching?

i. This brings us to this morning's text, which teaches us that...

**ii. *Gospel centered preaching is one of the primary ways we mature in Christ.***

iii. Let me say that again...

c. To help us understand this we will look at four aspects of gospel centered preaching...

*i. The source of gospel centered preaching.*

*ii. The subject of gospel centered preaching.*

*iii. The purpose of gospel centered preaching.*

*iv. The strength of gospel centered preaching.*

## 1. The source of gospel centered preaching!

a. What is the source of gospel centered preaching? The word of God.

b. **Colossians 1:25 (ESV) —25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,**

### i. Exposition

1. According to verse 25 the goal of Paul's ministry was to make the word of God fully known.
2. His goal is not to make his opinions fully known but the word of God fully known.
3. Notice that Paul calls the Bible the word of God.
  - a. The Bible does not contain the word of God, the Bible is the word of God.
  - b. This is the result of verbal and plenary inspiration.
  - c. This means that when the Bible speaks God speaks.
  - d. Without this conviction, preaching is a waste of time.
  - e. This conviction gives the preacher divine authority.
  - f. This also means that to disobey the preacher, when he is rightly interpreting and applying the Bible, is to disobey God. Right interpretation is the key!
  - g. Preachers don't have authority because of their character, age, title, education, or the volume of their voice.
  - h. Preachers have authority because they are proclaiming the very words of God.
  - i. This means that true preaching forces people to take sides. Are you with or against Jesus!!!
4. **The NBD says,**
  - a. **"Preaching is not the relaxed recital of morally neutral truths: it is God himself breaking in and confronting man with a demand for decision."** (NBD, 950)

### ii. Illustration

1. A preacher does not invite people to respond to the word of God, he summons them to respond to the word of God. There is a difference.
2. I have served on jury duty twice (tell story).
3. Being invited to a party (is an invitation)
4. Being invited to serve on jury duty (is a summons)

### c. Application

- i. These convictions about the source of gospel centered preaching lead us to a few conclusions...
- ii. The word of God must be interpreted accurately (this is hard work).
- iii. The best way to expose people to the meaning of scripture is through expository preaching and consecutive exposition (define and defend)

iv. There are several benefits to these convictions.

1. In expository preaching, the topic, main points, and sub points all come from one text, this ensures that the text, not the preacher, sets the agenda.
2. Consecutive exposition does not let the preacher skip difficult topics. (preaching on sex from 1 Cor. when my neighbors came)
3. Consecutive Exposition does not let a preacher sit on his hobby horse.
4. Consecutive Exposition provides a wealth of material
  - a. You will never run out of material for preaching
5. Consecutive Exposition ensures the highest level of biblical knowledge for the congregation
6. Consecutive Exposition teaches people how to read and study the Bible on their own.
7. We try to vary the genres...

d. *I understand that preachers must preach the Bible, but what should they say??? This brings us to the next point...*

e. *First, the source of gospel centered preaching...*

## 2. The subject of gospel centered preaching.

a. *What is the subject of gospel centered preaching? Jesus Christ.*

b. **Colossians 1:27–28 (ESV) — 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.**

c. Exposition

- i. In the first part of verse 28 Paul writes, “Him we proclaim.” Who is Paul referring to? According to verse 27, he is referring to Jesus Christ.
- ii. Paul preached Christ from the OT. This is all that Paul had. The NT had not been written yet.
- iii. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the focal point of Paul’s preaching.
- iv. Did you notice the connection between verse 25 and verse 28? In verse 25 Paul says that he desires to make the word of God fully known.... How? Verse 28 tells us... “by proclaiming Christ.”
- v. Preachers make the word of God fully known if and only if they proclaim Christ from all of scripture.

d. Illustration

- i. The great Charles Spurgeon adopted Paul’s model of preaching Christ. When addressing a young preacher He wrote,

- ii. “Don’t you know, young man, that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London? . . . And so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures that is Christ. And my dear brother, your business is when you get to a text, to say, ‘Now what is the road to Christ?’ and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And I have never yet found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one; I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master.” —Charles Spurgeon
- iii. Dr. Chapel’s illustration from the morning radio broadcast. . . .
- e. Application:
  - i. Paul’s sermons were very gospel centered. . . .
  - ii. We want our sermons to be very gospel centered. . . .
  - iii. What about other topics? Yes, Paul addressed other topics, but always in the context of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
    - 1. Are you struggling with Anxiety?
    - 2. Are you struggling with Anger?
    - 3. Does your life seem meaningless?
    - 4. Are you struggling with loneliness?
    - 5. Are you struggling to get a handle on your money?
    - 6. Do you want a better marriage?
    - 7. The implications of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the answers to all of these problems.
  - iv. Jesus Christ is my only hope and your only hope. Therefore, he must be the subject of all biblical preaching.
  - v. A Biblical sermon that fails to refer to Jesus Christ is not a Christian sermon.
  - vi. It had a preaching professor who used to say, “if your sermon would be acceptable to a Muslim or a Jew you have failed to preach a Christian sermon.”
  - vii. What is the purpose of preaching Christ? This brings us to the next point. . . .
- f. *The source of gospel centered preaching.*
- g. *The subject of gospel centered preaching.*

### 3. The purpose of gospel centered preaching!

- a. *What is the purpose of gospel centered preaching? Ultimately it is the glory of God.*
- b. *But how is God glorified in us? He is glorified in us as we mature in Christ, which happens through preaching. . . .*
- c. **Colossians 1:28 (ESV) — 28** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

**d. Exposition:**

- i. Notice that...
  - ii. Paul did not preach to transmit information.
  - iii. Paul did not preach to entertain or make people laugh.
  - iv. Paul did not preach for church growth.
  - v. Paul did not preach to boost his self esteem
  - vi. Paul did not preach primarily for conversions.
  - vii. Paul preached to present everyone mature in Christ.
- viii. In other words, he preached to help the saints grow in Christlikeness.

**e. Preaching as worship:**

- i. How do we grow in Christ likeness? We grow in Christlikeness as we worship Christ.
- ii. You can take this next thing I say to the bank... we become like the thing we worship....
  1. Do you remember that kid who grew up worshipping Michael Jordan? I think every high school in America in the 90s had a few kids that meet this description.
    - a. He wore the shoes...
    - b. Wore the gear...
    - c. Stuck his tongue out when he played b-ball...
    - d. He even stuck to Jordan's diet and work out routine.
    - e. How does this happen? he was becoming like the person he worshipped.
- iii. We too become like the things we worship.
- iv. Said another way, we become like the things we love!
- v. A sermon is meant to help us worship Christ. When this happens, we are transformed into his image on the spot.
  1. Keller, "A sermon that just informs the mind can give people things to do after they go home, but a sermon that moves the heart from loving career or acclaim or one's own independence to loving God and his son Changes listeners on the spot." (Keller, preaching, 165)
- vi. Paul describes this dynamic in 2 Cor.
- vii. **2 Corinthians 4:3–6 (ESV)** — **3** And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. **4** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **5** For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- viii. One of the greatest preachers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, wrote,

1. “The first and primary object of preaching... is to produce an impression. It is the impression at the time that matters, even more than what you can remember subsequently.” (quoted by Keller, CT, 77)
- ix. Many of us have an intellectual grasp of the gospel, but it is not real to us. Preaching is designed to make the glory of the gospel real to us, which leads to worship, which leads to maturity in Christ.
1. Edwards and honey... you can know it is sweet intellectually, but you don’t really know honey until you have tasted it!!!
- x. Again, Lloyd Jones writes,
1. “The goal of a lecture is that people leave with information; the goal of a motivational speech is that they leave with action steps; the goal of a sermon is that people leave worshipping. Gospel preaching will always have Christ-exalting worship as its aim.” (J.D Greear quoting D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Above All)
- xi. Tim Keller writes,
1. “Edwards defined a nominal Christian as one who finds Christ useful, while a true Christian is one who finds Christ beautiful for who he is in himself.” (Keller, Preaching, 162)
  2. Do you find him useful or beautiful???
  3. The job of the preacher is to make Christ beautiful, from all of scripture!!!
  4. This is why John Piper calls preaching, “expository exaltation.”
- xii. Illustration:
1. Describe the Louie Giglio sermon from Isa. 6 in 2003 surrounded by 3-4000 college students.
  2. The goal of preaching is to help people experience the truth, not just know the truth. When this happens preaching becomes worship, which leads to maturity in Christ.
- xiii. Application:
1. Saying all this makes me feel woefully inadequate as a preacher.
  2. I agree with Martyn Lloyd Jones when he said, “I’m not sure I have ever really preached a sermon in my life!!!”
  3. Hopefully, you see what I’m up against every week. Humanly speaking it is an impossible task.
  4. *This brings us to the last point...*

- f. *The source of gospel centered preaching.*
- g. *The subject of gospel centered preaching.*

*h. The purpose of gospel centered preaching.*

#### 4. The strength for gospel centered preaching.

*a. What was Paul's preaching strength? God's mighty energy!*

**b. Colossians 1:28–29 (ESV) — 28** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **29** For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

**c. 1 Corinthians 2:4 (ESV) — 4** and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

- i. Paul's power for preaching is not found in his skills of rhetoric, his preparation, or his dynamic personality. His only power to affect the hearts of his hearers was found in the HS.
- ii. Amazingly God's spirit works by and with the word to bring dead souls to life. Amazing...

**d. Application-**

- i. Prayer for the preacher (this is huge)
- ii. I'm not up for the task!!!
- iii. No human being is... Sadly...

1. **Fabarez:** "In an average church, fewer than half of the worshipers pray for their encounter with the sermon. Less than a third pray for their pastor or his preparation. Even when the passage is clearly announced the previous week, only one in five people will take the time to read it before they come to church. Most people wake up less than two hours before the service begins, and half don't eat anything for breakfast."

2. **This convicts all of us!!!**

3. I need you to pray for me.

4. Old Dutch proverb, the preacher said, "you pray me full, and I will preach you full"

iv. Also... Pray for a revival of biblical preaching...

1. All the great revivals in the history of Christianity have been the result of spirit empowered preaching.

2. The reformation was caused by the faithful preaching of God's word.

- a. John Calvin
- b. John Knox
- c. Thomas Cranmer
- d. Martin Luther

i. "I simply taught, preached, wrote God's Word: otherwise I did nothing. And when, while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a Prince or Emperor inflicted such damage upon it. I did nothing. The Word did it all."

3. The first great awakening

- a. Whitfield
- b. Edwards
- c. Wesley

4. Spurgeon (prayer in his church basement)

- v. A revival of Christ exalting, spirit empowered, expository preaching, is the only hope for this nation.
- vi. It is your only hope!
- vii. It is my only hope!

e. **Illustration-**

- i. What do the following activities have in common?
- ii. Holding one's breath under water for twenty minutes.
- iii. Running non-stop to North Carolina.
- iv. Eating 300 hot dogs in one sitting.
- v. Jumping from the ground to a six-story window...
- vi. Changing someone's heart through a sermon.
- vii. They are all impossible without God's help.
- viii. Therefore, we must pray for God's help.
  
- ix. Would you consider joining us at 8:30am on Sunday mornings to pray for the preaching of God's word?

5. Conclusion...

- a. Preaching is not very popular!
  
- b. It was not popular with me when I was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - i. I drew bikes
  - ii. I drew bike ramps and half pipes
  - iii. I drew pictures of guns
  - iv. I acted like I was sick...
  - v. The last thing I wanted to do was sit through a sermon.
  - vi. Maybe you feel the same way this morning.
  
- c. Hopefully, this sermon has convinced you that Christ exalting, spirit empowered, expository preaching is really important. It is designed to lead to worship, which results in Christian maturity.
  
- d. Mission statement....
  
- e. let's pray...