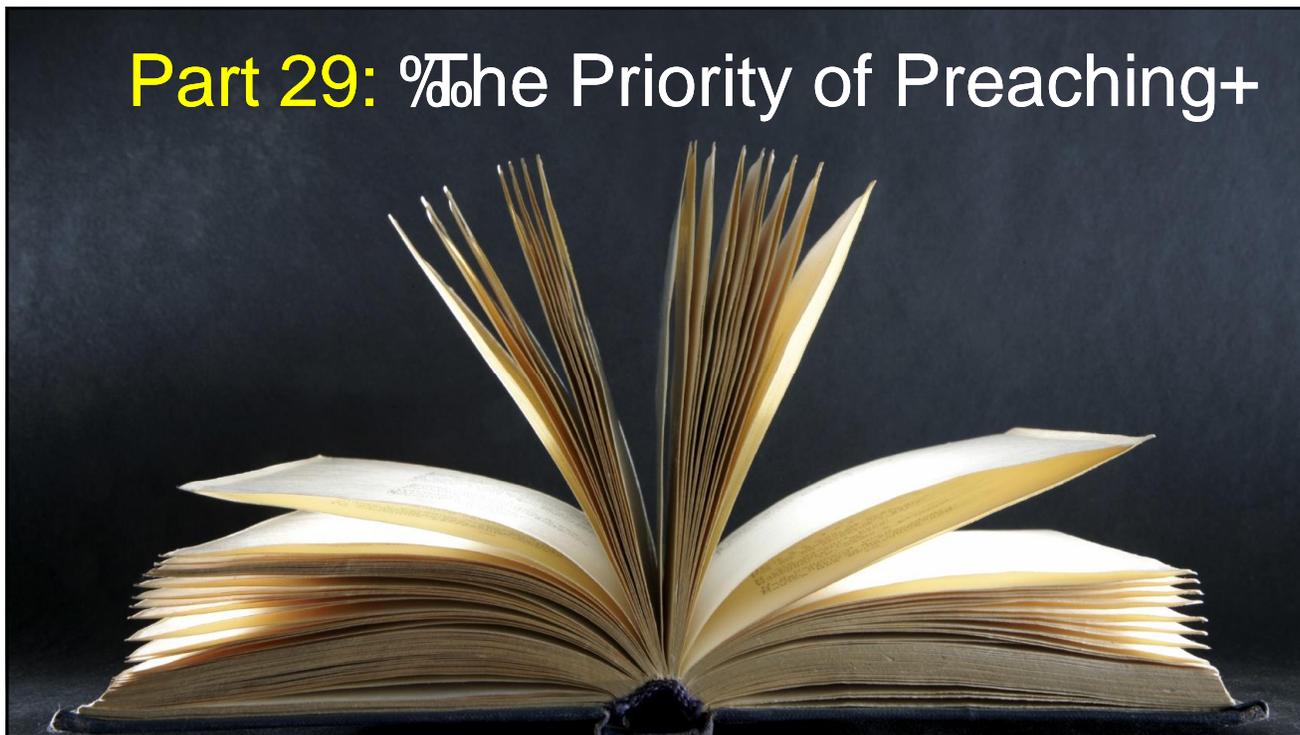


Part 29: The Priority of Preaching+



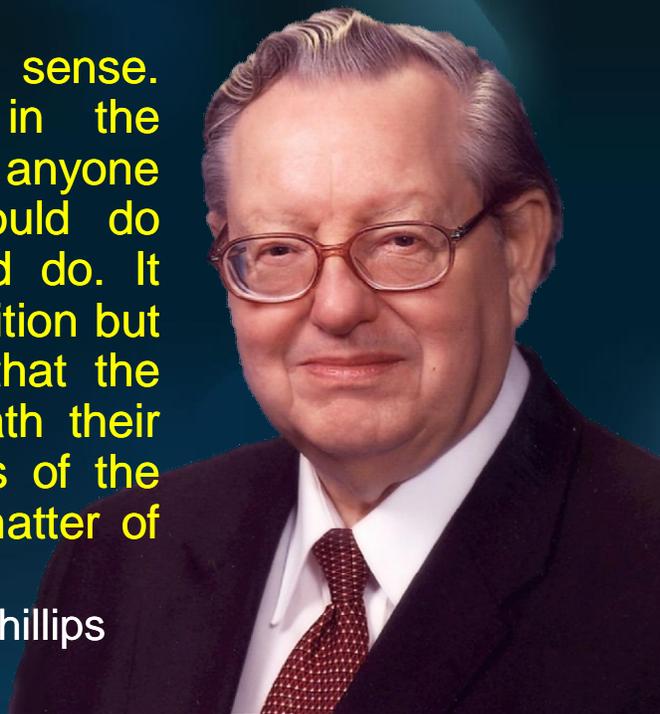
Many in the ministry today have left the emphasis on prayer and the Word of God. They are so involved in the administrative details of their church that they have little time left for intercession and study. By neglecting this ministry, they doom their congregations to languish in spiritual infancy. Programs are no substitute for the power of God and His Word. Those whom God has called to the ministry of prayer and the Word must make it their priority.+ John MacArthur

Acts 6:1-4 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ²Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, **It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.** ³Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; **⁴but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**+

The Apostles were not saying that ministering to people's physical needs was beneath them, they were simply saying that their priority in ministry was different from others.

What was plain common sense. There was no point in the apostles doing something anyone could do when they could do things no one else could do. It was not a question of position but of priorities. It was not that the apostles thought it beneath their dignity to run the errands of the church; it was simply a matter of putting first things first.+

John Phillips



1. The priority of preaching

1 Cor 12:28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

2. The Providence of preaching

“ God chose preaching

1 Cor 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

“ God chooses the preachers

Rom 10:15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

1 Cor 9:16-17, 26-27 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. ò ²⁶Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

3. The Point of preaching

2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus's sake.

1 Cor 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

4. The Purpose of preaching

“ To manifest God's Word to His people:

Titus 1:3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

“ To equip the saints:

Eph 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

5. The prerequisite of preaching

- “ Prayer
- “ Paul was a man of prayer

Eph 6:18-20 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Col 4:3-4 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

- “ Pray that he would be a pure channel through which God's Word can flow
- “ Pray for power when he preaches
- “ Pray that the people will hear and apply the truths from Scripture

6. The Power of preaching

1 Cor 2:3-5 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

7. The price of preaching

A young man once said to Dr. Donald Barnhouse, "Can you give the world to be able to preach the Bible like you do." Dr. Barnhouse replied, "Good, because that is exactly what it will cost you."



Paul to the Ephesian elders:

Acts 20:18-21 You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹servicing the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul to Timothy:

1 Tim 4:11-16 These things command and teach. ¹²Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. ¹³Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

2 Tim 4:2-4 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Js 1:22-25 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.