

Sermon Substance

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God and rightly dividing it between the law and the gospel, in order to bring people to faith and conviction.

Duration: 42:09

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:1-3, Matthew 22:37-39, John 13:34, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 2 Timothy 4:2, James 1:22, 1 Peter 4:11

Topics: "Sermon Preparation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God. He encourages preachers to focus on delivering a message from God's word rather than relying on their own abilities or clever points. The speaker highlights the need for ministers to lead people into a love for the Bible, as it is through the word of God that individuals can draw near to God. He also warns against being incompetent ministers who seek attention or fail to feed the people spiritually. The sermon concludes with a reminder that preaching should be accompanied by a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

I'd like to read to you from the book of 2 Chronicles. If you'd like to turn there, I just want to talk to you about preaching. In fact, after the workshop, I want to talk about stylistic preaching.

Today, I want to talk about the substance of preaching and of ministry, if I could put it that way. I want to talk about the dedication of the temple. If we could turn to chapter 7 of 2 Chronicles.

Chapter 7 says, When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifice, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priest could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. I want to talk about the dedication of the temple as being a picture of ministry and especially of preaching.

The part that I want you to focus on is, they took the Ark of the Covenant. You know, the Ark of the Covenant was a little bit bigger than the size of this pulpit, which is really not a pulpit. It's a piece of furniture that my wife and others bought in an auction, I think.

And if you turned it that way, it was a long box. And inside the box was, inside the Ark of the Covenant, was the law of God written on those tablets, which were kept inside the Ark. Then covering the Ark was the mercy seat, right? On top of the mercy seat were the cherubim.

And the Bible tells us that when the dedication went on, it really repeats this idea about the glory of the Lord filling the temple. So the priest couldn't minister. That happened twice, really, when Solomon prayed and once when they just got everything in place.

So what they did was they took carefully the Ark of the Covenant with the law inside, covered by the mercy seat. They put it in its place. Outside there was a huge choir and band making noise, instruments, and singing and praise going on.

And then the Bible says that, you can read it in that same book, that the glory of the Lord filled the temple so that the priest couldn't minister. And then Solomon prayed and said, Lord, you remember that my father wanted to build, as Franklin referenced, wanted to build a house for you for the glory of your name. But you didn't let him, but you gave the privilege to me and now here we are.

So let's get this picture of that special day. The Ark of the Covenant goes into the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place had the table with the bread on it and the golden lampstand.

But there was inside the Holy of Holies the Ark of the Covenant with the law inside the mercy seat. Then the glory of the Lord so came that nobody could minister. And then Solomon said, David built this house for the glory of your name.

And I see some things here that can help us as we minister. And let's just talk about preaching. Talking, exhorting, teaching.

I imagine almost everyone in this room, you speak publicly to people. So you talk to people to exhort them. If you're not a senior pastor, you teach, you exhort, you're in small groups, whatever.

So let's talk about this act of speaking to people which is so prominent in both the Old and the New Testament. Because the gospel has to be declared through a human vessel. God's not using angels.

He's not speaking through the clouds. He's chosen to use us as his co-workers so we have to speak. So let's talk about preaching and teaching.

First of all, brothers, let's be very honest. Now I'm going to be brutally frank, okay, here, because we want to improve. How many want to improve? Say amen.

We want to improve. So if you're already set in your ways and you think you know everything, it's like in sports. You never improve unless you're open to learning something new.

So may God humble us all and give us the humility to learn something new. There's an old saying by Samuel Chadwick, a Methodist preacher, whose books are recommended to you there. I think they're in the bookstore.

He said this, you can't advertise a feast if there's no food on the table. You know why a lot of people don't go to certain churches? Because the ministry is so pitiful. The preaching is pitiful.

I'm not saying the person is not sincere, but they lack total wisdom. They don't feed people with the word of God. They're confused.

They get emotional. They're not clear. They have no sequential thought.

And whether they get mystical or whether they put a tear in their voice or whether they get loud and start shouting, whatever, you can't imitate food. It's like the plastic fruit that's in some bowls. If you get close, you'll know that's not real fruit.

Don't bite into that. That is not an apple. And this is what holds a lot of churches back.

People come to a church. They have real problems in their real life. They're looking for answers, but they do not find it through the ministry of that church.

And while music and worship plays an important part in the church, you can see how blessed we are. Those of you who were in the service yesterday, between the worship, the band, the talent that God has blessed us with, the gifting of my wife, which she's more gifted from God than I am, it has blessed the church immensely. But no matter how much music you have, you've got to feed people the word of God.

Paul tells Timothy, preach the word. But how we preach it, why we preach it, what manner we preach it is so significant. I visit some churches, and just by the way they do the announcements and run the church, I love the people there.

I'm doing my best, but I say to myself sometimes, I'd never go there. I'd never go there. I would never go there.

I got an email from somebody that I looked at last week who said this. Could you please write me back? I've read some of your books. I go to a church, and this new pastor that we have now, he's on some tangent where he's tearing down everything that's wrong in the world, and everything that's wrong going on in churches, politically, this, that.

And when I leave the church, I am totally in despair and discouraged every time I leave church. And what should I do? So I couldn't put it in writing, but I'm trying to arrange a phone conversation with this couple so that I could tell them, well, have you shared? I'm going to find out, did they share it with their leadership? But maybe they just need to find another church, because you can't go to church and leave discouraged. There's not enough discouragements in life that you don't want to leave church discouraged, right? But if the word of God and the meeting is not a blessing, hey, listen, we got to be honest, it's on us.

Because if you think people will come to church because they ought to, that day ended decades ago. No one's going to church because they ought to. There's choices now, and this is why a lot of people end up watching on TV, because the churches that they go to, it does nothing for them.

There's no answers, there's no drawing them to God, there's no feeding them the bread of the word of God. So that's why we want to look at this and say, God, how can we improve? How can we get better? Because you can say you're sincere and God knows I have a good heart. Listen, that's not enough.

We have to, Paul says, God has made us competent ministers of the new covenant. Not of the letter that kills, but of the spirit that gives life. Notice, if God has made us competent ministers, that means you can be incompetent.

Obviously, if God makes some people competent, some people are incompetent. Some people are thieves who are in the ministry. Some people want to draw attention to themselves, they don't want to feed the people.

But if the people are not being fed, there's no sense us saying, why are there so few people coming? You know, one of the definitions of insanity is to keep doing the same thing over and over again, but think you'll get a different result. So ministers don't change. This is the way we've always done it.

Brother, this is the way I grew up. It's the way we do church. I know, but have you looked, have you seen? Can you be honest enough, can I be honest enough to look what's really happening here? You know, when you're playing basketball, you can't live in an illusionary world, because there's something called the scoreboard.

There's the score that's being kept. So when I was, let's say, in my senior year at University of Rhode Island, the captain of the team ended up playing in the NCAA tournament. When we'd be playing a game at home or away or in Madison Square Garden, and after nine minutes of the first half, you're losing 18 to 7 or 24 to 12.

The coach calls a timeout, and nobody went into the huddle and went, aren't these shorts nice that we're wearing? Look at the gold trim that we're wearing. Isn't this great? And look at my sneakers. You know how much these cost? Everybody's saying, we've got to do something different.

We're losing. Do we go to the zone press? Do we do a tight man to man? Do we slow the game down? Do we start to fast break? What do we do? We have to do something else because what we're doing, we're getting our heads knocked in. Everyone does that in business.

Everyone knows that in sports. But the church, we're very slow because we're tied to what we were born into. Most Christians, unfortunately, don't change much of their views two years after they're saved.

From two years after they're saved to the time they die, they're not going to be open to anything. I was born a Baptist, going to die a Baptist. Born assembly of God, going to die assembly of God.

Born evangelical, born charismatic, or this is what I'm into. We're Nazarenes, brother. That's the way we do.

You know, we're just Nazarenes. Salvation Army, it doesn't matter. The folks aren't stopping and listening to our band.

And when they used to be out here, I used to go to some of them and say, why do you guys play and speak? Nobody's stopping to listen. Brother, that's the army way. I said, that is not the army way.

General Booth did that in the east end of London, but people were stopping then. Now we live in a different society. You think General Booth would be talking to the air? Of course he wouldn't.

He's too smart. And Mrs. Booth. But we get locked into ways.

How many know what I'm talking about? Say amen. And that's all of us. The hardest thing to do is to go to the Bible and say, God, talk to me.

And I'm open. Because most of us, that's the way I grew up. I hear people say that all the time.

That's the way I grew up. As if, because you and I grew up that way, that's the last word. The final word is, I grew up that way.

Not is it in the Bible. Not is it producing fruit. Well, in the ark of the covenant was the law.

Was the word of God. And that's, I can't say it better than Franklin Graham. My goodness, that was strong.

But let's go past the gospel and let's just look at it. Paul told Timothy, preach the word. Well, that's the word of Christ.

We would also say, preach the Bible. Preach the Bible. Inside the ark of the covenant was the words of God.

In fact, the 10 commandments in the Hebrew Old Testament were never called 10 commandments. They were just simply called the 10 words. They were the word of God.

When you and I preach this Bible, did you know there's power in this Bible? Do you believe that? There's power. Not your opinion. Not your dream.

Not your vision for your church. I never see anyone being told to preach your vision for the church. Not what you think God is doing in the earth.

I don't see that. I never see one place where anywhere Jesus to the seven churches or Paul says, Don't you know what God is doing? The new thing he's doing in the earth. I do not see that anywhere in the Bible.

Because God is doing a thousand things in the earth right now. And churches are in all different conditions. Some good, some comatose.

So you can't say the word that God wants to speak to all Christians. Except love one another, pray, put faith in Christ. But God's saying a lot of different things.

But we have to preach this Bible. And we have to pray that God will give us a timely word out of this Bible. To fit the needs of the people we're speaking to.

I'd like to present this to you as a question. This coming Sunday when you're back in your church. What would Jesus preach if he were to take the microphone? You ever think about that? Now he knows the temperature of your church.

Remember when he wrote to seven churches in the book of Revelation? Laodicea, Smyrna, Ephesus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and the rest. Right? Did you notice that every letter was different? Why? Because every church was different. What would Jesus preach to your church? It has to come from the word of God.

But what word? You know if there's no prayer in your church. Everyone's gossiping and there's no love. And you do six weeks on tithing.

That might not be the best thing for your church. Is tithing in the Bible? Is giving in the Bible? Yeah. But that might not be the word that God wants you to give.

So we have to preach the word. But this is a big book. What do you preach? So before you start a series and before you preach a sermon.

Look brothers and sisters. We've been doing this for a while. Most of us here can get three points in conclusion.

If you just put me over in that corner. And give me five minutes and give me a verse. I've been doing this long enough.

I'll get three points in conclusion. It might be hash. But I'll get three points in conclusion.

But how about a word from God. From God's word. Listen.

A word from God from God's word. So we have to speak this word. If anyone speaks, let them speak as an oracle of God.

I'm speaking God's word. And remember that if we're not leading people into a love of the Bible. Then no matter what other illusions are in their lives.

They can't be drawing near to God. How would you draw near to God and not want to know what he says. And what he feels.

So one of the tests for all of our congregations and ministries. Is do they love the word of God. And to do that we have to love the word of God.

I'm going to talk about that this afternoon. When we talk about styles of preaching. And keys to the delivery.

I'm the last one to lecture you. I'm preaching to myself. But I have learned a lot by trial and error.

And by digging in the scriptures. Now. Inside the ark of the covenant was the law of God.

Thou shalt not, thou shalt, thou shalt not. Covering it was the mercy seat. Now that brings up a very interesting question for us who preach.

The Bible says that we are to rightly divide the word of God. And do you know the hardest part of rightly dividing the Bible. To me is to this very day.

Is how to divide between law and grace. The law was in the covenant. But what cut ark of the covenant.

But what covered the ark of the covenant. What seat. The mercy seat.

The law had its thunderings. And had its function by through God. But it was covered by the mercy seat.

Now that's the hardest thing for me to decipher. Between the law and the gospel. I think a lot of Christians.

Are actually old testament Christians. They preach 90% law 10% Jesus. I had a man.

Swedish Norwegian man. Who I was still in college not even married yet. And he saw me and he must have saw God's hand on my life.

And he said something to me one day in a church here in Brooklyn and Bay Ridge. And he said you're single and you should give yourself now to study. Because God wants to use you.

And I didn't even get it. I was shooting jump shots from the top of the key. That was my only life back then.

And he said can I tell you something Jim. And tears started to form in his eyes. And I went what brother.

You know because this guy was triple my age. He said I've been I was in the ministry for 40 years. Until I realized I was giving the people 90% law 10% Jesus.

Tears started rolling down. He said ah but then God put the light on. And I realized I have to preach Christ.

Now. Franklin Graham was saying we got to preach the gospel the gospel the gospel. But what's involved in preaching the gospel.

You have to rightly divide between the law. Which is characterized by Moses. The law came through Moses.

But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1. So. We have to preach the commands of God.

But we have to balance it with the mercy seat. The truth as it is in Jesus. What do I mean by that.

The common thing today is. People are preaching when they do preach about Jesus. They don't preach the law and the holiness of God.

So you're asking people to accept the Savior from nothing. He's going to save you from nothing. You don't even need him.

But your life is fine the way you are. You go girl. But you know what if you receive Jesus.

You'll even have more money and a happier life. But there's no desperate need. See if we're going to preach Christ crucified.

Crucified for what. He bore what on his body. When he died on the cross.

Our sins. Well what are sins. So we have to balance the commands of God.

God's holy nature. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's none righteous.

No not one. All we like sheep have gone astray. Unless we preach that.

There'll be no conviction. Conviction comes not by the good news of Jesus. Conviction comes by the law being preached.

The law has to do its work. But. It has to immediately be covered by the mercy seat.

So you don't leave people ready to commit suicide. And that my brother and sister is such a fine art. I don't think one sometimes in 50 ministers know how to do that well.

In other words to preach the law. So that it creates a sense of I need. I need God.

I'm lost and I'm done. Oh glad you feel that way. Because God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

That Jesus loves you in your sin. Doesn't love your sin. But he still cares for you in your sin.

The able to balance that. Oh my goodness. That's what will produce fruit among people.

If we only preach law. What do we tend to? Well we were self-righteous. And we're usually fun for ourselves full of ourselves.

But we're telling everybody where they're wrong. That's easy to do. A lot of people think that's prophetic.

To tell everybody where they're wrong. I heard a guy in California. I'm sorry Florida on TV years ago.

And here's a cheap way to have an altar call. He preached about. You know God said be perfect even as I am perfect.

And he went through this whole thing that God is perfect. And we're imperfect. Okay I'm with you.

Well how many know that you're not perfect like God says. Yeah well alright. So how many of you are going to get serious now.

And are going to start to live holy lives. Because you're just fooling around. Uh oh.

Where are we going with this? So how many. Everybody here who's not holy. And perfect like God.

But wants to come up and make a new promise to God. You're going to start living. And being just like God.

You come up to this altar. Well the whole church should have gone up. If I did that to you.

Wouldn't we all go up? But is that the gospel? No that's the law. But not covered by the gospel. That's legalism.

So what do you have in your church? You have people making new promises. Fresh promises that they're going to turn their life around. That is not the gospel.

To get people to make promises that they're going to do better. Has nothing to do with serving Jesus Christ. The just shall live by faith.

So if we only preach the law. What's inside the ark of the covenant. We're going to end up with people.

And a lot of times I've. I made some mistakes and had preachers here. And they just.

Especially in the other building. When I wasn't as careful who was preaching. And they just hurt the church.

Because they just battered people with the word of God. We should never do that. How about your struggles and my struggles? Are you so perfect? Am I so perfect? I'm asking for an answer.

Are you so perfect? Haven't you made a mistake? Haven't you sinned? What if your life was put up on the screen here? Would you stay while we were all watching it? Or would you be running down Flappish Avenue. Wanting to end your life with a 45 right? So. So we don't just preach law.

Even though it has a pseudo-prophetic kind of thing. Like. You all don't want to serve God.

But you're not real about this thing. You know. You know a little of that goes a long way.

But if we only preach the mercy seat. Then people are not convicted. And feel like.

Yeah of course Jesus loves me. I'm a good guy. Why wouldn't he love me? My mama loves me.

My daddy loves me. Jesus loves me. Yeah.

What else? You see the balance that we have to keep? If we only give the law. We bury people. We deceive people.

If we only give them grace. I think what we're. What's happening today.

In a lot of our churches is. Warren Wiersbe told me. He sometimes wonders.

If 50% of people go into evangelical churches. Are not. Are even born again.

Church is their culture. They've never had a born again experience. They never come to that.

Crossroads in their life. Where they felt their need of a savior. And cried out to God.

Have mercy upon me. So. It's like when I was in.

No. I'll give you two examples. Quick.

And this is commonplace. I don't know where you all are from. Some of you are going to probably.

Say yeah. It's worse than that. Pastor Jim.

But I got to tell you. I was out in Phoenix Arizona. At a conference.

Some years ago. And I was preaching a message. About King Asa.

And. The. You know.

King Asa came back. From that great victory. And.

The prophet came out. And met him. And said this.

King Asa. The Lord is with you. When you're with him.

But if you turn from him. You're going to lose everything. The Lord is with you.

When you're with him. So I was saying. What's the lesson from that? One of the lessons from that.

Is that unless we're in the light. And following God. And not practicing sin.

We're not going to have the blessing of God. Upon our lives and our prayers. Well I said that.

It's a pretty simple point. Right? And there was huge resistance. Silently.

So I thought. I didn't explain that right. I didn't explain that right.

I'm going to explain that better. So I went and explained it again. And said.

Look the Lord is with you. When you're with him. But if you're having an affair with someone.

Obviously. You're going to have discipline from God. If you're a born again Christian.

Or if you're lying. Or if you're prejudiced. And you hate black people.
Or something. And you don't want anyone in your church. Except your kind.
Obviously God is not going to bless you. How could he bless you. When your heart is far from his heart.
Then. I felt the wall even stronger. And then I feel myself perspiring.
And I said. The Lord kind I felt. Made me realize what I was in.
And I went. Oh no. Oh no.
If you think I came all the way here. To tell you. This new.
Gospel that there's no such thing as sin. You're wrong. If you're here today.
And you're not living right. You better get right with God. Oh no.
I'm not. And as I paused. Because I was in a fight.
In the back of the. In the back of the auditorium. There were about 2500 people.
A man with a cracked voice. Sound like an older man. Cried out.
Lift up his voice. Don't stop. Say it.
We need it. Don't stop. Oh, I'm telling you.
The place was charged. But it was like a battle. Like he was saying.
Going on. I did the best I could. And.
The next day. I was heading to the airport. I asked the driver to stop.
So I could buy something. For one of my grandchildren. And I'm in this little.
Big Target store. And I'm walking down the aisle. To check out.
And I walk by. And a guy goes. Jim Cimbala.
And I stopped. And he's there. And he went.
I was there last night. I said. Oh, nice.
That's good, brother. I'm leaving. He says.
Hey, listen. That was awesome. That was powerful last night.
I haven't heard a sermon like that. And I don't know how long. I said.
Well, whatever. Praise God. He said.
You know. You got my mother. He got my mother.

Yeah. She'd been going to church. For like eight years now.

And she told me. At the end of the sermon. She told me.

She said. You know what? She's going to start praying. About leaving her live-in boyfriend.

That she's been living with. For eight years. As a Christian.

She's going to think about that. Because. That.

Your message got through. And I went. What? She's a Christian.

She's living with her boyfriend. He said. Yeah.

So, I took his shoulders like this. I said. I have a message for your mother.

Don't pray about anything. Run for your life. Run.

See. Maybe that's where sloppy agape. And grace with no law.

Takes us. Yeah. Let's put our hands together.

For the balance of the word of God. And the grace of God. So.

That's easier said than done. Because in certain circles. You can watch certain Christian television programs.

You wouldn't hear the word sin for two years. You wouldn't hear the word sin for two years. You hear faith.

You hear prosperity. You hear blessing. You hear God feels your pain.

You hear all of that. It's Freudian. It's a Freudian invasion of the Christian church.

But we're not psychiatrists. We're preachers of the good news of Jesus Christ. So, we got to preach the righteousness of God.

But carefully. And can I just add this thing. Although I was going to say it this afternoon.

I'd like to suggest this to all of you. There's a moment when you're preaching. That if you stop at that moment.

That's the time to ask for response. And if you go past that moment. You miss the moment.

There's a moment when you're preaching. Even if it's. You got more notes to go.

Forget your notes. The Holy Spirit dictates. Not notes dictate.

Even if you're only halfway through your sermon. If there's a moment. That.

There's a moment where the Holy Spirit. The truth has been applied. The grace of God has been glorified.

Now is the moment to get people to what? Receive Christ. Repent of their sin. Praise God.

Say God I'm going to trust you in the hard place. Whatever the message is about. If you go past that moment.

You've missed it. And now the feeling that the Holy Spirit has created. Is going to dissipate.

Even though you're saying good things. I've learned that from going past it myself. There's a moment when you should stop.

And God determines when you should stop. You don't determine by your notes. Now.

Two last things. The law was inside covered by the mercy seat. Oh I'm so happy for the mercy seat covering the law.

Aren't you? Because Lord if you would count iniquities. Who could stand? But there's mercy. There's grace.

So don't leave people hanging. And depressed by beat down. But give them the good news.

That Jesus has come to forgive and change and what not. But just don't give that. Give the balance.

By the way. Charles Finney's suggestion is still a very good one. Finney said that one of the keys to ministry.

Is to live among the people. That's why. No matter what senior pastor position you have.

You never stop counseling. You keep talking to people. And you keep counseling.

Why? Because then you find out where people are living. There's an old saying. That if you just go to Bible studies all the time.

Bible conferences. You can get very strange quickly. Because if you're always hanging around Christians and ministers.

You can get very weird. Because that's not the real world. The real world is to live among the people.

And find out. Right Andy? Where they're being lied to. Where they're discouraged.

Where the enemy has a stronghold. Walk among them. Learn that.

Then get locked away with God. In prayer. With your Bible open.

And find out the word that God will give you. To get through that thing. But if you're removed from people.

And don't know where they're living. My wife said the other day. She was in a certain setting.

And there were new Christians. Or just people in a certain setting. And the person who prayed.

Prayed so religiously. So performance oriented. That it just ruined the whole prayer.

It ruined the whole thing. Because they weren't where the people were living. You know what I'm saying? You got to be just natural.

And know where the people are living. And what they understand. That's very true by the way when you preach.

You know my late father-in-law was one time. In a poor, poor town in Mexico. Preaching many decades ago.

And without clarification he said. You know it's like Paul said. Paul said this.

Out of nowhere. He's preaching something from the gospels. And then he said Paul said this.

And all the people who were listening to him. This group said. Armando Pablo.

The guy in our town said that? I never knew he said that. Did Pablo say that? Pablo actually said that? They didn't know the apostle Paul. And sometimes we quote things.

Obviously when we talk to ministers. We assume a certain level of knowledge. I stand here sometimes on Tuesday nights.

And pray for an hour before people come on the line. And deacons and deaconesses and other pastors are there. And we just have seven lines of prayer.

And I tell the people. Come forward and be prayed for. It so rebuked me.

It so helps me at the same time. So like the last time I did it. I was praying.

And I pray for three, four minutes with each person. But what's your name? I hold her hands or his hands. What's your name? How long you been coming? Are you a member? How long you been a Christian? Where do you live? What do you do for a living? So I can get a picture before they start telling me something.

And maybe God would show me something by the Holy Spirit to help me. And then I say, okay, how can I pray for you? And when they start telling me what they're facing in life. And when I see the obvious ADD, extreme ADD in some of them.

And when I see how new they are. And when I see the heartache. And how hard life is for them.

And when I see the battles they're fighting. Number one, it makes me say, oh God, if you don't help me to preach better, I'm just going to quit. God, help me to preach better so I can help the people.

But also then I realize, wow, are they getting what I'm saying? Because what good is this sermon seems good to you. But nobody else is getting it. You go home patting yourself on the back and nobody knows what you were talking about.

You know? And that's why we have to be careful. You know, someone does four weeks on the mark of the beast. Most people are living with a beast at home.

And they don't even want to know the mark of the beast. Oh my goodness. There are a lot of prophetic things.

I don't know how edifying they are. And they end up just being our opinion. A lot of men and women of God have disagreed.

My basic theology is Jesus is coming again. And I just want to be busy until he comes. And how that all is going to work out.

I have a lot of confusion right now on my eschatological chart. I don't know what I am anymore. But I know Jesus is coming.

Come on. How many say amen? Jesus is coming. It's all going to work out.

Then the Bible says, and I'll close with this. That the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, the temple. And they couldn't minister.

Isn't that an interesting combination? The ark of the covenant with the law covered with the mercy seat. And then there was a manifestation of God. In this case, the manifestation was the glory of the Lord.

So people couldn't even minister. And one of the most overlooked verses in the whole Bible. By Bible school certainly.

I check with seminary students. And say, did they ever discuss this in your homiletics course? Hermeneutics? Delivery of sermons and all of that? I haven't found one who said anyone ever discussed it. It's a very interesting verse.

And it says basically this. 1 Corinthians 2. And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence.

Or human wisdom. As I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 1 Corinthians 2. And so it was with me, brothers and sisters.

When I came to you, I did not come. Listen. I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom.

As I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing among you. While I was with you.

To accept Jesus Christ and him crucified. Now, just before we finish. I did not come to you with eloquence.

Or human wisdom. Or cleverness of speech. My opinion is.

That's 90% of what's emphasized. In ministerial training. Be a great communicator.

Be really clever. Know how to relate. Know when to tell the joke.

Know all that stuff. Be eloquent. And be filled with human wisdom.

How many leadership books right now are being written for the Christian church? As my friend Warren Wiersbe points out. They have nothing to do with the Bible. They're corporate.

That's corporate thinking invading the church. Most pastors are not looking for godly people. They're looking for sharp people.

Clever people. We gotta be efficient. We gotta put on a show.

I would suggest to you. That Jesus who was born in a manger. Is not really about that.

We should use all wisdom. And every part of technology we can. We'll talk about that later today.

But. There's something else Paul is saying. I didn't come to you.

I wasn't eloquent. I wasn't a good speaker. And I wasn't clever in my presentation.

I came to you in weakness. With great fear and trembling. I don't know what minister in America.

Would ever testify to that. On the television or the radio. I came to you in weakness.

With great fear and trembling. There's an honest soul. My message and my preaching.

Were not with wise and persuasive words. I thought that's the whole point. Be wise and persuasive.

Isn't that why we're supposed to speak? No. I did not come with wise and persuasive words. But with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

So that your faith. You in Corinth who listen to me preach. That your faith might not rest on human wisdom.

But on God's power. Praise God. Is that a powerful verse? I did not come to you.

With eloquence. With wise and persuasive words. But my preaching.

And this is the one that is hard to know. How to define this and explain it. My preaching was with a demonstration.

Of the power of the Holy Spirit. Now what does that mean? We know the substance was the gospel. But he's saying.

With a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. Jason if you would play something. Maybe come Holy Spirit.

Come to think of that. Now nowhere does it say Paul. Ever ever.

In fact Jesus. Couldn't empty every graveyard. He can only do the things the Father showed him.

Nowhere does it indicate that when Paul was preaching. He would say. Oh by the way.

I'm just going to heal a few blind people here. Before I make my next point. And you know.

That the preaching was some miraculous exhibition of gifts. There's no hint of that. He certainly didn't do that in Athens.

He didn't do that in Thessalonica. Things just had to develop. And then the Spirit would show him what to do.

Like the damsel of divination. In Philippi. So what does that mean? My preaching to you.

This is what God. How God wants you to speak Andy. This is how God wants you to speak.

Pastor. Moffat Fiery. In Malawi.

Not with wise and persuasive words. Yes be clear. Utter it.

As the word of God. But with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. So that your faith.

Would not stand in the wisdom of men. And you wouldn't go home talking. Wasn't he good today? Oh she was good.

Remember that joke she told. Oh that's so funny. I can't wait to tell my sister-in-law about that.

No. So that when you go home. You go.

When that guy was preaching. God surrounded me. There was some manifestation.

Now for those of you who are cessationists. And don't believe that the Holy Spirit does anything. But inspire the word of God.

The Bible and convictive sin. I have no argument to make with you. I don't want to discuss it with you.

You believe what you want to believe. But according to our faith. It will be unto us.

But Paul said my preaching was not with wise and persuasive words. But when I spoke. There was a demonstration of God's power.

He doesn't say how. But it must have been some invisible witness. While he was preaching.

That people knew. That is the word of God. Word of knowledge.

Word of wisdom. Just something in the atmosphere. Where it wasn't like.

I hope this guy gets done. So I can go watch the cowboy game. Man I mean.

This is forever this message. You know what. I'd rather have that for one month.

Than live ten years. That's what I crave. To be able to speak.

And God bear witness. As I speak his word. So that people know.

Not me. Anything about me. But that people would go.

God is awesome. Don't you want that. Don't you want to balance the word with the grace of God.

And don't you want the atmosphere to be charged in your churches. And this is. Some of you are going to have to face.

What you believe about the Holy Spirit. What you've taught about the Holy Spirit. But you take away the Holy Spirit from preaching.

Lots of luck. I just saw a book. I looked through it in a bookstore.

300 page book on preaching. Not one reference to prayer or the Holy Spirit. How in the world could you write about preaching.

Without mentioning prayer and the Holy Spirit. But that's the way it's going. That's the other battle.

That Franklin Graham. It's not just the opposition. It's the Judas's that are among us.

Who are saying God is dead. He doesn't do that anymore. God can do anything he wants to do.

How many are with me? Say Amen. Come on. Let's put our hands together.

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