
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
ITEM Conference on Ministry and Preaching
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THE POWER OF BIBLICAL PREACHING (JONAH)
Preaching Lecture #4

Introduction: Do preachers today have confidence in God's power to use His Word in the lives of His followers? We say that the Bible is the Word of God. We say it is inspired by God. But do we believe it is all that is needed to accomplish God's intended results? Some churches put much more emphasis on singing and dancing and testimonies rather than the careful teaching of the Word of God.

We should consider the ministries of God's servants in Scripture and follow their examples. One of those examples is Jonah. The book of Jonah is the story of one man who preached only one message and that was God's message, and it transformed a city.

I. THE CALL TO BIBLICAL PREACHING

- The power of biblical preaching begins with one who is called by God to preach.
 - A. God Calls Specific Men to Preach and Teach His Word
 1. Jonah first resisted God's call (Jonah 1:3) before accepting His call (Jonah 3:1-2).
 2. Other examples include: Moses (Exo 3:1-8), Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), John the Baptist (John 1:15-17), the twelve disciples (Mark 3:13-14), and the apostle Paul (Gal 1:15-16).
 3. The same is true today. God appoints some to the ministry of preaching.
 - a. Each one who preaches should know he has been called.
 - b. The call to preach should help strengthen all whom God has selected.
 - B. God Calls Specific Men to a Specific Place
 1. Jonah was called to preach to Nineveh, a great city (Jonah 3:3).
 - a. Nineveh was a wicked city and it was feared by neighboring nations.
 - b. Nineveh was called "the bloody city" by Nahum (Nahum 3:1).

2. All places that God calls someone to preach at has its challenges.
 - a. Unbelievers are being held captive by Satan (2 Tim 2:25-26).
 - b. The whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19).
 - c. Even believers still struggle with sin because of the flesh (Gal 5:17-21).
- C. God Calls Specific Men to a Specific Place for a Specific Purpose
 1. Jonah was told to preach God's message (not his own) (Jonah 3:2).
 - a. God would tell him what to say and how to say it.
 - b. What Jonah preached was not Jonah's suggestions or ideas.
 - c. Jonah's message originated with God Himself.
 - d. Jonah was faithful to preach God's message not his own thoughts about God (Jonah 3:3).
 - e. Nineveh was a great city that was very big and very wicked but that did not stop Jonah from faithfully preaching God's message. He was going to the place God called him to and doing what God wanted him to do.
- D. Biblical preaching is still God's plan for today. Every movement of the Spirit in church history has begun with powerful preaching of God's actual words; not just sermons but preaching God's actual words from His Word.

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL PREACHING

- Jonah's message was short and simple, "Forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown (Jonah 3:4)."
- Several characteristics of biblical preaching can be identified in this statement.
 - A. Jonah's preaching was bold and courageous. He "cried out (Jonah 3:4)."
 1. He was not timid. He was not afraid. He raised his voice and proclaimed God's message with boldness and confidence. "He cried out."
 2. Jonah was not shy about declaring a message of God's judgment to the sinful city even though there was a chance he might be killed.
 3. With boldness from God, who called him to preach, Jonah raised his voice so everyone in the city could hear God's message.
- If you are afraid of the opinion of men do something other than preach because you will not preach God's message, you will preach what people want to hear (2 Tim 4:1-4).

- B. Jonah's preaching was forceful and convincing.
1. Preaching is supposed to motivate people to live out the Word of God.
 2. The call to preach is a call to PREACH, not tell stories.
 3. Preaching is supposed to be serious proclamation of God's Word not man's ideas about God.
- C. Jonah's preaching was confrontational. He confronted Nineveh with God's warning of coming judgment if they did not repent.
1. All of the prophets of the Old Testament were direct and confrontational also.
 2. John the Baptist and Jesus were both confrontational (Luke 3:1-17).
 3. The apostles confronted and accused the Jews of murdering Jesus (Acts 2:23; 4:10; 5:30).
 4. Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus telling them to reprove, rebuke, and exhort (2 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:15).
 5. Jesus called the churches in Revelation 2-3 to repent.
 6. Pastors who are committed to biblical preaching must not be afraid to confront sin and misbehavior in people's lives.
- It is better to be hated for telling the truth than to be loved for telling a lie.
 - It is not love and it is not friendship if we fail to declare the whole counsel of God.
- D. Jonah's preaching was also compassionate.
1. After preaching that judgment was coming he also offered God's forgiveness if they repented.
 2. God offered to people of Nineveh an opportunity to turn from their sin and escape God's judgment.
 3. Jonah understood that God was a patient and loving and was willing to forgive Nineveh (Jonah 4:2).
 4. God's grace and mercy must also be preached. Not just God's judgment (Ezek 33:11 compare Ezek 18:23; also Exo 34:6-7).
 5. Loving compassion must also be a part of biblical preaching.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF BIBLICAL PREACHING

- When the people of Nineveh heard Jonah’s message about the coming judgment if they didn’t repent, they repented and turned to God and were not judged.
 - A. Saving faith: “The people of Nineveh believed God (Jonah 3:5).”
 - 1. True belief leads to action. They turned from their false religions and turned to God, which showed that their belief was real.
 - 2. Biblical preaching will result in true faith leading to true salvation.
 - a. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17).
 - b. God has always used preaching to bring salvation to people (1 Cor 1:18-25).
 - B. Repentance: “They called a fast and put on sackcloth (Jonah 3:5).”
 - 1. They were sorry and grieved over their sin and they chose to submit to God.
 - 2. The same kind of sorrow and repentance because of sin is needed today also.
 - C. Sanctification: “And let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from the violence which is in his hands (Jonah 3:8).”
 - 1. “Repent” means to change directions, to “turn from sin” and “turn to God.”
 - 2. God saw that they had turned from their wicked ways and changed His mind about judging them (Jonah 3:10).
 - 3. This can happen today also when God’s Word is preached boldly and confidently right out of the Bible.

Conclusion: Churches need preachers like Jonah who will commit to biblical preaching and say what God’s Word says not what the preacher thinks. Preaching that is courageous, persuasive, confrontive, and compassionate. Preaching that comes directly out of the Bible, verse by verse.