

RETHINKING THE SERMON

RECONSIDERING WHAT IS BEING SAID AND WHY

*"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly,
and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."*

~ Nehemiah 8:8

1. Something Amiss

- a. What you hear in every church this morning is a sermon, homily, lesson, preaching.
- b. *'What did you get from the sermon?'* What most don't get is scriptural understanding.
- c. Sermon ~def. a discourse on Scripture for the purpose of instruction or exhortation.
 - i. New definition – 'a long tedious speech', 'moralizing of a nondoctrinal nature'
- d. Sermons are now pretexts for self-help, storytelling, leveraging God's help.
- e. The main pursuit has become personal application (i.e. 'what does it mean to me')
- f. Sermons should not have the objective of pleasing you, appealing to you, inspiring you, engaging you, giving you self-assurance, a 'fresh word', or serve as a pep rally.
- g. *What good is a sermon if it does not appeal to me?* It's time to rethink the sermon.

2. Missing Bible

- a. Bible? "follow Jesus on your journey" 'God writes your story' 'God laid it on my heart'
- b. The pulpit should cause people to understand scripture – Neh 8:8
- c. 'Preach the word' 'hold fast the form of sound words' - 2 Tim 1:13, 4:2-4

3. Missing Context

- a. 'Sermon' not mentioned in the Bible despite 'sermon on the mount'
- b. Modern sermon title: Making Calm out of Chaos - Matt 8:23-27
- c. Context: Jesus ministers to Israel confirming promises – Rom 15:8, Ps 107:23-30

4. Missing the Big Picture

- a. 'I know the thoughts that I think toward you' 'to give you hope and a future' - Jer 29:11
- b. You are not the point. God has a purpose and a will. Preachers are supposed to explain.
- c. Charts can serve the function of giving understanding of the scriptures in context.
- d. God's will changes, unfolds, is fulfilled, resumes, and is revealed from beginning to end.

5. Missing our Pattern/Place

- a. A sermon is supposed to strengthen, furnish, edify, instruct, and exhort the church.
- b. We are warned against teaching other doctrines, wrong doctrine – 1 Tim 1:3-7, 16
- c. If you don't know the pattern, then who is the church following? 1 Pet 2:9, 1 Cor 12:17
- d. If you don't know our place, then what is God doing today? Eph 3:1-2, 3:9
- e. Understanding is necessary for us to operate in this dispensation – 2 Tim 2:7
- f. Not understanding in churches is a failure to give proper place to God's words rightly divided in sermons.