



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

Preaching the Word (Homiletics)

Lesson #11

C. The Power of God's Word

3. Living in Harmony with Our Preaching

There is an old saying that goes like this: “Your actions speak so loudly I can’t hear what you say.” If our lives and conduct do not match what we say, our listeners may not pay much attention to what we say. In other words, we can hurt the preaching of God’s Word by conducting ourselves in ungodly or even unfriendly ways. We cannot add to the power of God’s Word by the way we speak or by the way we act, but we can hinder the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word by the way we act and speak.

When the missionary Paul came to Thessalonica with the Gospel, he was careful not to get in the way of the Holy Spirit’s work. This is his report (the underlined words bring out the main points):

- **We were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness – God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. (1 Thessalonians 2:2-8)**
- **You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12).**

To the Corinthians Paul wrote: **“We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God”** (2 Corinthians 6:3-4). We need to remember at all times that we are representing God as preachers of His Word. Giving offense means that we do or say something that does not fit with the glorious Gospel of Christ that we are preaching.

Paul carefully instructed his helpers Timothy and Titus to live lives in keeping with the Gospel they preached:

- **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. (2 Timothy 2:15-16)**
- **Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition. (2 Timothy 2:22-25)**
- **In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of us. (Titus 2:7-8)**

If we remember what our Lord Jesus did for us and how the Holy Spirit brought us to faith in Christ through the Word, we will want to share this good news with others; therefore, we will not want to do anything that will work against the Gospel that we preach. To use an American expression, we not only want to talk the talk, but we want to walk the walk. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in this direction. Humility is extremely important. We who preach the Word are sinners, just like those to whom we preach, and we need of the same Gospel we proclaim to others.

Let us listen to some more of the instruction Paul gave to his young assistant:

- **Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity...Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. (1 Timothy 4:12, 15-16)**

Questions

1. Why is the conduct of the preacher so important?
2. What can happen to the Word we preach if our conduct is bad?
3. What are some of the things Paul avoided in Thessalonica for the sake of the Gospel?
4. What kind of advice about their conduct did Paul give to Titus and Timothy?
5. What kind of Christian life is worthy of God?
6. Why is humility so important in the preaching of God's Word?
7. What is a character flaw you need God's help with?