

# Preaching the Word of God

by William Gouge

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*William Gouge emphasizes the importance of preaching the pure word of God, grounded in Scripture, to glorify God and transform lives.*

**Scripture:** 2 Peter 1:21

**Topics:** "Preaching God", "Ministerial Integrity"

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## Description

William Gouge preaches about the significance of preaching as 'The Word of God,' emphasizing that true ministers of God speak the word of God when exercising their ministerial function. The word of God is identified in four aspects: the primary author being God, the subject matter being the will of God, the purpose being the glory of God, and the powerful effect it has in bringing salvation and obedience to Christ. Ministers are warned not to deviate from God's word, with a curse pronounced against those who preach any other word.

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## Transcript

How Preaching May be Called "The Word of God"

The subject matter to be preached is here called "the word of God." Although that which is spoken by ministers is only the sound of a man's voice, yet that which true ministers of God preach in exercising their ministerial function is the word of God. Thus it is said of the apostles, "They spoke the word of God," Acts 4:31, and it is said of the people of Antioch, that "almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God," Acts 13:44.

That which ministers do or ought to preach is called the word of God in four respects.

1. In regard to the primary author of it, which is God. God did immediately inspire extraordinary ministers, and thereby informed them in his will. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Peter 1:21. Therefore they would commonly use these introductory phrases, "The word of the Lord," Hosea 1:1; "Thus says the Lord," Isa 7:7; and an apostle says, "I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you," 1 Cor. 11:23. As for ordinary ministers, they have God's word written and left upon record for their use, "For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. 3:16. They therefore that ground what they preach upon the Scripture, and deliver nothing but what is agreeable to it, preach the word of God.

2. In regard to the subject-matter which they preach, which is the will of God; as the apostle exhorts, to "understand what the will of the Lord is," Eph. 5:17, and to "prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God," Rom. 12:2.

3. In regard to the purpose of preaching, which is the glory of God, and making known "the manifold wisdom of God," Eph. 3:10.

4. In regard to the mighty effect and power of it, for preaching God's word is "the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16. Preaching the word of God is "mighty through God to bring every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. 10:4,5. For "the word of God is quick and powerful," etc., Heb. 4:12.

So close ought ministers to hold to God's word in their preaching, that they should not dare to swerve away from it in anything. The apostle pronounces a curse against him, whosoever he is, that shall preach any other word, Gal. 1:8,9.

Therefore we have just cause to avoid such teachers as preach contrary to this doctrine, Rom. 16:17, 2 John 10. The whole body of Roman Catholicism is to be rejected for this reason. So are the manifold errors and heresies which have been broached in former ages, and in this our age. The feigning of new light and immediate inspiration in these days is a mere pretence.

#### The Right Hearing of Preaching

by this subject matter of preaching the word of God, we may receive a good direction to observe two caveats enjoined by Christ concerning hearing:

The first is concerning the matter which we hear, "Take heed what you hear," Mark 4:24. We must hear nothing with approval except what we know to be the word of God. We must, therefore, be well acquainted with the Scriptures ourselves, and by them test the things which we hear, whether they are the word of God or not, as the men of Berea did, Acts 17:11.

The second caveat is concerning the manner of hearing, "Take heed how you hear," Luke 18:18. That which we know to be grounded upon the Scriptures we must receive, "not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God," 1 Thess. 2:13. We must with reverence attend to it; we must in our hearts believe, and we must in our lives obey it.

#### Preach the Pure Word

It is God's word that does convert, quicken, comfort, and build up, or, on the other side, wound and beat down. What is the reason that there was so great an alteration made by the ministry of Christ and his disciples, by the apostles and others after them, indeed, by Luther, and other ministers of reformed churches? They did not preach traditions of elders like the scribes; nor men's inventions like the Roman Catholics do. They preached the pure word of God. The more purely God's word is preached, the more deeply it pierces and the more kindly it works.

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