

Theological Foundations
for Biblical Preaching
Melbourne 2014

John Stott: “In a world which seems either unwilling or unable to listen, how can we be persuaded to go on preaching, and learn to do effectively? The essential secret is not mastering certain techniques but being mastered by certain convictions. In other words, theology is more important than methodology.... To be sure, there are principles of preaching to be learned, and a practice to be developed, but it is easy to put too much confidence in these. Technique can only make us orators; if we want to be preachers, theology is what we need. If our theology is right, then we have all the basic insights we need into what we ought to be doing, and all the incentives we need to induce us to it faithfully.”

1 Cor. 2:1 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 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.

I. Conviction About God

3 affirmations about God:

1. God is light. 1 John 1:5

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

II Cor. 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **5** For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

John 3:19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **20** Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. **21** But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

2. God has Acted

- God called Abraham from Ur
- God called the Israelites from Egypt
- God called the Exiles from Babylon
- Ultimately God sent His Son to call us out of a lost world. A “better” and “eternal” covenant

3. God has Spoken

Psalm 115:4 But their idols are silver and gold,
made by human hands.

5 They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but cannot see.

6 They have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but cannot smell.

7 They have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but cannot walk,
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.

- God called Abraham out of Ur and then God explained to him His plan
- God called them out of Egypt and gave them Moses to explain His law and covenant
- God called them out of captivity and had his prophets explain why it had happened.
- God sent His son and then had the apostles explain what all this meant and recall his words.

II. A Conviction about Scripture

3 convictions about Scripture

1. Scripture is God's written Word



2nd conviction - God still speaks through what he has spoken

Psalm 95:7 Today, if only you would hear his voice,
8 “Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,
9 where your ancestors tested me;
they tried me, though they had seen what I did.
10 For forty years I was angry with that generation;

Heb. 3:7 So, as the Holy Spirit says:
“Today, if you hear his voice,
8 do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion,

Two errors:

Christian antiquarianism

The first is the belief that though it was heard in ancient times, God's voice is silent today.

Christian existentialism

The claim that God is indeed speaking today, but that his Word has little or nothing to do with scripture.

3rd Conviction is God's
Word is Powerful

Is 55:8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,”
declares the LORD.

9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

- Ps 33:9 He created the universe by his Word
- Ro 1:16 God's power for salvation for all
- Heb 4:12 it is living and active, sharper than a double edge sword
- Jer 23:29 Word is like a hammer...
- Ps 119 it illumines our path
- James 2 it is like a mirror
- Mark 4 it is like a seed causing birth
- I Peter, Heb like milk causing growth
- Ps 19 like honey and the honey comb which sweetens, like gold which enriches its possessor

III. Convictions about the Church

The Church is the creation of God by his Word.
God's new creation (the Church) is as dependent upon his Word as his old creation (the universe). Not only has he brought it into being by his word but he maintains and sustains and renews it by his Word.

Psalm 81:13 “If my people would only listen to me,
if Israel would only follow my ways...

Jer. 7:21 “ ‘This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says:
Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat
the meat yourselves! 22 For when I brought your ancestors out of
Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about
burnt offerings and sacrifices, 23 but I gave them this command: Obey
me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in
obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. 24 But
they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn
inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward.
25 From the time your ancestors left Egypt until now, day after day,
again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. 26 But they did
not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more
evil than their ancestors.’

2Chr. 36:15 The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

A Deaf Church is a
Dead Church

IV. Conviction about Preaching

Mal. 2:7 “For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. 8 But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,” says the LORD Almighty. 9 “So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.”

Exposition is about
Preaching God's Word

- it sets us limits
- it demands integrity
- it is creates faith, Rm 10:14
- it gives new birth, I Peter 1:23-24