

Chosen Vessel - Teaching the Word

by Chuck Smith

The key to success in a church is solid, strong teaching and applying of the truths of God's word.

Duration: 16:57

Scripture: Acts 2:42

Topics: "Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of studying and understanding the Bible. He highlights the value of using biblical illustrations and commentary to open up the scriptures to the people. The speaker also shares his personal experiences of how he found the truth of the text applicable in his own life. He explains that expository teaching, which involves reading the scriptures and giving the sense and understanding of what it means, is what people are hungry for. The speaker concludes by stating that solid and faithful teaching of God's word is a common aspect in successful churches.

Transcript

...word of God distinctly, giving to the people the sense, and then causing them to understand. This of course is the hallmark of the Calvary chapels. The emphasis upon the word of God.

Reading the word of God distinctly, giving sense, causing the people to understand. In preparation for a service, I take the text that I'm going to be speaking from, and I read it in its context probably 25 to 30 times at least. Just reading, re-reading, meditating, reading, re-reading, meditating.

I will often then just sort of jot down thoughts and ideas that come to me as I am reading and re-reading the text in its context. And by the time I've read it 25 or 30 times, I've got it pretty well instilled in my mind. Then I begin to think of passages in the Bible that might illustrate the basic teaching or truth of that text.

I look for what is it seeking to say. What is the major thought? I study the words that are the key words of the text. And then I start thinking of biblical illustrations.

I have discovered that the finest commentary I have ever read on the Bible is the Bible itself. You can't beat it. It's a fantastic commentary on the Bible.

And then I try to think of something that may have happened in my own life, in my own walk with the Lord, where the truth of this text was made real to me. How I found it applicable in certain situations in my life. I seek then to give the sense of the text.

This is what it's saying. This is what it means. This is how you can apply it to your life, to your circumstances.

And this is how it happened in the Bible. This is the way it worked there. For instance, Steve was sharing with us this morning the fourth chapter of Romans where he talks about Abraham's faith.

One of those four points of the faith of Abraham was that he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief. Now as I came across that, and I was trying to prepare a lesson out of it, I thought, where in the Bible do we have illustrations of people who have actually staggered at the promises of God? Now I know that I have staggered at many of the promises of God. That one promise, I shall supply all of your needs, or the Lord will supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ.

Man, I've staggered at that one. And where in the Bible do we find examples of people staggering at the promises of God? And I got to thinking in the Old Testament at the time of Elisha the prophet, when the city of Samaria was under siege by the Syrians, and they had cut off all of the supplies. People were beginning to starve to death.

They were selling the jawbone of a donkey for 65 pieces of silver. Quarter of a cab of a dove's dung for 5 pieces of silver. They were really hurting.

When the ladies came to the king, and the one woman cried, King, help me, I want justice here. And he said, what's your problem? I don't have anything. He said, you want me to sweep the barn and see if I can find something? I don't have anything myself.

I'm hungry too. She said, no, this woman, my neighbor and I made a covenant yesterday that we would eat our babies. And so we boiled my baby and ate it.

And now she's hid her baby, make her produce it so we could eat it. And the king tore his clothes. And he said, God help me if I don't have the head of that prophet Elisha, as he sought to blame Elisha for the problems.

And so Elisha was sitting there in his house with his friends. And sort of a character. I like Elisha.

I admire him. I wish I had more of the sensitivity to the spirit as he does, or did. Because he was the kind of guy who'd be sitting there talking with you and then he'd go, hmm, wow.

Far out. I can't believe it. Unreal.

You know, what's going on? And the Lord be showing him something. He was so tuned in. So tuned in that he was surprised when the Lord didn't show him things.

Now, I'm surprised whenever the Lord shows me something. A couple of times in my life, the Lord has shown me something. Got so excited.

I lived on it for months. Oh, the Lord, all right. All excited because the Lord showed me something.

Rare, rare. But this guy was surprised when the Lord didn't show him things. So here he was sitting with his friends and he starts this old far out routine, you know.

Unreal. I can't believe it, you know. And what's going on, man? Oh, the king.

He's sending a guy down here to get my head. Can you believe that? Now, as soon as he knocks on the door, open the door and pin him. Hold him fast because the king is right behind him with the prime minister.

So here's the knock on the door and Elisha's friends open the door and they pin the guy, the messenger. And here the king came riding up with his prime minister. And he said, OK, Elisha, you've troubled Israel long enough.

Your time has come. And Elisha said, wait a minute, man. You're the one that's troubled Israel.

You're the one that's brought in the worship of Baal and the false gods. It's not me. It's you.

But don't worry. Tomorrow, by this time, in the gate of Samaria, they'll be selling a bushel of fine flour for 65 cents. And this guy, prime minister on whom the king leaned, said, if God should open windows in heaven, could such a thing be? What happened? He was staggering at the promises of God.

So I look for a biblical illustration. And as I say, the Bible is a great book for illustrations. It's a great book for commentary.

And so finding the scripture, giving the sense, giving illustrations. You open up the scripture to the people. Now, I notice here that the people were very interested in what God had to say.

The people were standing from morning till noontime, listening to them as they gave them the scriptures, gave them the sense and the understanding. Here you are kicked back. Now, if we had the things scripturally, I'd be kicked back here and you guys would all be standing.

Here they were standing from morning till noon, attentive to the word of God, listening to the teaching. Don't give me that business. Well, people aren't interested in the Bible.

They are very interested in the Bible. The problem is they have a hard time finding a place where the Bible is being taught. They go to church and they hear all about psychology and the latest, you know, kind of concepts of psychology.

Or they go to church and they hear all about philosophy. Well, Socrates said and Aristotle. And it makes you sound very brilliant.

You can quote Socrates, wow, you know. Plato, whoo, man, you know. But they don't need to know what those guys, their own contemporaries put them down.

They don't need to know what the philosophers have to say. They need to know what God has to say about life. Many of those people that they're quoting, the psychologists.

Have you ever met a psychologist that was really, you know, had his feet on the ground, solid, was a well-balanced person? I had a psychology professor tell me. Be extremely careful when you choose your psychologist because most of them have severe mental problems. The reason why they have their degree in psychology is when they went to college, they had all of these personal problems.

They were trying to understand themselves. So they took every psychology course that was offered in the college. When they got ready to graduate, they found they had a psychology degree.

So you hang up a shingle. Their lives are so often messed up and yet they're trying to tell you how to live. They've been through five marriages, but they're going to counsel you on how to get along with your wife.

You know, it just. People don't need to know what psychology has to say about life. They're still trying to find out themselves.

They need to know what God says about life. And when they come to church, they need to know what God has to say. Now, as I read down in the eighth chapter, as God's word was being read, they came across the passage that talked about how that their fathers had built these little booths to celebrate God's preservation through their 40 years in the wilderness.

And they hadn't done this for years. And so they decided, we're all going to build booths. It's the seventh month.

It's the time for the Feast of the Tabernacles. And so they built their booths and they began to institute again the prescribed worship of God. In other words, the word of God brought obedience in their hearts.

And so our task is, as even in the times of Nehemiah, when they gave them the word, they then gave the sense, and then they gave understanding to the word. I do notice that it was only the adults and those that had understanding. That is, they didn't have the little kids around distracting.

A lot of times I get into trouble because we don't allow babies in the church. But notice here, it was only those that were able to understand. Why bore a kid to death? If he can't understand it, then put him in a class where he can understand it.

Let church be an enjoyable experience to him, not a bore where he is going to sit there and fidget and just, you know, keep his parents from being able to concentrate and just keep things in a constant turmoil. It used to be we had our family devotions at home, and our littlest daughter would say, time for family commotions. And so often when you have the little ones, that's what it becomes, commotions rather than devotions.

And so I just saw that it is a sort of an interesting sidelight to the teaching of the word. And so we have a task. People are hungry for the word of God.

If you will really study it, get an understanding of it, and then expository teaching is just the reading of the scriptures, giving the sense, giving the understanding of what it means, and people want to know, they're hungry to know. And I have observed that in every Calvary Chapel where we have one of these mega churches, it's where a pastor has been there for over five years, faithfully teaching the word of God. Every one of the large churches, and we've got a bunch of them, there is that one common aspect to that church.

There is the solid, strong teaching and applying of the truths of God's word. That's the key for success. And so we encourage you to follow the example, and as you go, become a Bible expositor.

Teach God's word. As Jesus said, feed my sheep. As has been pointed out to us on several occasions.

Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for your word. A lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path. Your word that gives us power over sin.

Your word that helps us in the hour of temptation. Your word that brings us rejoicing, even as the people went their way rejoicing, because they were convicted of their sin, and they forsook their sin, and in finding

the forgiveness, found great joy. And Lord, we thank you that that's the effect of your word.

Conviction, followed by the forgiveness, goodness, followed by the rejoicing. As with David, oh how happy is the man whose transgressions are forgiven. And so Lord, as we are here right now, we want to make a fresh commitment unto you, that we will to the best of our ability, and the enabling of your Holy Spirit, go to those flocks that you have called us to minister to, and we will be faithful, Lord, faithful shepherds, who will feed the flock of God that is among us.

Use us, Lord, to teach your word unto the people. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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