

# O Come, Let Us Worship – IV

## The Peculiar Work of the Preached Word

**Introduction** – The authority of the pulpit has vanished, and our culture hates preaching. We live in a day that likes ‘sharing’ and ‘talks’ with skits and special music. Even a church with a higher view of preaching (like ours) needs to recover a biblical view of the pulpit, lest we simply consider this time a lecture from a Bible-teacher.

**The Preacher and the Word** (1 Tim 4:1-16, 2 Tim 3:16-4:5) – Besides the requirement of being a qualified elder (1 Tim 3), the preacher is to be a man given to instructing, building up, and correcting the flock around him.

**An Example** - The ‘man of God’, like Timothy, is an ordained elder, set aside for the ministry of the Word. His life must be an example as to what he teaches (1 Tim 4:12). He must be able to correct the false teachings of his day and avoid the temptation of tickling itching ears. He must meditate on these things, and then give himself entirely to command and teach them.

**The Power of the Preached Word** - The ‘man of God’ is to trust solely in the Word of God as sufficient to instruct his flock in all righteousness. He does not need any other doctrines than what is found in the Word. The Word is central to the inception of our spiritual life (James 1:18, 1 Pet 1:22-25) and in our growth in faith and practice (Deut 8:3, 32:46-47). But notice that while he is exhorted to read the Word (publicly), he is commanded to preach the Word. In other words, God intends to use the fallible words of a fallible man in a more efficacious manner than if he simply read the infallible text. And while there are multitudes of applications for the elders of the church in employing these words in all kinds of teaching situations, a very important application Paul has in mind is the preaching of the Word in the assembly of God’s people. (see also 1 Cor 1:18, 21, Titus 1:1-3, 1 Pet 1:23-25)

**The Corporate Assembly and the Preached Word** (Heb 12:22-24, Rom 10:1-17) – This assembly, gathered at Mt. Zion, has come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. We have not simply gathered to hear about Jesus. We have come to hear the voice of Jesus.

**Faith Comes by Preaching** – In Romans 10:17 we read, “*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*”. But we must not forget the context of Romans 10. It is hearing the Word preached that Paul is emphasizing here (vv 13-14). And it is here that we see that more is happening in preaching than simply the act of a man.

**Hearing Christ** – Romans 10:14 does not actually contain the word ‘of’ in the Greek. Other verses contain the same grammatical structure, but are not translated this way, for instance, in Rev 11:12 (they heard *of* a loud voice....) or John 10:8 (the sheep did not hear *of* them). Simply put, the word ‘of’ should not be in verse 14. Paul is not saying that we must hear *about* Christ, but that we must hear Christ Himself. And this is what Jesus taught as well (John 5:24-25; 10:2-3, 16, 27; 18:37)

**When Do We Hear Christ?** – Jesus taught that when they heard His commissioned disciples, they heard Him (Luke 10:16) and when they received these preachers, they received Christ (Matt 10:40). Jesus closely identifies himself with His faithful servants. Paul understands this to be the case in his preaching as well (Gal 4:13-14, Eph 4:21, 1 Thess 2:13).

**Implications and Applications** – Once we see this from the scriptures, it puts all kinds of related items in perspective.

**The Sermon and the Word of God** – We are not saying that these two are identical. We are not giving ‘the gift of prophesy’ to the preacher. We must always examine what is heard, measured against the scripture, for which the Bereans were commended (Acts 17:10-11). Nevertheless, when the Word is faithfully preached (and not simply read), the voice of Christ is heard.

**Trembling in our Voice** – This gives no room for arrogance or pride for the preacher. Rightly understood, it humbles him and leaves him with no expectation for spiritual birth or nurture to occur outside of the work of God in his preaching (and sometimes in spite of it). On behalf of Christ he will proclaim, “be reconciled with God!” (2 Cor 5:20).

**Our Approach to Mt. Zion** – We continue to come back to this. As we grow in our understanding of this assembly, we should come to this service of worship with greater and greater expectancy, and with greater and greater faith (Heb 4:2). You should also realize the solemn obligation to be present here in a much greater way, to give careful attention to the things that are spoken and to carefully examine the scriptures to see if those things are so.

**Preacher and Congregation** – It should humble us all. We have come into the heavens. We are hearing the voice of Christ. And *our God is a consuming fire*. May He find our offering a pleasing aroma, a pleasant meal to be consumed. In Christ, He will.