

Preaching and Fear

IN: Some studies suggest greatest fear is speaking publicly → Pastoring involves preaching, going to have to deal with this → Need learn/see fear and how it will affect our preaching

Ac 18:9–10 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent;¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."

1) The Fear Factor

a) Need to see how fear will affect your preaching

- i) Make timid: Some men cannot *preach or proclaim* the word b/c of fear → Talk/dialogue/discuss/share
 - (a) Fear: Looking foolish, out/comfort zone → Reality this is pride: Won't let go of 'cool' or whatever it may be
 - (1) *1 Co 14:8 For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?*
- ii) Change content: Some won't preach on certain subjects, or change content depending on who is in church
 - (a) HS, end times, money, sin – don't want to scare off your 'choice' couple
 - (b) Fear says: If this subject makes me uncomfortable – change it, water it down
- iii) Can't bring to decision: Essence of preaching is 'this is what God said, now what will YOU do?'
 - (a) BUT some don't want to put a point on it – just share some ideas and dismiss church
 - (1) Altar calls: "Maybe you want to experience the blessing of God, God will help you, etc" → Never challenge to repent, confess, turn

b) But your preaching will affect the output of your ministry

- i) *Jn 21:15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."*
 - (a) Large part of pastoring is feeding your flock via preaching
- ii) IF timid: Word is presented as an option/suggestion → No challenge to wake up and pay attention
 - (a) Practical: Your passion is what gets people's attention!
- iii) IF Change content: B/c feel you might offend people, those people will not be convicted *when they need to be!*
 - (a) Strength/fellowship for decades: PM preaching what needs to be said, w/o intentional offense but ALSO w/o beating around bush

2) Decoding Fear

a) When give in to fear it demonstrates that we don't understand how preaching works

- i) Fear says: I'm afraid of what they'll think about *ME*, I don't want to be embarrassed, uncomfortable ... *ME!*
 - (a) Actually saying we're concerned about how people will respond to us – personally
- ii) Preaching: Actually transmission of God's word to a desperate heart – people respond to WOG and God Himself – not us!
 - (a) Think about Peter: Cared very much about how people viewed him – BUT then he preached:
 - (1) *Ac 2:36–37 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
- iii) POINT: fear is a symptom of relying on US more than relying on GOD

b) Giving in to fear also a demonstration that we don't fully trust God's word

- i) If we quiet down, change subjects, won't drive it home – whatever – we're saying "God you were lying!"
 - (a) Fear says: If this subject makes me uncomfortable – change it; if altar call is bombing, people aren't responding
- ii) *Je 1:6–8 Then said I: "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth."*⁷ But the Lord said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord.
- iii) Preaching will go good and bad – for every preacher – but the confidence we need: God's word is true!

3) Beating Fear

a) Spiritual Dimension to Beating Fear

- i) Have to recognize that we possess dominion by the promises of God:
 - (a) *Ro 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*
 - (b) *1 Jn 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

ii) Actually develop a spiritual condition that combats fear:

- (a) I pray against fear: Sometimes before preaching or some event: "*I rebuke the spirit of fear*"

b) Practical things that must be involved: Fear is a human emotion, you can get power over it

- i) Preparation: The better you are prepared the less you will be afraid
 - (a) Don't ever just 'wing it!' – Ministry suicide! → Take every ministry opportunity seriously
 - (1) I prepared for altar calls as if I was preaching Sunday AM in conference – it mattered to me

- ii) Practice: At some level fear is something that is conquered with time & experience
 - (a) I was more nervous 1st altar call than 1st conference – it's just a time issue

- iii) Perspective: Remember that people aren't judging you, analyzing you – they want to hear from God
 - (a) If you will step out/way – provide people a way to see God's word & meet Him – they won't notice your mistakes/slips!

c) Great thing about preaching: It works!

- i) Nothing like pulling an altar call and seeing people surrender/Christ → Greatest exhilaration on earth!
- ii) Pastoring: Watching people's lives slowly change – testimonies of transformed lives
- iii) BUT: You've got to preach!

¹ *Co 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.*