

What Does The Bible Say About The Content of Preaching?¹

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you; unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.”
1 Corinthians 15:1-5.

People sometimes say that preaching should be less about the church, and more about Jesus. Sometimes they say that preaching should be more practical and less doctrinal. Such comments prompt the question, what does the Bible say about the content of preaching?

When every New Testament passage that uses “preach,” “preached,” or “preaching” is examined, five major topics are discovered which describe the content of preaching. New Testament preachers preached **Jesus**. They preached **Christ**. They preached the **gospel**. They preached the **word**. And they preached the **kingdom**.

More specifically, they preached **Jesus** (Acts 8:35) “as the Christ” (Acts 5:42; Romans 16:25). They preached “the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). They preached “Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18). They preached “the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:20).

Second, they preached **Christ** (Acts 8:5; Phil 1:15, 16, 18), “that he is the son of God” (Acts 9:20). They preached “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8). They preached “Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:5). They preached “Christ’s gospel” (2 Corinthians 2:12). They preached “Him” (Galatians 1:16; Colossians 1:28) as “Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23).

Third, they preached the **gospel** (Matthew 11:5; 26:13; Mark 14:9; 16:15; Luke 7:22; 9:6; 20:1; Acts 8:25; 14:7, 21; 16:10; Romans 1:15; 15:20; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 9:14, 16, 18; 15:1; 2 Corinthians 10:16; Galatians 3:8; 4:13, Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:12; 4:6). The gospel they preached is described as “the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:19), “the gospel of God” (2 Corinthians 11:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:9), “the gospel of peace” (Romans 10:15) “the everlasting gospel” (Revelation 14:6), “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 24:14) and “the gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14).

Fourth, they preached the **word** (Mark 2:2; Acts 8:4; 11:19; 16:16; 14:25; 1 Corinthians 15: 2; 2 Timothy 4:2). The word they preached is described as the “word of faith” (Romans 10:8), the “word of the Lord” (Acts 8:25; 15:35, 36), and the “word of God” (Acts 13:5; 17:13). That the preaching of the word is the same as the preaching of the gospel is indicated by the fact that in 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2 “gospel” and “word” are used interchangeably.

Fifth, Jesus and his disciples preached the **kingdom**, and “the things concerning the kingdom” (Acts 8:12). The kingdom is described as “the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 4:17; 10:7) and “the kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2, 60; 16:16; Acts 8:12, 20:25; 28:31). Since “kingdom” and “church” seem to be used interchangeably in Matthew 16:18-19, then we may conclude that they preached about the church.

In preaching these things, New Testament preachers emphasized certain specifics. They preached “in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:2; 17:3; 1 Corinthians 15:12). Peter said that they were commanded to “preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42). Paul preached the same (Acts 17:31).

Jesus declared that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached” (Luke 24:47; see also Mark 6:12). Luke wrote that “through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38). That preaching about Jesus also includes preaching about baptism is indicated by the fact that when Jesus was preached by Philip, the Ethiopian wanted to be baptized (Acts 8:35,36).

When the content of today’s preaching is like theirs was, then it may be characterized as biblical.

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