

# Ministers of the Word of God

by Eric J. Alexander

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of preaching the Word of God as the main task of a minister, and the need to approach preaching by expounding the Word in its context.*

**Duration:** 57:58

**Scripture:** Luke 24:27, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Timothy 4:1-5

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Biblical Preaching"

---

## Description

The video is a sermon on the task to which believers are called, focusing on the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1-2. The speaker emphasizes the importance of the Word of God and the role of the Holy Spirit in its proclamation. He shares a personal testimony of a converted man in his congregation and the impact of the gospel on his life. The speaker also criticizes the practice of reducing the gospel to a mere pill that is swallowed once or twice a week, instead of fully engaging with the Word of God for spiritual growth and transformation.

---

## Transcript

May we read first of all, John, in the second epistle of Paul to Timothy, chapter 3. Second Timothy, chapter 3, reading from verse 13 and into the fourth chapter. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore, before God and the Lord Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word.

Be instant, in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longs suffering 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.

But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I

have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me of that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Well now brethren, we turn this evening from the first to the second of these apostolic injunctions at which we looked last evening, where the Apostle calls upon Timothy, take heed to thyself and to the doctrine.

Last night we were looking together at the first injunction, our calling to be examples to the flock as men of God, take heed to thyself. And this evening we turn to the other injunction, take heed to the doctrine, to the teaching, where our concern this evening will be with the essential nature of the minister's work. I was at a conference of Christian doctors some months ago, where while I was sitting in one of the medical sessions, a very distinguished physician in London turned to me when the meeting had ended.

And the only words that he spoke to me during the whole of the conference were these, and I hadn't forgotten them. He said, do you know, the impression I have of the majority of clergymen, and I don't think he was speaking about one denomination in particular, is that they have only the most nebulous idea of exactly what their work is. Something happened to disturb our conversation and I didn't get the opportunity of speaking to him during the remainder of the weekend, but I have a feeling that there is just enough edge and just enough reality in what he was saying to make this kind of comment a spur to us, to give ourselves this evening to the task of trying to understand from the Word of God exactly what is the nature of our ministry.

What is the task to which we are called? And I want right away to seek to focus it in the Apostle Paul's words that we have just been reading. In 1 Timothy 4 verses 1 & 2, I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will notice the charge is given in the context of the judgment at the last day. I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, preach the Word, and I want to suggest to you that from the context what the Apostle is referring to by the Word is the message of the Holy Scriptures.

In chapter 3 verse 15, he has been speaking of Timothy's knowledge of the Scriptures even from his childhood, and he then goes on to speak about the profitability of the Holy Scriptures, to make men wise unto salvation, and to complete the work of making us men of God through teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. And the reason for its profitability and the background against which Paul brings this injunction to Timothy to preach the Word of the essence of the charge which he receives from God as the nature of his ministry, the reason for its profitability is its divine authorship. All Scripture is God breathed and is profitable.

May I then say at once that my own conviction is that the truest description of our ministry is found by describing it in all its features as a ministry of the Word, and the priority of such a ministry is the preaching of the Word which we are called to minister. Now there is no doubt in my own mind that this concentration upon the preaching of the Word as being of the very essence of our calling is the dominical and apostolic example which we have in the New Testament. May I substantiate that by referring you to the Gospels and Acts in this connection.

Although it is true of course that in one sense our Lord's example is unique, in another sense it is important for us to remind ourselves that all true ministry derives from His ministry. He is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and the record is clear that Jesus came preaching the gospel of God, Mark 1 14, and calling for repentance and faith. And as you move through the Gospels you find that this is the

great emphasis of His ministry.

In Luke's Gospel we have the record that in the early days of the ministry of our Lord He went into the synagogue at Nazareth and applied to Himself the words of the prophet Isaiah, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. From then on the great priority of Jesus' ministry is unquestionably preaching and teaching. He went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Everyone is searching for you, they tell Him after the healing at Capernaum, and Jesus replies, let us go on to the next town that I may preach there also, for that is why I came forth. When He sends His disciples out on their first missionary tour it's significant that in Luke chapter 9 verse 2 it is preaching that Jesus puts first in their ministry. And the last great commission as He sends them out into the world to evangelize is concerned with preaching the gospel to all nations.

When you move into the book of Acts, the evidence of the book of Acts is that the apostles fulfilled the Lord's command. Anything in the way of this priority in their ministry must be immediately seen to, and whenever something was going to buy with this clamant concern which they had, then arrangements had to be made in order that priorities might have their rightful place. And they determined together that we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

Anything in the way of administration in the church that interferes with or detracts from the priority of preaching must be dealt with and resolved. And this is precisely what they did from the day of Pentecost onwards. The early church is a preaching church.

Every day, Acts 5 42, in the temple and at home, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus Christ. The persecution in Acts 8, for instance, has the simple result that they went about preaching the Word. Now the example of the Apostle Paul requires fiercely any comment.

He gives it to us as his own divine commission from the Lord Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. And there, of course, Paul is not disparaging the place of baptism, but rather magnifying the priority of preaching. And Paul then goes on to point out that it is the preaching of the message and not anything else that God is pleased to use as the means of salvation.

It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe. And so the whole of Paul's Christian life is the life of a missionary preacher. So that we need to remind ourselves, brethren, I suggest to you this evening that the book of Acts bears witness not only to the awakening and reviving power of the Holy Spirit, it also bears witness to the regenerating power of the Word preached with the anointing of the same Spirit.

And I want to suggest to you this evening that we need in these days to recover something of this apostolic priority and of this apostolic confidence in the preaching of the Word. We need to thrust it into the forefront of our ministry as the great purpose for which we are called of God. And I would suggest to you that there is something far wrong in all the muddled thinking about the ministry that makes it possible for men to say without shame and concern and distress, well, I am no preacher.

Or to say, further confusing the issue, so-and-so, of course, is a great pastor, but he's a dreadful preacher. Let me read you the words of John Owen. The first and principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the Word.

It is a promise relating to the New Testament that God would give unto his church pastors according to his own heart who should feed them with knowledge and understanding. This is by preaching and teaching the Word and not otherwise. And this feeding is the essence of the office of the pastor.

This is the concern, brethren, that we need to have. And I suggest to you that if a man tries to divorce between these two elements in our office and these two descriptions of our calling, he fails to do justice to the great commission of our Lord and to the command that we all of us bear in our souls as ministers preach the Word. We need to grasp its vital importance in the economy of God.

Preaching, says Professor Mounce of the United States, preaching is the medium through which God contemporizes his historic self-disclosure in Christ. It is through the preaching of the written Word that God confronts men with himself. When he was preaching at the licensing of young men who were receiving their charge as ministers of the gospel for the first time, Reverend Williams still in Aberdeen spoke these words to them.

You are called to be preachers of the Word of God. And I hope that amidst all the multifarious and increasing calls that you will find clamoring for your attention as modern Christian ministers, you will occasionally close your ears long enough for your minds to be clarified, your motives purified, and this leading thought to emerge that you are ministers and preachers of the Word of God before you are anything else. This is why, brethren, I believe that one of the issues that in many spheres we need to settle today when a man's call to the ministry is being tested, is this whole issue of whether he has the gift of a preacher, because it is of the essence of his task to preach the Word.

And I believe, and it may be something that amongst ourselves we would want to talk about, but I believe that one of the marks of a call into the ministry is the presence of a gift given by God for the preaching of the Word. Well now, if preaching is of the essence of our task, what is the true nature of that activity which we describe as a ministry of the Word? I came across in some of my random readings some time ago this definition of preaching by Bernard Manning. You'll excuse me having quoted him on the same page as John Owen, but here is his definition of preaching.

Preaching is a manifestation of the incarnate Word from the written Word through the spoken Word. Now, whatever be the deficiencies of that as a definition of preaching, it focuses two facts which seem to me to be vitally important, and the first is this, that the preacher's theme is Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son who took our nature that he might bear our sin. And secondly, the preacher's authoritative textbook is Holy Scripture.

You get the same thing combined in Luther and the Psalms, in the volume of the book it is written of me. And Luther asks, what book and what person? And answers, there is only one book, the Bible. There is only one person, Christ.

So as I see it, the true nature of preaching is pictured for us in the ministry of Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, 27. Where you remember we read, he interpreted to them in all the scripture the thing concerning himself. Now I suggest to you that we have here a picture of the task of the man who is called to preach the Word.

He interpreted to them in all the scripture the things concerning himself. I would therefore suggest to you that all true preaching ought to be the preaching of Christ. We have no other theme.

But there is no other way to preach Christ, and there is a dichotomy often inserted here which does not in fact exist. We have no other way to preach Christ than through the scripture. We know of no Christ but the Christ of the scripture.

And therefore, I would suggest to you that all our preaching should be the exposition of the Word of God in its context. And my own conviction is that there is no true preaching outside of that definition. The exposition of the Word of God in its context.

It seems to me that the apostolic example bears witness to this. This is what you find Stephen doing. He is taking these people to whom he is preaching through that mighty sweep of the Word of God.

This is what you find Paul doing. This is what you find Peter doing. In his sermon, he is taking them through the Word of God.

Paul's habit as his manner was, we read in places like Thessalonica and Corinth and Ephesus, his manner was this. He went into the synagogue and reasoned with them out of the scripture. Opening and alleging, this is the kind of vocabulary that is used.

And the vocabulary opening and alleging is vocabulary which speaks in the first place of laying a table and of unraveling a tangled skein of wool so that it may be plainly set forth what the apostle is doing. In other words, is opening up the Word of God to them. And this is of the very essence of his ministry.

Now it is of this supremely that the apostle is speaking, I believe, in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, where he is writing against a background in which it is very easy to be discouraged. We noticed last night in another connection how the background of 2nd Corinthians is the background of a ministry that is under great pressure, with the possibilities of discouragement and losing heart, so that you find the apostle saying twice over in these chapters 3 and 4 of 2 Corinthians, we do not lose heart for this cause, we faint not, we do not lose heart. Now I believe that it's of significance that you find at the beginning of 2 Corinthians 4, this assertion, we do not lose heart, linked with a man's attitude to the Word of God.

I believe that one of the greatest temptations to the minister of the gospel, in days of discouragement and spiritual darkness and apathy and barrenness, is that he should be tempted to leave off this high calling of the anorosis of the truth. Now this is what Paul is speaking about here. Seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, or tampering with the Word of God, but by manifestation of the truth, the anorosis of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience.

Now this is the ground of the apostles preaching of the gospel. You see he is going on to describe the gospel. They say, we preach not ourselves, he says.

The pulpit is not a place for self-advertisement or self-display. We were reminding ourselves of this last night. This is the ultimate blasphemy in the ministry.

But this preaching of the gospel which the apostle speaks of, this mighty act of God which he can only parallel in the creation of the world at the beginning, you get something of the sense of the majesty of this gospel which the apostle preaches. The same God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Brethren I tell you it's something when a man can only find a parallel in creation to what has happened in his own soul.

And this is the majesty of the gospel of God as he preaches it. But how does he preach it? It's by the anorosis of the truth. By the open declaration of the truth.

We are not tampering with the word of God. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty and our concern is to open up the truth. Now I think that is a very good definition of preaching.

Our task is the opening or exposing the manifestation of the truth. Now the charge of tampering with the word of God is one from which we would all of course instinctively recoil. But I wonder if you would agree with me that there is a certain kind of textual preaching which does precisely this.

What I mean is this that there is a certain kind of textual preaching which uses the text as a launching pad to go off into an orbit that is purely of the preacher's making and is quite unrelated to the basic meaning and purpose and context of the text. Or there is another kind of textual preaching which has a text which tends not to be the basis from which the man works but rather as a prop to support a topic upon which he has decided and which he has worked upon and all worked out carefully and then he finds a text. I mean I was amazed recently when I was speaking to a man, I'm relieved to say it wasn't in Scotland, who came to me and said and he was a good, solid, reformed, Calvinistic brother.

He came to me and said I've got my theme all worked out for Sunday. We were at a conference together. Well I said to him that's very good where are you preaching from? He said I haven't got the text yet.

You know. Now brethren I think it's an important thing. This is why I'm not very happy about topical preaching.

May I have the temerity to say that I'm not very happy about some of the things that Shedd says in his book Homiletical and Pastoral Theology on topical preaching and tends to suggest that expository and didactic preaching is something that is not really in place in the pulpit. It is possible, I believe, for us to get into the danger of misusing scripture in our preaching akin to the misuse that a drunk man makes of a lamppost for support rather than for illumination. You know.

Now this is something which I think we we cannot escape from the possible charge that may be laid at some of our doors. That we need to give attention to the fact that our preaching has to be exposition of the scripture and not imposition upon the scripture. It's possible you see for us to be saying many true things truly and yet for us not to be expounding the word of God.

And the reason that this is so vital is that the sword of the spirit is the word of God and nothing else. And we dare not seek to thrust into the spirit's hand some other weapon. It is the word of God.

Now beloved I would have thought that if we are men who are utterly convinced that the word of God is the holy scripture that we would have been preaching the word of God and seeking to open this up to us. And it's in this sense that I think all our preaching is to be judged. I confess to you again that I'm not very happy about the student who came to me from Glasgow not very long ago about another thing altogether.

We were talking about the church he went to and I said to him where are you worshipping? He said I stopped going to so and so. I said why? He said because he's not preaching Calvinism. I said to him well you know I think the vital thing is not that but is he faithfully expounding the word of God? Brethren I reckon that Calvin's Calvinism was the exposition of the scripture.

Isn't that the legacy that he has mainly left us? And that's my Calvinism. I didn't become a Calvinist by primarily studying systematic theology. I became a Calvinist through studying the scripture.

And if somebody discovered for me tomorrow that the word of God didn't fit in with the Calvinistic system I tell you I would be no Calvinist any day longer. We are men who sit and live and minister under the word. I don't like people talking about gathering around the word.

We don't gather around the word. We gather under the word. And if the authority of the word of God means anything it means this that in our ministry it is to this that we are submitted.

Now may I apply all this in one or two actually five specific ways. First I believe that it is in this way that your people receive a balanced diet of the truth. I believe that there is no other ministry except an expository ministry which will save a man from unleashing the current theological or spiritual bee in his bonnet upon his congregation and degenerating in the name of biblical preaching almost to preaching his own experience.

Now brethren I would be the last to suggest to you that our experience is divorced from our preaching. I was trying to suggest this to you last night that we preach as men of experience and it is out of the fullness of the heart that the mouth speaks of Christ. I believe there is a tremendous danger that our preaching should not be rooted and grounded in the consecutive exposition of the word of God and we fail to give our people a balanced diet of the truth.

I shall have more to say about that in some detail presently if there is time but I think it's a very important thing. There are occasions you see when we are ourselves in a special situation spiritually, practically, circumstantially and you know how easy it is for that to be the determining influence in what you're preaching if you're hunting around every week for a text. Incidentally may I tell you that I don't think I could stand the sheer strain and tension in the ministry if I wasn't preaching consecutively and in an expository fashion through a book or through a series of some kind.

The extraordinary energy men spend in hunting around week after week for a text and almost climbing the wall sometimes by Saturday night. Well I tell you it seems to me something that is not the best use of your time to say the least. The second way in which I would want to apply this is this, that this expository ministry for which I enter a plea tonight is a ministry of the whole word of God and not just snippets of it.

Those of us who believe in the plenary inspiration of the scriptures need to put our doctrine into practice here. You see such a ministry will range through the old and new testaments in all their glorious unity and in all their rich diversity and we will be concerned to preach the whole counsel of God to men by expounding the whole word of God. I remember having Reverend Graham Miller of New Zealand in our mans for a week some years ago before he came to take the bible readings at the Catholic Convention.

I remember hearing him talking to a few others who were ministers who had gathered in the sitting room of our mans to sit at his feet and listen to some of the riches of his own experience in a ministry that God has quite singularly owned in Papatara near Auckland in New Zealand. I remember him telling us how he discovered God calling him to this expository ministry in the early years of his ministry in connection with a new found faith in the word of God and what his new conviction about the authority and inerrancy of scripture did for him was to make him an expositor and I think that's what it ought to do for all of us. And he said to us you know brethren he said I think that after a few years in the ministry you ought to be able to point to your shelves and to the work that you've done and the hard study you've put into your preparation

and you'll say now that's my work on Romans, that's my work on Ephesians, that's my work on this, that's my work on Isaiah and this is the kind of evidence that you have been studying to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth that you've been teaching the world and I say again it's the whole world.

May I read to you some words again from William Still. Some men have never got down yet to mastering even one book of the Bible without you to expounding it thoroughly and consecutively that at the end people may know in short compass what that portion of the word of God is to offer for man's upbuilding in the faith and unto his telling witness in the world. They must give what they call the gospel at every service or meeting and so the mighty gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ which sweeps from Genesis to Revelation in its devastating and edifying power is reduced to a mere pill which men swallow once or twice a week according to whether they are half or quarter saved and go away thinking they have been spiritually fed.

Yes they really think that they have been fed and so a few grains of truth is equated with the mighty word of God that longs to ransack our hearts and minds and fill us with its great use and its tremendous hopes and possibilities. The word of God is present in all its parts but it is only when these parts are brought together in an intelligent conspectus and we see the Bible as one and whole with one whole message of grace for our everyday lives that rightly divided its saved sinners and sanctified saints progressively unto purity honesty grace humility and charity. Some people think that the criterion of the gospel is a certain clear formulation of the gospel facts set out in some kind of order but the true gospel has been declared whenever the word of God has been opened up and let loose among people.

I believe that this is true brethren and I think that we need to demonstrate in our ministry what we profess in our doctrine that we believe in the inspiration of the whole word of God. Now leading on from that may I emphasize again and I'll be wanting to make another quotation from William Still from whom so many of us in Scotland have learned so much and I make no apology for returning to it. The third thing that I want to say by way of application of this is that the whole word of God has converting power.

You know it's in this sense that I wonder if we are really right in this hard division that we make as evangelicals between evangelistic or gospel occasions as we call them and teaching occasions. I wonder if this is really a biblical thing to do. Let me read you some words from the same article.

In some Christian fellowships if they saw a stranger coming in after they'd got over the shock they would creep to the rostrum and whisper to the preacher the gospel the gospel there's a stranger here to which the preacher might well retort wherever in the bible he was preaching from what do you think I'm preaching from old moore's almanac no from some part of the word of God the answer would come but not the gospel and what part of the bible is not the gospel you'd really like to know and the answer is there is no part of the bible that is not the gospel at least it is my experience in nearly 20 years in one place I continue to quote ranging through the bible book after book that I have found no part of the book that God has not used for the salvation and upbuilding of souls unto

fruitful service and then this illustration I was giving what one zealous Christian woman called a lecture on the jews one sunday evening exactly expounding romans 9 to 11 as you might guess and she was annoyed because she had an unconverted laugh with her and he had brought her that I might convert her so she sat and humed and was apparently too angry to pray which was a pity for the girl was being converted and anger wasn't helping very much what happened was that the spirit was there in answer to

believing prayer and the word for all the complexity of the story of the jew being unfolded was the word of God and God did what one sees him do with domestic regularity his own work by his own word through his spirit using the costly prayers of his children it is quite simple it is not easy

it involves many deaths but it is simple and I think this is something to which many of us could bear witness when I went to the congregation that I am now in there was one converted man in that congregation and he was 86 there was a young man who came to me one sunday evening when we have our small group in our morning service we have the larger more comprehensive gathering of people but in the evening which is an innovation there never was such a thing as an evening service in the valley where I live that those who are living there now can remember we have a smaller group of committed people and I was expounding at that time particularly obviously with them in view and somebody came to me some weeks afterwards a man he said you know I came into the evening service he said I scarcely

dare tell you the reason he had for coming in he wanted to get out of the way of his wife he said I came into the evening service he said as I was sitting there he said I didn't intend to listen he said but you know what you've been talking about this being converted he said I didn't intend it but I think I must have been converted or something and the word of God you see has saving power brethren oh that we might believe it and act on it in our ministry let me go on to the fourth thing that I want to say and it is necessary to say it in order to give balance to what I have just been saying that is this that the expository nature of true preaching does not of course suggest that we are expounding the scripture into a vacuum there is a certain doctrinaire attitude to and interest in

expository preaching which seems to me to be utterly unrelated to the people to whom it is addressed you know what I mean it would be very fitting to another congregation which doesn't happen to be there at the time but it is unrelated to the congregation to whom it is addressed and it's possible for a man to have the kind of doctrinaire interest it's the only word I can find to express what I mean in expository preaching which tends to develop what I was speaking about last night this rather metallic touch this clinical atmosphere thrusting it out of you take it or leave it whether they will hear or whether they will forbear is the text that's often used to support this but you see the new testament metaphor of the steward which is so helpful in our understanding of this helps us here

for the steward is called not only to be faithful but to be wise our lord's in luke 12 42 who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his master will set over his household to give them their portion of food at the proper time do you see that the essence of being a true steward means not only that you are faithful in giving to the household what the master has given to you but that you are wise in knowing the proper kind the proper quantity even of food that they're able to take it means that the good steward is neither unfaithful nor is he clumsy and inept and our preaching therefore I suggest you brethren must be rooted in reality and speak to real people in real situations whose need and capacity vary for example my wife receives each week the tipped services that come from

hollyrood abbey church in edinburgh where one of my dearest friends james phillip is minister by reason of our local situation it's impossible for my wife to get out to our evening service and she leads the young children's work in the morning which means she is unable to get a ministry in the morning and so she receives these tips which are a tremendous blessing of course to her and to me and sometimes I come in on a sunday evening as the last part of the sermon is finishing on the tape and we often talk together about what the word has been whatever james phillip has been expounding and quite often we say to one another you know our people are not at the stage yet where they could take that and to extract that

ministry out of a situation which largely is dealing with people who come

because they are hungry for the word of god as mature christians and put it into a situation like my own which is really a pioneer one would be utterly irrelevant in one very real sense you see the faithful steward is not only faithful he is wise in his dealing with the people to whom god has sent him now obviously this neither alters the message nor does it alter the fact that all our preaching is to be expository it is the application of the principle that varies from situation to situation and even from occasion to occasion within the one congregation I have a very different congregation in the morning from the one I have in the evening we have something like 200 to 250 people in the morning the vast majority of whom are spiritually in a very primitive condition but my evening

congregation is a very different situation and my wednesday evening bible study consists of about two dozen people who come because they have a great hunger for the word of god and many of them are growing in grace and maturing in the things of christ and they want to know something of the strong meat of the word now this is the difference even within one situation and herein lies the importance of knowing your people lastly that leads me to the thing which seems to me to be not unimportant even for ourselves this evening that is that our task in opening the truth is to make it plain and clear to people you remember the words of the apostle in 2 timothy 2:15 the task of the true workman in relation to the word of god is rightly dividing the word of truth and the word for rightly dividing

is a word which means cutting straight cutting a straight path you see among some of our theologians in scotland in these days in the sphere in which i was trained anyway there is what has been called by some of the students the cult of bamboozlement so that some men have been heard coming away from listening to someone and saying you know he must be brilliant i couldn't understand a word he was saying now you know brethren normally the reason people are not very clear about what we are trying to explain to them is that we're not really very clear ourselves and it's not too much knowledge or too much study that produces bamboozlement it's too little study to show thyself approved unto god a workman who has no need to be ashamed rightly cutting a straight course through the word of god so

that your heroes will not find themselves in a maze but in a clear straight road and the way to this may i emphasize again is through study being a workman and whatever else it takes this kind of ministry will take study and it will be necessary for you to refuse many things and to mortify many interests and desires in order to take yourself into your study and get to grips with the word of god using every means that is available but giving yourself to it if god has given you the ability to understand the original languages getting into it there as some of us were saying earlier today but if he hasn't using all the aids that are there for grappling with the word of god becoming a workman brethren is your study that kind of wasn't it jowat who said if your study is allowed your pulpit will

be a disgrace is your study a workplace where you're ready to indulge as well as in seeking for inspiration in experiencing perspiration too getting down to it with the labor of a student you never stop being a student in the ministry and with all our reading and with all our studying in many different spheres whatever the books we are able to read brethren be sure that you don't allow any other book to rob you of the time you really need to get down to the word of god and i don't care how valuable the other book is and there is nobody here this evening who would not press who would press any harder let me say than i would for the reading of good books but let us be sure that it's in the context of giving ourselves primarily to being students of the word but we may not finish without

returning to what we insisted upon last night and that is that the vital thing in the ministry of the word however faithfully we seek to open it up to our people whether it be chapter by chapter verse by verse or whether we have ordered our preaching to go through a certain serious expounding passages that open up doctrines to us whatever it be the vital thing in all our preaching is that it should have upon it the unction of the holy spirit of god and that leads us right into what we were talking about last night doesn't it that it is possible for two men you see to come to the word of god and with great skill and sometimes with great freshness and great insight to open up the truth and yet for there to be a cold dampness about it all exciting and moving the intellect but never becoming

the rapier thrust of the sword of the spirit to pierce the soul to the dividing asunder it's possible for another man to be doing exactly the same thing perhaps without as much mental equipment but with a soul that is on fire for god and as he opens up the word of god somehow or other you are aware that the unction of the holy spirit is there and the word is thrust out at you like flames of fire and that's why Spurgeon says with all you're getting brethren get unction upon your ministry and pray that god the holy spirit himself will come down and that it will be he as well as you and he's through you who will take the sword of the spirit and wield it amongst your people for the glory of his name and for their eternal good may that be our ministry and our experience for his glory almighty

god we are humbled before thee this evening as we come to worship and praise thee for thy calling of us out of darkness into thy most marvelous light we are awed in thy presence at the majesty of thy grace and at the wonder of thy truth and we bow to in the presence of this mystery that thou hast called us to be stewards of these mysteries and we bless and adore thee oh lord for this glorious privilege as thou hast commissioned us to be preachers of the word we humbly beseech thee that thou wilt thoroughly furnish us in our own lives that we too may know the holy scripture which is able to make us wise unto salvation that we may not only know it but that we may be in thy hand killed in wielding it and grant oh lord that we may hide behind thy word and thy holy spirit that we may be

servants of the word and of the lord and above all we beseech thee that thou will let the anointing of thy spirit rest upon us whenever and wherever we arise to open thy truth and grant that the very flaming fires of holy spirit conviction may be seen in our ministry of the word not for our own sake oh lord deliver us from every subtle interest in self-glory and grant that we may have a true desire to be servants of thy word hear our prayer and set thy seal upon whatever thou hast said to us this evening for the glory of thy name for the sake of thy church and through jesus christ our only king

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3945.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/eric-j-alexander/ministers-of-the-word-of-god/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**