

# A Message From the King

by John Piper

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*Preaching is not just explaining or teaching, but heralding a message from the King, and it must be done with exultation in the Word.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 95:6, Psalm 119:103, Colossians 3:16, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 4:1

**Topics:** "Expository Preaching", "Worship Leadership"

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## Description

John Piper emphasizes that preaching is not merely explaining or teaching, but heralding like a town crier delivering a message from the king. Preaching involves exulting in the Word, announcing it with passion and reverence to inspire worship. It is a balance of expository exultation, handling the Word of Truth accurately without twisting it for emotional manipulation. Piper stresses the importance of keeping both the head (exposition) and heart (exultation) alive in preaching to avoid spiritual death in the church.

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## Transcript

Preaching is not just explaining or teaching. Preaching is heralding. Preaching is what a town crier does when there is a message from the king.

He gathers a group of people and says, "Hear ye, hear ye, be it known to you today that by royal order of his highness, the king, there will henceforth be granted to this town an imperial watch of one hundred soldiers to protect you from the rebel bands who plunder the king's subjects."

And a cheer goes up among the people. (Those are the Amen's of the congregation.)

And he continues, "Furthermore be it known to you that the cost for this protection shall be born not by taxation but by the beneficence of the king from his royal treasury!"

Again cheers! (Amen!)

"Moreover, the king would have you know that he loves you, his loyal subjects, and will use all his royal counsel and power to defend you and supply your wants."

Again cheers! (Amen! Amen!)

"And lastly he sends through me his royal blessing. Blessed be the people whose trust is in the king!"  
Cheers. (Amen!)

Preaching is more than teaching. It is exultation in the Word. "Preach the Word," means "exult in the Word." That is, announce it and revel in it. Speak it as amazing news. Speak it from a heart that is moved by it.

God exists to be worshiped--to be admired and treasured and desired and praised. Therefore, the Word of God is written primarily to produce worship. Our hearts will not be drawn out to worship if someone just dissects and analyzes the worth and glory of God but does not exult in it before us.

The Truth of God begs to be handled with exultation. And our hearts yearn for this and need it. Something in us starts to die when precious and infinitely valuable realities are handled without feelings and words of wonder and exultation. That is, a church starts to die without preaching.

But, of course, this assumes something massive. To treasure the Truth, and to love the Truth, to be impassioned about the Truth, and to exult in the Truth, you have to know the Truth. So it's not enough to say that preaching is exultation. We must also say it is "expository exultation." It is exultation in the Truth of God's Word. And the exultation is in proportion to the Truth delivered.

In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul tells Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." This, too, is part of preaching. Preaching is handling accurately the Word of Truth. In other words, you can never twist or exploit the Word in order to increase the emotional response of the people.

Preaching is not exultation without exposition of the Word. Nor is preaching exposition of the Word without exultation. One error cuts off the head. The other rips out the heart. In both cases the victim dies. No heart. Or, no head. You're dead. And so is preaching. And not too long after, the church.

So the command of the Lord is, Preach the Word. Keep your head on (exposition) and keep your heart alive (exultation). Handle the precious living Word of God accurately. And come to this pulpit week after week and do expository exultation. There is enough glory in the Word that you need add nothing artificial. Just eat it until your heart is deeply and truly satisfied and then serve the same banquet for your people.

You will be tempted in many ways to give up preaching. Satan will lie to you that it is not a great thing. Or that you could devote yourself to something more significant. But when that happens, go back to 2 Timothy 4:1-2 and listen to the apostle. Al solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the Word."

Then you will rise up and say with Martin Luther, "If I could today become king or emperor, I would not give up my office as preacher."

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