

(Sermon Preparation) Lecture 02

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath emphasizes the importance of individuality and personal connection to truth in effective preaching and ministry.

Duration: 26:28

Scripture: Psalm 37:23, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, John 8:32, Ephesians 4:15, 2 Timothy 2:15, James 1:22

Topics: "Sermon Preparation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of embracing one's own individuality when preaching and proclaiming the gospel. He highlights that the New Testament writers had different styles, and therefore, each preacher should be themselves and not try to copy others. The speaker emphasizes that the gospel is communicated through individuals, and it is important to avoid becoming carbon copies of others. He warns against the tendency to repress one's personality and urges listeners to avoid copying others, as it is the worst form of flattery.

Transcript

We praise you, dear Lord, for this lovely day we've had. We thank you for the fellowship we've enjoyed with each other and with yourself. We thank you, indeed, for our wonderful Saviour.

We praise you. He knows the way that each one of us should take, and we trust that you can take our obedience for granted as we seek to follow you. Now help us as we turn to you tonight, and may we just know that you're with us right here.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. We thought this morning a little bit about the elements of ministry, of teaching, witnessing, preaching.

Just let's remember that I'm using any of those words to mean the same, really. I've got it down in my notes as the elements of preaching, but that would mean testimony, any word you like to use in that connection. And we've defined the elements of preaching, you should have this down in your notes, as communication of truth through people to people, through men to men, men or women.

If you have any questions about the preaching of ladies, well, you can have a little word with me about that. By the way, next week, I have no lecture time, but so many people have been asking questions about one thing or another, and I just haven't time to cope. So, we're arranging an evening at our house, after

lectures, one evening next week, I'll put it on the board, when we can take 21 of you, immediately after lectures, have some supper together, and then you can fire questions at me.

So, those of you who are accumulating questions, just hold them till then, if you will. Anybody who wants to have a word with us personally about some matter, just you tell us, tell my wife or myself, and we'll be glad to arrange that. But, 21 people who want to ask some questions, not necessarily deep theological ones, but some questions that remain unanswered in your mind, do feel free to put your name on the list, which will be put on the board tomorrow.

I think it will be for next Wednesday evening. Is there any evening next week, which is your last week here, which is absolutely impossible? Would Wednesday be okay, as far as you know? Sounds good. Right.

All right. Now, in this testimony ministry, two elements involved, you've got them, truth and personality. Truth and personality.

Communicating truths through men to men. Truth and personality involved. And we thought about the first of these this morning.

And we thought two things about it, especially the danger of criticism, and the danger of mechanism. Therefore, how tremendously important is this second element. Actually, I shall give tonight and tomorrow morning to this, I think.

Then we'll go into the matter of preparation of messages and so on. But, I have, oh my, five headings in my notes. I'll never get through.

Yes, you will, I think. First one, some principles of personality. And this sounds rather a clumsy sentence, but then I couldn't make any less clumsy.

Perhaps you can. The principle of personality in communicating truth involves the individuality of every witness. Repeat.

The principle of personality involves the individuality of every preacher or every witness. Individuality, you understand that? I'll explain it in a moment. The fact that the gospel is not written in the sky, or committed impersonally, means that, this is it, you see, every one of us will proclaim the truth in our own way.

Individuals. Individually. Every one of us will be different.

God doesn't want carbon copies. Repeat that. The fact that the gospel isn't written in the sky or committed impersonally means that every preacher or every witness will utter the truth in his own way.

Truth, therefore, comes not only through man, but through men. Using that word in its generic sense, that is, men and women. Through individuals.

To make everybody alike would mean that nobody would do any thinking. To make everybody alike would mean nobody would do any thinking. And the fact that this task of witness to Jesus is such a solemn one, perhaps that's not the best word, a sacred one, so immense, really, has a tendency to repress personality.

Repress being different. We mustn't let our personality intrude, we say. So, we begin to copy other people.

Copying people is the worst form of flattery. Copy people who have been the most successful. Remember, the God who sent us to preach and proclaim the gospel sent us to do so in the individual humanity of each one of us.

I'll repeat that. God who sent us to preach or testify sent us to do so distinctively in the humanity of each of us. You see that in the New Testament writers.

All of them have different style. Therefore, be yourself and don't cultivate other people's oddities. Don't try and copy somebody else.

I won't go any further into that when I could copy one or two others whom I've heard very often and you would recognize them and you'd be amazed at how many students go out doing exactly the same thing and how many people who come to a Capony platform do exactly the same thing, copying other people. I'll leave it at that. Use your imagination.

It's awfully easy to be a John the Baptist as far as camel's hair and look is still concerned but to have the fire burning in your heart that's something else. So, be yourself and develop your own style of ministry. Now this will quite shake you.

The preacher or the person in full-time service so-called, I don't like that phrase but you know what I mean. The person in full-time service is in constant familiarity with thoughts and words which are rare to other people and contrasting on the one hand a pastor or a missionary or a full-time Christian worker with a businessman who's a Christian and the preacher is in constant touch with words which are familiar and to which the other person they're rare. And to that other person, that businessman they preserve their sacredness because they are rare.

And someone who comes to preach the gospel from the midst of a busy business life can often do so with a reality and a fire and an earnestness which a preacher has lost. You can so easily lose the word of God in the work of God. That's the point.

Let me repeat that. You can easily lose the word of God in the work of God. My top argument when the Lord called me into so-called full-time service my top argument in favour was much more time to pray and read my Bible.

I've still got that bit of paper but I've crossed that one out until it can't possibly be read because it's nonsense. Nonsense. You never have more time to read your Bible or to pray.

In fact, you think that in Christian work full-time you're substituting the necessity for all that. That's the danger. You can lose the word of God in the work of God.

Constant daily use of the word of God can make us less powerful to communicate it to others. It's rather like a pipeline through which water comes and collects sediment and dirt and lets water get through. And all of that leads to a sort of self-deception of our own experience.

For instance, if you urge people constantly to repent and you're always urging them to do it you may have absolutely failed to realise that you've never repented yourself. And no church rises to a higher spiritual level than the leadership. No church or organisation rises to a higher spiritual level than the leadership.

And it's amazing how you can hammer away at the need for repentance to other people and fail to have done it yourself. You can lose the word of God in the work of God. By merely repeating over and over again the need to repent you can think you've done it yourself.

And you find you haven't. That's a terrible moment when you make that discovery. You get so familiar with the theory that you find it hard to know you've never yourself repented.

You tell people that in every situation they must be so patient and you never notice how utterly impatient you are yourself. Romans 2, 21 to 24 I've referred to so I won't ask you to read it but I ask you to note it again in this connection. When I first came to Capenry before most of you were even thought of about 1947 you know we used to come to Borwick Station and there was a train that stopped there and we got out and a bus took us.

You know the porter at Borwick Station immediately the train stopped would shout out all the stations between here and Leeds where the train was going. Every one of them. But I found out he'd never been further than Canter himself than Borwick himself.

He'd never been to any of them. But he called out all the names he knew them all. Absolutely amazing.

Halifield and all the rest of them he knew them all. Chains of Sansa but he'd never been there. It's so easy to do that in the Christian life in preaching.

You know the theory you know the doctrine you know the way but you've never been there yourself. And therefore nobody else ever gets there either. Now of course the thought here is not in the truth.

The answer is not to be less familiar with it. But there's a relationship to truth which will help and not hinder. John 8.32 You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Listen. No, don't listen.

Get it down. Ready for it? The more you urge other people on to holiness the more intense must be your own longing for a holy life. Let me repeat.

The more you urge other people on to holiness the more intense must be your own longing for it in your own life. Familiarity does not breed contempt except in contemptible people. Familiarity does not breed contempt except in contemptible people.

The delight and the joy and the growing sacredness of life will come out of your own familiar way, your own ministry. You're absolutely lost as a witness or a preacher, absolutely lost if familiarity with the truth deadens your appetite for it. You're absolutely lost if familiarity with truth deadens your appetite for it instead of opening your personality to all of it.

It's one thing I'm speaking, trying to speak a dictation speech at this point. It's one thing to dwell with the work for the king. It's another thing to dwell with the king for the work.

Authority for that. First Chronicles, chapter 4, verse 23. Certain members of the tribe of Judah dwelt among ditches and hedges.

Nothing glamorous about that. And there they dwelt with the king for his work. You know what I mean? A statement? Yes.

Reverse gear. Just a minute. Can't remember it altogether now.

Wait a minute now. Yes. I'm very stupid.

It's one thing to dwell with the work for the king. It's another thing to dwell with the king for the work. Dwell with the work for the king.

Another thing to dwell with the king for the work. Got that? First Chronicles, chapter 4, verse 23. Members of the tribe of Judah lived in hedges and ditches.

And there they dwelt with the king for his work. If I dwell with the work for the king, I'm always living within the area of my own deficiency. I dwell with the work for the king.

I live within the area of my own deficiencies. If I dwell with the king for the work, I'm living with Jesus and his sufficiency. Yes.

If I dwell with the work for the king, I'm just living within the area of my own deficiency. If I live with the king for his work, I'm living with Jesus and his sufficiency. Scriptural authority for that, 2 Corinthians, chapter 3. 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 5, preceded by 2 Corinthians 2, verse 16.

Who is sufficient for these things? Says the close of that verse. 2 Corinthians 2, verse 15. We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved, among those who perish.

To one, a fragrance from death to death. To the other, a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? 2 Corinthians 3, verse 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us.

Our sufficiency is from God. God. We are living within the area of his sufficiency.

If we dwell with the work, with the king for the work, drawing upon his adequacy in every situation. Ourselves destitute. Revelation 3, verse 17.

Perfect example of a church which thought itself without any need at all. Rich, priest with goats and needed nothing. But in fact, naked, miserable, poor, blind.

Destitute. It's a great place for a Christian to be. Destitute.

It's the last place you want to be. I sat a bit ago. I think it was in a dentist's waiting room.

A miserable place to be. And I happened to notice a copy of Reader's Digest. And the leading article in it that month was headed on the front page, Ten Ways to Get Rid of Fear.

I thought, my, this is just the time for me to read that. So I picked it up and I read it through. The usual stuff that a psychiatrist or psychologist who isn't a Christian would say.

And it got to the bottom of the page and towards the end and he said, but have faith. And I missed my heart missed a beat. With excitement.

Have faith, that's it. And I turned to the page. Have faith in yourself.

You've gone through before, you'll get through again. Not destitute. When I'm absolutely destitute I'm living in the sufficiency of Jesus.

You I hope will prove that before long. Become destitute. Can I tell you about a man I met in Johannesburg? No, Pretoria.

Or it's the same thing. He just bought a terrific Rolls Royce car. Do you know what that is? Best car in the world, we say in England.

We think that. May be true or may not. But certainly the most expensive.

But this fellow bought this car and it was smashing. Absolutely tremendous. The smoothness and its speed and its acceleration.

Unbelievable. And he was so intrigued that he said well now he said I'm going to the agent and find out the horse power. Went to the agent, tell me what's the horse power of this vehicle? Oh sir I'm sorry, Rolls Royce never tell us.

Well he said, find out. Well I'll try but he said they never tell us. Well, the agent sent an overseas telegram by that evening mail to Derby in England.

Rolls Royce Silver Shadow 1980 model. Brake horse power so much from 0 to 100 miles an hour in so many seconds. Eight cylinders V8 engine.

Advised by a return cable precise horse power of vehicle. Had the reply in an hour. One word, adequate.

Typically British, typically snooty but what more do I want in life than adequacy? Jesus is adequate. I am inadequate. There's a difference.

Dwell with the king for the work. Adequate. Dell with the work for the king.

Inadequate. Make sure which one we're doing. Remember then the danger of being constantly

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