

The Church - Part 8

by Les Wheeldon

Les Wheeldon emphasizes the church's foundation in God's eternal love and the vital role of preaching in nurturing that love within the community.

Duration: 1:07:19

Scripture: Matthew 4:17, Mark 16:15, Acts 8:4, Romans 1:16, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 1:17, 2 Timothy 4:2

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching as a community action and involvement of the church. He encourages the congregation to embrace their riches and acknowledge that God has blessed them. The preacher highlights the significance of humility and love, using the example of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. He also emphasizes the need for discernment in identifying individuals with the gift of preaching and encourages the congregation to read the Bible verse by verse.

Transcript

I love it to be with you again this week and tonight I want to continue to talk about the ministry of preaching which I started a little bit, talking about preaching and also about the context of preaching in the whole church. Now when we ask ourselves what is the primary function, what's the primary reason for the church, let's turn back into the Old Testament just for a moment, into the book of Ezra and into chapter one of Ezra. If you haven't brought your Old Testament don't worry I shan't be there very long but there.

Now Ezra is the book on the house of God and the building of the temple and in chapter one verse one it tells us in the first year of Cyrus the king of Persia that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it also in writing saying thus saith Cyrus king of Persia the Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Now you notice there the prophetic element, this man Cyrus who was prophesied of by Isaiah and Isaiah prophesied various things about Cyrus but that he would lay the foundation of God's house, tremendous prophecy, there's some incredible prophecies back there in the Old Testament and it's fulfilled Cyrus built the house or he made the proclamation that led to the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. Cyrus gave the proclamation and he gave the proclamation because God had told him and in verse two he said the Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth just like Jesus was given all the kingdoms of the earth in order to build a house so we have here one of the

foundational elements of the church and the church is being built by God not because of something in time but because of something in eternity.

Okay what do I mean?

What I mean is that there are things that are to do with time to do with what is now for example there may be a war or there may be persecution for example in you may love hymn singing I love hymn singing I love singing all together but in Russia during the time of persecution when they got together they would sing like um they would sing like that so the neighbors wouldn't notice they were singing hymns and no one would report them to the police they couldn't sing and that's something to do with time and situations but the church is not being built because of one situation or one set of circumstances it's being built by the command of God from all eternity the church is fulfilling the heart of God from all eternity and the command has gone forth from eternity and sin has come in to

hinder the fulfillment of God's plan Satan has done his best to hinder God's plan but God always will fulfill and return to and abide in what he said in the beginning and God will always fulfill it remember that no matter what Satan does or sin does God will never deviate from his original plan and his original plan is that the church be built what is the church well the church comes from the heart of love of God it's his people it is made by love it is made for love the whole purpose of the church is the love of God born from the love of God and for the love of God now let's turn to the new testament and let us see something about this also there in Ephesians chapter 5 and this will introduce you into the context of preaching and the church here's Ephesians chapter 5 and we have here um

verse 25 husbands love your wives wonderful isn't it do you like that one this is the command of scripture husbands love your wives now you'll notice it doesn't say make them submit to you that would be the word dominate i remember once a man quite seriously saying to his wife when she gave her opinion and she was not quite agreeing with him he said Ephesians 5 and i've forgotten the verse 25 no he didn't say that verse he said 22 Ephesians 5 22 wives submit and i thought well i think you ought to also read or perhaps only read Ephesians 5 25 the bible doesn't say dominate it says love and if you want your wife to submit to you the best thing you can ever do is love her isn't that wonderful so that's the way of God his command are clear wives must submit that's your command from God not

your husband husbands must love that's your command from God it doesn't say dominate it says love and then it says love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her or it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that he might present her to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she should be holy and without blemish pray the lord now that is God's will for the church and you'll notice in verse 25 that the reason for everything that's to do with preaching is this Christ loved the church that's the reason there are preachers because Christ loved the church the reason that God is doing things and we'll look at what God is doing is because of the love of God and every preacher must know

that the reason he is preaching is because Christ loved the church and that is his reason where the reason we're here tonight is because Christ loves you and he wants to do things in you for you so he may present you to himself now you notice the tense there it says Christ loved the church you know that the bible says that God so loved the world who said that Jesus Jesus said it John wrote it quoting Jesus Christ Jesus Christ said those words to Nicodemus they were sitting together in upper room and Jesus said to him he'd gone through the new birth he talked about the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness and then he said

well the son of man must be lifted up and he said because for and he looked at Nicodemus and he said for God so loved the world this is Jesus speaking to Nicodemus

for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life now notice again the tenses he didn't say God loves the world that he will give his son you notice that he said God so loved the world that he has given his son but Jesus wasn't crucified at that point he hadn't been crucified that was yet a future event but Jesus speaking to Nicodemus said God so loved the world that he gave and the reason we know the love of God tonight is because God loved the world you only know that God loves you because he loves you what do I mean the love of God is not something that he will do tonight oh I love you tonight for example when I met my wife for the first time and got to know her I began to love her I could not have

said of her that I had loved her before I met her I had never couldn't even imagine I never knew she existed didn't know her name I had not loved her before I met her because I did not know her and so I met her and I fell in love with her beautiful lovely but you see the danger of that is and this is always a danger with human love is that as easily as you fall in love you fall out of love you can start loving you can stop loving so God doesn't look at you and say oh I love you tonight because you've come to this meeting and you're a good boy good girl well done I love you God doesn't sing like that God loves you because he loves you now my wife sometimes said to me I'm pleased you didn't need me before before you did because if you'd known me when I wasn't a Christian you would never

have never looked at me twice and I say to her well it's a good job you didn't know me when I was otherwise you wouldn't have looked at me and the truth is that he would not have loved me but God loved me you begin to understand what I'm saying God loved me therefore he loves me God loved the prostitutes in this city tonight he loved them he loved them so much that he gave his son for them they don't know it but when you go and witness to a person who is in desperate need and their life is in a mess you're not going to say to them God will love you if you turn to him you're not saying that you're not going to say to anybody if you believe in God God will begin to you know do things you were saying God has loved you from before you were born God loved you in your worst state God loved you

in your deepest rebellion God loved you in your deepest sin he loves you and because God loved me he loves me and the Bible lays great emphasis on this that what God did before the foundation of the world determines what he does in time and the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world God so loved the world that he gave and when Jesus was stood before Nicodemus and said God had given his son he was the son that was given he was given in the incarnation and he was given on the cross but Jesus did not say he will give me he said he's given me it's done it's settled it only awaits the moment of fulfillment but it's done God loved us and has given his son for us from before the foundation of the world now this means for you and me this wonderful truth that there is nothing that

you or I can do to increase the love of God for us isn't that wonderful because it also means that nothing you and I can ever do to decrease his love for us you cannot change the love of God he loved you because he loved you it's it's what he is from the source of eternity in time and when we begin to look at the church we are not looking at the products of Paul's imagination in the first century we are looking at the products of God's will and heart from before the creation of the world this is what God created the world for we are the reason that this world exists the church he loves us and that command there goes right from the beginning he loved us he loved all men and would that all men should be saved and so he tells us here also that husbands ought to love their wives as Christ

also loved the church and gave himself for it and then it takes us on to the next step in this that he gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word so you now know that the love of God means that he wants to wash love wants to make clean love wants to purify love wants to sanctify love wants to wash you now let's turn to another uh scripture this time in John chapter 12 sorry chapter 13 this is Jesus washing his disciples feet what i am coming to tonight is this that the church is a place of washing it's a place of washing if the church is not a place of washing it is not the church there are certain things that make the church what it but the church is above all a place of washing and it's the washings of love it's a place of

refreshing it's a place to be said oh wonderfully refreshed again your your life is renewed you know that people should not come dragging their feet on a Sunday morning to the meetings they can only do one reason they should ever do that it's because they do not know the refreshings of the holy ghost once you know the refreshings of the holy ghost you you want to be in the church but you see this is why as we're coming to it you have to see that the preaching ministry is a central ministry we're going to come to it the preaching ministry and i don't know the elders aren't here tonight but maybe they'll listen to the tape i don't know but the thing is that whatever whatever about the preachers in every place the preaching ministry is of vital importance in the life of the local church

because it's told us there in ephesians that he's going to wash it with the water of the word that is one of the primary functions in the church the washing of the saints with the water of the word i hope you'll be washed tonight because you see what they're saying here is that the preaching ministry or that we're talking now about ministries there's no gifts of the spirit in one way there's no gifts called preaching is there doesn't say there's a gift of the spirit called preaching strange isn't it there's a gift of prophecy various gifts we know about ministries we know about but preaching is really a means of various ministries various functions evangelists preach and pastors preach teach and all kinds of things apostles preach what they are doing is declaring something from the heart

of god that is a means for god to come to his people and wash us and we are we have to see this vital realm of preaching you see if you went to the modern 20th century i know we know the 21st century have to change our thinking a little bit but the 20th century man loves discussion discussion will not wash you the church will not be washed by discussion groups and in although you may find a place for discussion groups maybe an evangelistic context or whatever fine but the truth is there is a ministry of god for the washing of his church and it must go on if we have discussion groups fine in their place all right but they do not nor can they replace the preaching ministry now here in john chapter 13 we have the washing of the disciples feet now you would say this is not preaching and

that's absolutely true because nobody is washed by preaching alone we're not washed by preaching on his own we're washed by the love of god in the power of the holy spirit and that is something that is wider than the preaching ministry do you know that you could wash each other's feet by the humility of love towards each other tonight those are elements of the love of god if there is humility and there is love then people will be washed the greatest power to wash each other is love and when we consider the church so if i want to describe what the church is the church is a labor of love that's how i describe the church it's a labor of love i didn't say a labor of love i said a labor of love all right there may be loves labor but there's a labor what is this great place of washing and here

in chapter 13 jesus verse 3 knowing that the father had given all things into his hands you'll notice again the tense he uses he doesn't say that the father was going to give all things into his hands the bible uses

incredible tenses it says he has chosen us from the foundation of the world god is not making his mind up in time god has made his mind up in eternity he has chosen us now you can get tied up in knots what all that means and if you've got that kind of mind that wants to have everything worked out i am sorry for you i am not a calvinist i am not an armenian armenian i'm not armenian either but i am not a calvinist i am a believer in new testament truth i believe in free destination because the new testament does i believe in free choice man has free will how far it goes we

could explore sometime but i am not a calvinist and i am not an armenian but god has chosen us from the foundation of the world and it tells us here that he is jesus knowing that the father had given all things into his hands it was done before it was done isn't that wonderful when you are saved you are entering into what was done from before the foundation of the world this means that my salvation is not dependent on a something that happens in time it's depending on something that is settled at the bedrock of eternity it's wonderful to realize i am coming through salvation to touch with eternal reality and power jesus knowing that all done all settled how else could he have faced the cross except knowing it was all done in the will of god you know that the one thing that will rob

you of rest is to doubt that god is in control once you doubt that you will lose rest because if god is not in control what is who is is it sickness is it chance is it satan is it is it the government is it bill clinton is it president yeltsin i praise god that the world does not lie in their hands remember a photograph of president nixon meeting now to come the daily express 1971 i think it was or 73 something like that i can't remember all those years ago and there he was they were shaking hands it was a big sheet there in those days and there it was they were shaking the whole world in their hands i didn't know then how foolish that word was i wasn't a believer but i i the whole world is not in the hands of men it's in the hands of god praise god they have not got the power to push the

button or whatever they don't have it and we have to know it we have to know who god is he's sovereign he's loving merciful kind and here he is knowing these things that he was come from god and went to god he rises from supper laid aside his garments took a towel and girded himself like a slave is this a preparation for preaching ministry lay aside your garments and dress yourself like a slave embrace poverty in the preaching ministry if you want to make a lot of money don't enter into the preaching ministry is there no money to be made in it oh yes you know how to get money out of people you can do it but you will betray your ministry he embraced poverty you know have you ever thought of embracing poverty a preacher may have to do it do you know when they walk through the cornfields on

the sabbath day they pluck the ears of corn they rub them and they eat them do you know what that means they were hungry it means that they have nothing to eat they were with jesus and he had not fed them you may say oh doesn't he feed people of course he feeds people and there are days when he lets us go hungry for a pilgrim who may trust him that doesn't mean to say he's cruel he's doing things with us he let them feel poverty why because he became poor for our sakes that we may be made rich but not that we may be made millionaires and have gold taps and you know he wanted us to know the wonder of grace jesus became poor for our sakes he embraced it gladly now he's there dressed as a slave by the way you can embrace poverty in the way you live to make others rich did you know that you

might have a fantastic salary you might have a job that enables you to have a great big car and a great big house and you can say no i'm going to have a small house i'm going to have a modest car i'm going to tailor my income to my needs and i'm going to give everything else away you can embrace poverty and serve the lord we haven't talked about money in the church yet have we we'll do that one time all right we'll

talk about your money and my money yeah we're going to have a collection that night don't worry i've read up your money but you see people oh god can make me rich and you know i remember hearing on the news in the morning about a nigerian preacher had a fleet of great big cars and all this and houses and i've heard of preachers in america with gold taps and swimming

pools and i think god made them rich why does he make men rich so that they may give it away as jesus would give it away god's given you money he's given it to meet your needs and the serpent to do his will with it praise god so you can embrace poverty or you can embrace your riches and say this is great god's made me rich full stop we're in a rich nation we are rich and i listen to the news and i listen to various things about wages rising and this thing happening and that thing happening anyway there is verse uh four he's put on the garments of the slaves he's poured water into a basin this is the church and he's begun to wash the disciples feet and to wipe them with the towel they're with he was good he was dressed like a slave and washed their feet isn't it wonderful what was he doing

he was washing them with his humility and with his love i've been to a church where this was practiced foot washing and there are churches where they practice foot washing as regularly as we practice communion i remember when i went to that church didn't wash my feet they didn't do it that night uh thank you very much aren't i glad you haven't been well it's good if i can't hear what everybody's saying there the thing is that there were certain people there who got they had to do it they got their bowl out at the end of the meeting and they washed their feet at the back of the hall they were so convinced of this being part of church life they had to wash each other's feet they wouldn't leave unless they'd done it but of course this is not the real purpose is that the actual physical

washing of feet is not the thing it's the humility you know when you are together you are to notice each other and be observant of each other's needs meet them do you know i tell you how you know one of the things one of the great prayers that we can pray is lord speak to me you ever said that lord speak to me and god could say well les why should i speak to a whinging whining selfish man les what do you always talk to you about yourself what do you need more assurance what do you want to hear me say les i want to talk to you les about others do you want me to talk to you about yourself there's only one way to hear god's voice to be in tune with god and god is not selfish and if you're selfish you will be deaf as opposed to god speaking to you will rebuke you your selfishness in one way

or another he will have to seek to bring you from it god wants to minister life and washing and cleansing now if a person is a rebel and is far away from god he'll speak to them in loving entreaty they'll do all kinds of things but if we're his people and we're saying speak to me speak to me speak to me i said what do you want me to talk to you about because he's saying i want to speak to the world i want to speak to my church i have things to say and i want a channel you want to hear me speak then be a channel of love i will speak to you but i will want you to obey what i ask you to do will be to go and love people go and love them why do people not hear the voice of the lord is he not able to speak oh there are many reasons but here is one of them god speaks in accordance with his

nature he does not speak according to our nature you understand what i'm saying if he has to speak against it then he will speak against it but you can't tell me you hear and know the voice of the lord if you're against god's nature you don't know he has to shake you and rattle you god is a speaking god if only there is a humble repentant heart willing to go before him and say lord show me what to pray today who do you want me to pray for who do you want me to pray for because when you go to the lord i can tell guarantee you that i know who you'll pray for you'll pray for one or two people that you love very wonderful but you

have to pray for lots and lots of other people whom god loves our list for short is a long speak to me lord show me how to pray i want you to listen to me says god i

will teach you to pray i will teach you to preach i will teach you to prophesy i will teach you to hear my voice i want you to be an instrument of love in the hands of god i don't want you to be an instrument of selfishness for your own end you know the the easiest way to find yourself in a dead-ending prayer is to ask selfish prayers you will get nowhere and the fact that you get nowhere is to you an indication not that god is not with you but that you are asking the wrong prayers for the wrong reasons and you need to go back to basics and say lord what am i doing wrong why do i have no joy in prayer why do i get nowhere in prayer why don't i find any why is everything closed to me god is saying because your heart is not right with me you are not an intercessor unless you love people and

are prepared to lay your life down to love them and listen to god for them he's pouring water and wash humility you know that when they got to this upper room there was a bowl at the door all made ready everything was ready but the astonishing thing is here no one washed anybody's feet until jesus did it why i suspect it was because they all thought he should do it she should do it somebody else should do that job best thing is laying in your heart you say i will do it everything you see that he's doing you should have in your heart this statement i will do it i will do it he come up to simon peter and said peter said to him lord you wash my feet jesus answered and said to him what i do you know not now but you shall know hereafter peter said unto him you shall never wash my feet jesus

answered him if i wash you not you have no part with me simon peter said unto him lord not my feet only but also my hands and my head a radical man he would always think of one to exchange the other no no oh yes yes radical he wanted first nothing and everything jesus said to him he that is washed needeth not say to wash his feet but it clean every wit and you are clean but not all of you spoke of jesus what a tremendous statement that when god has really washed you with the baptism in the spirit and cleansed you there's blood there's the spirit of god there's purging there's cleansing when you're being made clean you need continual washing you do need it but not the same radical way you needed in the beginning isn't that tremendous every one of us needs the continual washing but we

don't need new birth every day praise god there is a radical washing and there is a continual washing i hope you know the radical washing the purging of your life from sin but there's the love of god now here's the love of god when you meet with one another when you serve one another when you help one another and this is true not only of the church but also the wider church you know that god has many sheep in fact as you look around you you can see sheep everywhere some of them are found some of them are lost but he looks on them all with the shepherd's heart he doesn't say oh no no no i don't want this one he wants everybody and there is a ministry to gather his sheep and there is a ministry to feed his sheep and so on but the shepherd's heart use everybody as a sheep or as a potential

one when you see it's lost it needs to be found here he is this is the church being washed you are to go wash and serve and love the foundation of the church is love the reason for the church is love when there is love there is washing all right now let's look a little bit at the preaching ministry and i i've got a number of things here that i've written down about the preaching ministry um and uh what can i say what are the important things about the preaching is i've got a lot of points here we don't necessarily go through them all but um you know that paul said for example christ sent me not to baptize but to preach i'd love to preach up in the baptist church uh you understand christ sent me not to baptize but to preach and jesus did not baptize with water he got instructed his

apostles to do it for him he preached jesus said these words i must preach the gospel to others it is also oh you heard words i must preach tremendous to think that jesus was a preacher and um you know it tells us for example that uh the apostles were sent forth to preach jesus came forth to preach and uh you know that one of the things about the preaching ministry now that is the it's all founded in this ministry of love and humility and washing of the saints but it is a ministry conferred by god not all our apostles of the scripture not all preach and as i said last week the preaching ministry needs to be nourished by the church not just by those who have the ministry so we are not all preachers but we are all involved in preaching you know one of the things about this involvement of us

all in preaching is that when someone comes to hear the preaching of the gospel amongst us it is not simply the preacher they listen to it is the atmosphere of the congregation listening that they enter into you know that any preacher will tell you that a lot of his preaching is determined by the congregation with me that's a very common phrase but you can find this if you go if you've ever taught anybody anything is true it's the attitude of the the people listening to you know somebody didn't want to learn if you i teach german french uh and you know sometimes if i've got a student doesn't want to learn german and they don't want to you say do this for your homework and they come next week and they haven't learned a word and they do it what's the past tense in german and they explain it

and then three minutes later said now can you repeat it for me they said no they get it all wrong and you explain it again and again and it's discouraging it doesn't seem clear to you anymore you think well it's complicated then you find other students who's with you wants to understand listens goes over learns it say it once and they've got it i have students like that not all of them but you know that when we come together preaching is a community action it's an action of the church not just of the preacher you are involved in the preaching ministry well if not we could always have a set of microphones and you could stay at home and tune in you can't do it you know the people think i can just go and listen to a tape i'll get the tape afterwards what if we could all get the tape

afterwards you know sometimes i think that if people stopped coming to meetings because they could get the tape i would say don't stop the taping if they don't come here because they can get the tape then it should not be taped if it stopped people coming now i get blessed by tapes but preaching is an act of in the church it's an act wider than the church as well but you'll find this that where there is preaching ministry and the power of the holy ghost and god raises up preaching people are drawn people bring their friends people want others to come there is something happening in the hearts of people where there is preaching so we are not to neglect the ministry of preaching it is a central function of the church we are to nourish it we are to pray for it we are to we are to cover the

washing of our own lives and of other lives with preaching ministry men who are called are to give themselves to it it says in this is a second point the first point where we're not all preachers but it is a joint act of us all we're all involved in it's my first point the second point out here is 1 Peter 4 verses 10 and 11 it says if any man speak let him speak of the oracles of god so he doesn't just jump up and say well i never heard a good story and i'll just read a verse and tell that story that'll be all right i've got my testimony to fall back on that'll do because i can always tell my testimony preaching is not just your testimony if you haven't got a testimony you should never preach really god has laid his hand on you you've got something to say that's true everyone's got a

testimony in some way god is working in your life god is convincing you of truth but preaching is not your experience preaching is god's word to men and women it's the oracle of god it's not my experience he

uses my experience but it is god in his desire to speak to men and women so my third point is this 1 Timothy 5 17 1 Timothy 5 17 they who labor in the word and doctrine if you want the preaching ministry to grow men must labor in the word and in doctrine they must work hard at it they must read the scriptures they must read them much and consistently you labor in reading meditation and prayer you prepare the text every preacher must prepare his text and every preacher must prepare his heart we are using the scripture not using it for our own ideas we are preaching what the scripture

says i know a man who was a preacher for so many years he must be a preacher now for about 40 years i remember asking him about 15 years ago talking to him he said he had never read the bible through he's been a preacher at that point for 25 years he only did thematic bible studies that means he follows themes god had his concordance followed a word followed it through he never read the whole bible so what he did was he started from what he thought the bible said then he found the text to prove it was what the bible said and then he preached what he thought the bible said you can imagine i have other difficulties with this preacher we are not to preach what we think the bible says before we've read it we are to read the bible ask ourselves what does it mean you know many preachers i know

they preach what their group says they don't preach what the bible says they preach what their group says their group have one or two great themes you know we believe that this and this and this or that and that and that so that's what we preach once twice three times every now and again the same old testaments coming out very good but not edifying what you're hearing is what that group believe the bible says not what the bible says praise god you want to be a preacher don't preach your favorite text only start reading from this chapter read that chapter make sure you understand that chapter go to the next chapter and read and read and read and go on sometimes you'll have to read a chapter 10 times before you understand it so if you're in romans you might read 10 chapters a day but you

only read one chapter all right you don't start in chapter 1 and reach chapter 10 you start in chapter 1 and reach chapter 1 you've read 10 chapters and you're beginning to understand it and you don't rush to the bits you understand miss the bits you don't you linger by the bits you don't understand and you go quickly with the bits you do what does this mean lord i don't understand it it's hard you'll find the scripture hard i don't know what that means lord so i'll try those who labor in the word and in doctrine i don't understand it lord and i can't find any concordance or any bible dictionaries to explain it either that's pretty typical of bible commentary bible commentaries tell you what you already knew but they never tell you what you didn't know you can't know i found that out too

but i i've found this out many times and i said what does that mean lord i'll go to all the commentaries none of them will help me and i'll come back i think right i'm on my own now at least i know where i am there's a famous quote by dryden how commentators each dark passage shun and hold their farthing candle to the sun do you get it you're pointing your torch at the sun you say that's the sun everybody and when they said what's in that dark corner over here they said well that's i don't know but that's the sun all right you've got to labor in the word and doctrine and if you do you are counted worthy of double honor elders who labor in the word and doctrine are counted worthy of double honor i don't know what that means i really get two christmas cards out of one i don't know but um i

don't know what double honor is twice nothing is nothing but anyway okay it shows you're supposed to honor your elders i don't mean the older ones i mean those who are elder those who labor in the word and doctrine encourage them all right now the gospel is our expertise this is another point now further point whatever number you've got i'm not going to give you all my numbers here because i've got more than i'm

giving you but the thing is the gospel is our field the gospel is the power of god to salvation you know once i heard of somebody who was an alcoholic and they heard the gospel didn't help went to meetings heard the gospel didn't help them then they went to a counselor and the counselor said well let me go into this psychologically what's the problem what's making you turn to

alcohol and he went followed it through why do people turn to alcohol and as he went into it he found that the reason was he had a nagging wife all right turned him to alcohol so he found out that if he was going to cure this man he had to talk to his wife so he got her into counseling she was very amenable oh very wonderful yes and it worked got him off of alcohol through counseling what a gospel you got problems it's your wife brother all right let me give the account to your wife and count it he said the point i'm making is this it worked but he wasn't saved he wasn't saved got him over alcohol but it didn't get him saved and there are many things you can do oh if i get them to hear this there's a psychotherapy let's say christian psychologist i'm not saying that it's all wrong if a

christian psychologist gives you the gospel that's great but if they give you psychology that's humanism the gospel is the power of christ just imagine if a psychologist if a man alcoholic came to me and said i've got problems how do i get off alcohol i could say well i know one way that's if your wife changes apparently and that's true apparently if that's his problem but i know another way even if his wife gets worse even if she becomes a witch even if she casts spells on him to make him drink more if she does the worst things possible that a woman could ever do if he believes jesus he's free because i don't have a help i have the answer i can have a man in front of me who is mad insane who needs drugs and who needs restraint and who needs counseling and psychology and all but if i can

give him the gospel he can be totally changed by the power of god and you have to know that the church has the gospel the church ceases to preach when it loses its conviction in the power of the gospel we cast around further helps because we don't believe the gospel i believe there's many ways to help men but there's only one way to save them some people say well you've got better that way you've got better that way you're getting better you know used to be worse used to be worse do you know i observe people as you do i could give you loads of examples of people who have got better they're giving up smoking they're drinking less more moderate so i'll tell you what's changed them age experience hardship in some cases danger of losing job i know one man who used to drink so much one day he

hit somebody in a pub he nearly lost his job he was disciplined he stopped drinking from that day never heard the gospel people change they get better for all kinds of reasons oh they're better that's not my question is he saved are you saved is your heart made new by the power of the blood of christ or are you being patched up by humanism humanism has no place in the church we are not christian humanists we are not preaching evolution you are not saved by a course of bible study you are saved by the power of god when you believe in christ and repent from your sin and that's the only way a man can be saved it's plead god by the foolishness of preaching that men should be saved praise god isn't that incredible we are to preach the gospel but we're good to do that we have to believe it we

have to believe that there is one context in which people can best be served in our generation preaching you are to make context whereby people hear the preaching of the word of god one thing i believe with all my heart is to get people in to hear the word of god whatever you do you get them to hear the word of god i am very careful to if i meet an evangelist somebody who's got an evangelist to cultivate that relationship bring them into the church create meetings whereby people can be brought to hear the preaching of god's word because i believe it and i know that there is one power to save men and women it's anointed

preaching let's move on preaching is not light or trivial it's not a joke it is the most serious occupation of men's minds of men's lives it is the most sober occupation

and i quote here a man named baxter he said i preached as never sure to preach again and as a dying man to dying men when robert murray mcshane preached he walked into the church or rather from where he sat he would walk among the congregation he used to preach from a pulpit he would go to that pulpit and he just said that people wept at the look on his face as he prepared to speak to them we are about eternal business people on another point now people are afraid of emotion afraid of emotion i suppose we could be emotional and play on people's emotions but do you know that you are an emotional person one of the great tragedies of our age is that people have said intellect versus emotion do you know that your mind can be fired with emotion truth can stir you you can be all analytical and

cold and but truth should stir you it should stir the people of god it should stir everybody now if i were to encourage preachers in a congregation i would say start by encouraging people to share a little word don't give people preaching ministry before they've shown they have gift encourage people to share but don't assume yes we need opportunities to share we need opportunities to minister and as people minister you will learn to discern who has the gift they will know it others will know it and it will be clear create opportunities but don't make it a free fall next point we've already covered it really is that bible preaching is the preaching of what god says in the text it is not what we've already covered it really but i believe this with all my heart that people need to read the

bible they need to read verse by verse sometimes they need to spend an hour reading a chapter sometimes they need to spend an hour reading a verse you know i remember hearing i think it's david paulson said he went to a bible college and was talking i think it was david paulson he said that he went to a bible college and he was talking to the principal about the bible college and about the different courses they held and the principal said do you know that every year this is i think in the 70s or 80s this this took place he said that every year we have a new batch of bible students and he said do you know that every year the bible knowledge is less in each new year he had noticed it and he'd been in that principal his principal for many years so he's noticed it since the 50s and going

down he said every new batch of students coming in they know less of the bible than the previous batch and i believe it's true particularly now that bible reading i would say among christians is at an all-time low am i speaking of you know do you read the bible once a year and does that satisfy you it wouldn't satisfy me reading the bible once a year does not satisfy me reading the bible once a year does not mean i've studied the bible and i know it doesn't mean that for you either you've read it once a year fine but you have to study it in addition my last point from the preaching ministry is you must be released preachers must be released to preach no use being all bound up in your mind or in your emotions and standing there like a coalfish delivering something there has to be release

now this release is something that must take place in the spirit of a man he must be released where does it take place it takes place in prayer there's release in prayer where your whole being is set free sometimes it takes place when you shout sometimes it takes place when you've met jesus in his way and you believe him but something is released and you let go and you're free suddenly maybe the day you're baptized in the spirit maybe who knows what date is but one of the key things is release and if a man isn't releasing his praying he can't be releasing his preaching you know i watch people sing i don't do it all the time i don't spend my life watching people sing but i can see people who are not released in singing and i think well they are released in their spirit when god's

released you you want to pour out when you sing you can tell a congregation that's released they make noise but it isn't just the noise it's the heart you hear when i hear people sing i want to hear their heart when i hear them pray i want to hear their heart and when i hear people preach i want to hear their heart we're in a heart life aren't we we want release well god has got to be released well we've talked about it this is husbands love your wives as christ also loved the church and gave himself for it that he might wash her with the water of the word that he might present her to himself as spotless bride amen well let's pray shall we look

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