

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mr. Hadley, Ashley Law, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Ms. Sowder, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

Oak Grove Church of Christ Bulletin
2922 NW 76th Terrace, Jennings, FL 32053

March 21, 2021

Is Our Focus upon Delivery or Content?

By Derek Long

God has made it where the gospel must be taught in order for people to be saved (Romans 10:14-17). 1 Corinthians 1:21 tells us, "it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (NKJV). In order for teaching or preaching to take place there must be content which is taught and it must be delivered in some form. As teachers and listeners, it is important for us to consider the question of where do we place the emphasis. Is our emphasis and focus upon the delivery of the message or upon the content of the message?

There is nothing wrong with a teacher having the ability to deliver a message well. In fact, the Bible speaks about people who had the ability to speak well and taught God's message. The people came to hear the message of Ezekiel and it is said of him, "Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument" (Ezekiel 33:32, NKJV). Evidently, Ezekiel sounded good to the people. The people enjoyed listening to his preaching but sadly did not do what Ezekiel taught them to do. God does not condemn Ezekiel for his good delivery. In Acts 18, we are introduced to a man named Apollos. He is described as "an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures" (vs. 24, NKJV).

Initially, his knowledge was lacking and so Aquila and Priscilla “took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (vs. 25, 26, NKJV). However, Apollos is not condemned for his eloquence in presenting the truth (vs. 27-28). Today there are those who have the ability to deliver the word of God in an eloquent manner and such is not sinful. It would appear God would want us to do our best to present His word to the best of our ability (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

It is easy to focus on delivery though and neglect the content of one’s teaching. The Bible shows us there are individuals who are eloquent but are dangerous because of their content. Romans 16:18 warns about those who, “by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple” (NKJV). Peter describes some as speaking, “great swelling words of emptiness” (2 Peter 2:18, NKJV). They may use impressive sounding words or be trained in rhetoric but their message is empty. A failure to give diligence to studying and rightly dividing the word of truth can lead one to be eloquent and yet empty (2 Timothy 2:15). When preachers get up and attempt to impress people with their education, funny stories, and jokes, they may have a “great delivery” but sometimes fail to actually get to the business of preaching the word (2 Timothy 4:1-5). A focus upon delivery coupled with a neglect of focusing on the content is a terrible combination.

When listeners focus upon delivery rather than content, they may begin to rally around their favorite speaker. It appears some at Corinth may have struggled with this problem. Paul writes about the Corinthians following various men (1 Corinthians 1:12). All of these individuals were teaching the same message though and a person did not have to choose one

over another (1 Corinthians 3:21-22). Focusing upon the style of the preacher though can lead people to follow a man instead of being loyal to the message no matter who the human messenger is. When we as listeners begin focusing too much upon the delivery, we may run into the danger of following a man whose delivery we like and failing to listen to those who are equally teaching the truth but without a pleasing delivery.

As teachers focus upon delivery rather than content, they may begin to exalt their talents and abilities above the message of the cross. Teachers need to remember the power to save mankind is not found in a smooth delivery. The power to save mankind is found in the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18). It should be the goal of teachers of the gospel for people to be impressed not with their ability to deliver a message but to be impressed with the content of the gospel message. Paul describes his preaching among the Corinthians in the following way: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, NKJV). Let’s do our best in presenting the gospel message but let’s remember the power is not in our delivery but in the message we are presenting!