

Session 3 - Holy Spirit in Preaching – Preaching Matters - Notes

John 3:8 - The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit is messy, but it's fruitful. It's unpredictable, like the wind. How does that compare to a sermon?

Is the Spirit at work in the sermon? ...not always

So how can the Holy Spirit be more at work in and through our preaching?

The Life of the Preacher

Become aware of the Holy Spirit within you

“Author and theologian Os Guinness was once speaking in Australia, and afterward a Japanese CEO approached him. He said to Guinness, “When I meet a Buddhist monk, I meet a holy man in touch with another world. When I meet a western missionary, I meet a manager who is only in touch with the world I know.” And then Guinness adds this comment: “You could say that many, many Christians are atheists unawares.”” (from *Your God Is Too Safe* by Mark Buchanan, Multnomah Press, 2001, pg. 55-56)

Learn to spend time with God and take God with you...

Rev 3:20 - written to Christians- “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

Theologia Germanica- “If you can come to the point where you are to God what your hand is to you, be content.”

Learn to be obedient to the Holy Spirit

Bill Bright- “To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with Christ. The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ. Therefore, if I am filled with the Spirit, I am abiding in Christ... And if I am controlled and empowered by Christ, He will be walking around in my body, living His resurrection life in and through me.”

Galatians 5:25 - Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Learn to depend on the Holy Spirit

It is important that we have times when we are out of our depth, and find God's Spirit is there to help us.

The Holy Spirit in our Preparation and Delivery

In preparation

We should be saturated by the Holy Spirit, as much as possible, as we prepare.

Something I find helpful is a little prayer I often use, “God what do you want to do to these people?”. It is my way of inviting the Holy Spirit into my preparation and aiming at the purpose of my preaching. I find often a switch flips for me that completely changes my attitude toward the sermon.

Before preaching

Something that often stops the Spirit of God from working is our sinfulness, and our ego. The unpredictable nature of preaching drives me often to get on my knees in prayer before a sermon. Asking for God to help me to get out of the way so that He can work.

During preaching

Although I wouldn't throw my notes out, I do want to pay attention to the Spirit of God in the moment.

Look out at people and pray for them. Holy Spirit what do you have for them today? This sermon is yours. Change it. Do what you want. Your work is what really matters.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 - My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

In Groups...

What helps you to depend on the Holy Spirit in your personal life?

What helps you to depend on the Holy Spirit in your preaching?

Why might we get worse at depending on the Holy Spirit with experience and how can we fight against this?