

“The Preacher’s Portrait”

word studies on the ministry of preaching by John R.W. Stott

1. **Steward** – The Preacher’s Message and Authority
2. **Herald** – The Preacher’s Proclamation and Appeal
3. **Witness** – The Preacher’s Experience and Humility
4. **Father** – The Preacher’s Love and Gentleness
5. **Servant** – The Preacher’s Power and Motive

1. Steward – The Preacher’s Message and Authority

A. Preacher is NOT a Prophet – message is not Direct and Original Revelation from God

1. Sometimes we use the descriptive word ‘prophetic’ to describe a preacher’s unique insights or bold declaration. But this God-given ability is not the same as the office of the Prophet.

2. OT Prophets were the direct ‘mouth-piece’ of God.

God’s message to Moses about the work of his brother Aaron: “You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him.”

Exodus 4.15,16

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.”

Exodus 7.1

Description of Prophet like Moses who will come: “I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.”

Deuteronomy 18.18,19

“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.”

Amos 3.7

“For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Isaiah 1.20

“For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Peter 1.21

Last OT Prophet: “the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert” Luke 3.2

NT Prophets served while the Scriptures were being formulated:

“a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea... he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, `In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'”

Acts 21.10-11

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy... everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort... he who prophesies edifies the church... He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.” 1 Corinthians 14.1-5

3. No original revelation is given today to the Christian preacher; instead he speaks the Word given once for all in Scripture.

“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.” 1 Peter 4.11

“they have been entrusted with the very words of God” Romans 3.2

4. He preaches in the power of the Spirit, not under direct inspiration of the Spirit.

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit” 1 Corinthians 12.7,8

B. The Preacher is NOT an Apostle – foundational messengers of the Church of Jesus Christ

“God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.” Ephesians 2.19,20

“mystery of Christ... now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets” Ephesians 3.4,5

1. Apostle – “sent one” special commission as fully authorized representative of sender

“Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” 1 Corinthians 9.1

“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.” 1 Thessalonians 2.13

2. Close parallel between OT Prophets and NT Apostles

“God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.” Ephesians 2.19,20

“Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.” 2 Peter 3.15,16

3. These offices are closed now that Scripture has been completed

“the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” Jude 3

“If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” Revelation 22.18,19

C. Preacher is NOT a False Prophet or False Apostle

1. Sign of a True Prophet

“they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people”
Jeremiah 23.22

2. Signs of False Prophet

“They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD... prophesy lies in my name...who prophesy the delusions of their own minds...every man's own word becomes his oracle and so you distort the words of the living God” Jeremiah 23.16,25,26,36

D. Preacher is NOT a ‘Babbler’

Athenian Philosophers asked of Paul: "What is this babbler trying to say?" Acts 17.18

Literal definition: “seed picker” – like scavenger bird picking up whatever they can find

The preacher can borrow from others when they credit their sources and when ideas support their own carefully thought out convictions and understanding.

Babbler: No mind of his own, thoughtlessly borrows others ideas; no discernment.

E. Steward – Trustee who Dispenses the Goods of Another

“So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”
1 Corinthians 4.1,2

1. OT Examples

“Joseph...said to the steward of his house” Genesis 43.16

“Ahishar--in charge of the palace” 1 Kings 4.6

“This is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: "Go, say to this steward, to Shebna, who is in charge of the palace”
Isaiah 22.15

“the officials in charge of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons”
1 Chronicles 28.1

2. NT Examples

“the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages”
Matthew 20.8

“an overseer is entrusted with God's work” Titus 1.7

“a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them”
Matthew 24.14-30

“he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ Luke 19.13

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”
1 Peter 4.10

F. The Preacher as Steward

1. Source of Incentive: Trust has been given, the Master depends on him.

“we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel” 1 Thessalonians 2.4

“Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.”
1 Corinthians 9.16,17

“I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.”
Romans 1.14,15

2. Content of our Message: Not our invented ideas, but God’s entrusted Word.

“the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me” 1 Timothy 1.11

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
1 Corinthians 3.11

“The seed is the word of God.” Luke 8.11

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you.”
Hebrews 13.7

“Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care.”
1 Timothy 6.20

“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you--guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”
2 Timothy 1.14

“we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God...setting forth the truth plainly”
2 Corinthians 4.2

“enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness”
Acts 4.29

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”
Deuteronomy 29.29

3. Application of our Message: God, the householder, determines what goes into His Storehouse (His Word). The Steward has the responsibility to take it out at the right time in the right amounts for the right people.

"Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?" Luke 12.42

"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction." 2 Timothy 4.2

"the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness" Colossians 1.25

"For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God." Acts 20.27

"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." 2 Timothy 3.16,17

4. Nature of the Preacher's Authority: "The Bible Says..."

- Not a Prophet who says "thus says the Lord"
- Not an Apostle who speaks directly for God
- Not the Son of God who says, "I say unto you"

"everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me...those who fear the commands of our God" Ezra 9.4, 10.3

The LORD: "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word." Isaiah 66.2

"If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother." 2 Thessalonians 3.14,15

Authority is connected to Accuracy of careful handling of Scripture Text. The Household is fed by the food the householder supplies, not the steward who dispenses it. May our Listeners hear God's Voice through our voice.

5. The Preacher's Discipline: Stewards all the Master's vast resources; know His Word well.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2.15

Apostles: "we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." Acts 6.4

"For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel." Ezra 7.10

"Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this." 2 Timothy 2.7

"Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

Matthew 13.52

2. Herald – The Preacher’s Proclamation and Appeal

A. Differences between Steward and Herald

1. Steward feeds the Household; Herald proclaims a message to the World.

“Go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

Luke 9.60

2. Announcement of a Great Event in familiar and understandable words; Stewards of what God has Said; Heralds of what God has Done.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.” 1 John 1.1-5

3. Steward is responsible to serve; Herald’s listeners are responsible to respond.

“In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”

Acts 17.30

4. Both stewards and heralds mediate; steward stands between householder and the household, herald stands between King and subject people.

“His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.”

Ephesians 2.15-17

“You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”

Acts 10.36

B. OT Examples

Joseph in Egypt: He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, "Make way!"

Genesis 41.43

“At the king's command (Hezekiah), couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and from his officials, which read: "People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel”

2 Chronicles 30.6

So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"
Esther 6.11

"the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language"
Daniel 3.4

C. NT Examples

It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" -- "a voice of one calling in the desert, `Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.
Mark 1.2-5

"I was appointed a herald and an apostle--I am telling the truth, I am not lying--and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles"
1 Timothy 2.7

"And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher." 2 Timothy 1.11

D. The Christ we Herald

SAVIOR: "we preach Christ crucified" 1 Corinthians 1.23

LORD: "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord" 2 Corinthians 4.5

E. Proclamation: What God has Done For Us

15. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

18. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

19. that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

21. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5.15,18,19,21

- God does not count our sins against us
- God has made Christ to be sin for us
- Salvation is a gracious and finished work

F. Appeal: What God Demands From Us

19. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.
2 Corinthians 5.19,20

- We are God’s Ambassadors – we appeal to people
- God Himself makes His Appeal through Us

G. The Message we Herald – Proclamation and Appeal

1. An Appeal without Proclamation is Emotionalism

“We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”
2 Corinthians 4.2

2. The Gospel is Directed to the Intellect – People must understand the Truth before they are asked to Respond to it.

“Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.”
Acts 9.22

As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ, " he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas”
Acts 17.2-4

“he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day”
Acts 17.17

“Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.” Acts 18.4

“Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way.”
Acts 19.8,9

See also – Acts 18.19, 24.35, 9.29, 18.28, 19.26, 28.23,24, 14.3, 16.12,14, 18.11,18, 13.12, 17.19, 5.42, 28.31

3. When true understanding is given, life transformation follows.

“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”
Romans 6.17,18

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”
2 Corinthians 4.4-6

“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.”
1 Thessalonians 2.13

“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”
2 Thessalonians 2.13-15

“the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness”
Titus 1.1

4. We must follow our Proclamation with an Appeal – urging people to embrace the Message

Peter’s balanced example in preaching:

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

14. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

15. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

16. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

17. "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.

18. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

19. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

20. and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. Acts 3.13-20

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"
Mark 1.15

3. Witness – The Preacher’s Experience and Humility

Steward – Domestic metaphor – Householder entrusts Steward with care of his goods

Herald – Political metaphor – Public proclamation of Royal Decree

Witness – Legal metaphor – Giving defense of what we have seen and heard

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--*the task of testifying to the gospel* of God's grace.” Acts 20.24

A. We declare that we know Him by our Lives and our Message

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”
1 Timothy 4.16

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13.35

B. Jesus is on Trial

1. Before Jewish Critics in the First Century

“But Peter and John replied...For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”
Acts 4.19,20

“Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews”
Acts 26.1,2

2. Before the Unbelieving World Today

“the whole world is under the control of the evil one” 1 John 5.19

“Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.” 1 John 3.13

“The world and its desires pass away” 1 John 2.17

“On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”
Matthew 10.18-20

C. We Witness to Jesus – not to Sin or Self

“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.” Acts 2.32

“You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.”
Acts 3.15

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen”
Acts 10.38-41

“John, who testifies to everything he saw--that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
Revelation 1.1,2

D. Holy Spirit – Empowers our Witness of Jesus

"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”
John 15.26,27

“He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you” John 16.14

“And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.” 1 John 5.6

E. The Father – Ultimate Witness of Jesus

“And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me.” John 5.37

“My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.” John 8.54

"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." John 17.1

F. Scripture: How the Father witnesses to Jesus

1. Old Testament

“And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me... These are the Scriptures that testify about me”
John 5.37,39

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.”
1 Peter 1.10-12

2. New Testament

Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me." John 7.16

“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.”
John 12.49

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19.10

G. Through the Church

“One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”
Deuteronomy 19.15

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1.8

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that `every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church”
Matthew 18.15-17

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.”
Luke 10.1

H. Qualifications for a Witness

1. Personal Experience of Jesus Christ

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” 1 John 1.1-3

Risen Jesus to Saul:

“You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.” Acts 22.15

“Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.” Acts 26.16

“They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.” 1 Timothy 1.7

2. Humility – following the example of John the Baptist’s witness

“He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.” John 1.7,8

“John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" John 1.15

“Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ. " John 1.19,20

“He must become greater; I must become less.” John 3.30

“The Man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon. Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life. It takes 20 years to make a sermon, because it takes 20 years to make a man.” E.M. Bounds

4. Father – The Preacher’s Love and Gentleness

Steward > House

Herald > Public Place in the City

Witness > Law Courts

Father > House > Loves and Cares for his Children

Preaching involves a personal relationship between the preacher and his people; before, during and after the preaching.

A. Be Careful of Spiritual Dependency > Not the AUTHORITY of Father

“And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.”
Matthew 23.9

Our dependency is to fully in God, not man > God alone is our Physical and Spiritual provider

“We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”
Colossians 1.28

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and *become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ”
Ephesians 4.11-15

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”
Ephesians 1.3

B. Affection of the Father

“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you”
Galatians 4.19

“I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.”
Philemon 10

“For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory”
1 Thessalonians 2.11,12

C. Discipline of the Father

“I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.”
1 Corinthians 4.14,15

“And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!” Hebrews 12.5-9

D. Understanding of the Father

Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart." Acts 1.24

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Ephesians 6.4

"He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man." John 2.25

E. Gentleness of the Father

"What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?" 1 Corinthians 4.21

"By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you" 2 Corinthians 10.1

"we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2.7,8

"And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth" 2 Timothy 2.24,25

F. Simplicity of the Father

The good preacher tries to make "hard things easy."

"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power." 1 Corinthians 2.1-5

G. Earnestness of the Father

"So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears." Acts 20.31

"Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness." Romans 11.22

H. Example of the Father

"in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me." 1 Corinthians 4.16,17

“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” 1 Peter 5.2,3

I. Prayer of the Father

“God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight”
Philippians 1.8,9

“Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.”
Romans 10.1

5. Servant – The Preacher’s Power and Motive

A. Greek words for ‘Servant.’

1. ‘oiketes’ – domestic, household servant, steward

"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." Luke 16.13

“Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants”
Acts 10.7

“Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls.”
Romans 14.4

2. ‘doulos’ – bond slave, no legal rights, personal possession of their master

“For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.” 1 Corinthians 7.22

“Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.”
1 Peter 2.16

3. ‘huperetes’ – subordinate, one who rows in lower galley of warship

“men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God”
1 Corinthians 4.1

4. ‘diakonos’ – one who carries out the commands of another, attendant, minister

His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." John 2.5

“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, *through whom* you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task.”
1 Corinthians 3.5

- Preacher is instrument of God, agent of His powerful message
- Paul wanted to stop the ‘personality cult’ in the Corinthian church.
- We go to church to ‘worship God’ not to ‘hear a man’ – for spiritual profit not just pleasure.
- Sermons are to be tools – to make us more like Christ – not work’s of art

B. We need God’s Power in our Preaching

1. In many places the church is stagnant, or even in serious decline; few conversions

“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”
Luke 24.49

2. We must humbly acknowledge our weakness and need of God

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.”
2 Corinthians 4.3-5

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”
Ephesians 2.1,2

C. Power in the Word of God

“For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased *through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*”
1 Corinthians 1.19-21

- Contrast between ‘to know’ and ‘to save’ – God will save, not intellectual enlightenment
- God brings saving knowledge by Himself, through revelation of His Word
- Salvation comes to those who believe, not to the wise and clever

"Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"
Jeremiah 23.29

D. Power in the Cross of Christ

“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For 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...* For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased *through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.* Jews demand

miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but *we preach Christ crucified*: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, *Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*” 1 Corinthians 1.17,18,21-24

- Jew: To the legalist the cross is a stumbling block, wounding their pride
- Gentile: To the intellectual it is a scandal, insulting their intelligence

“When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.” 1 Corinthians 2.1-3

- Saving power is not in the preacher
- God saves through a foolish message conveyed through weakness and trembling

E. Power through the Holy Spirit

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.” 1 Corinthians 2.4,5

- Paul did not trust his own intellect or eloquence
- Holy Spirit uses gospel preaching to drive word into people's hearts
- Our confidence in preaching is in the Holy Spirit

“The gospel is preached in the ears of all; it only comes with power to some. The power that is in the gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher; otherwise men would be converters of souls. Not does it lie in the preacher's learning; otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless there were mysterious power going with it – the Holy Ghost changing the will of man. O Sirs! We might as well preach to stone walls as preach to humanity unless the Holy Ghost be with the Word, to give it power to convert the soul.” Charles Spurgeon

Difference between preaching and propaganda –

- Propaganda is to suppress, distort, or embellish the truth; preaching is to faithfully proclaim the Word God has entrusted to us.
- Propaganda aims to please and win popularity; preaching is offensive to the proud, and a stumbling block to the intellectuals.
- Propaganda relies on psychological techniques, pressure, pathos, logic, and flattery; preaching is a plain message relying on invisible power of the Holy Spirit.

F. Holiness and Humility

1. We must strive to be Holy to become a useful vessel of the Master

“In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”
2 Timothy 2.20-22

“Remember you are God’s sword – His instrument – I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.”
Robert Murray M’Cheyne

2. We must strive to be Humble

- God’s power is revealed through human weakness and God’s wisdom through human folly.
- Since people cannot be saved by oratory, Paul preached in weakness and trembling.
- He was willing to be a ‘fool’ for Christ’s sake, not trusting in his massive intellect
- God honors the preaching of a man willing to be a weakling and a fool
- Paul’s ultimate goal in preaching was the Glory of God

“God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."
1 Corinthians 1.27-31

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