

**Intro:**

Today we continue our series on Our Church. We are talking about our philosophy of ministry — what we are all about... or what we are attempting to be all about in our ministry.

I am using material from the Mount Calvary Baptist Church document called “The Non-Negotiables of the Ministry”. Today’s message brings us to the central focus of our ministry. It is echoed in the Mount Calvary statement:

We believe that the main focus of the church service should be the Word of God through pastoral preaching (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2).

The foremost purpose for our gathering is to hear from God through His Word. While our church is overtly evangelistic, the regular preaching is pastoral in nature. Pastoral preaching focuses on declaring the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42) so that the body functions according to its Divinely designed end (Eph. 4:16).

I’d like to read each of the passages referenced in this statement, then we will consider a few more as well.

Read 1 Tim. 4:13-16; 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:16

Let me give you 1 Tim 4.13-16 again in the NAS:

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**1 Timothy 4:13** Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching. <sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. <sup>15</sup> Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. <sup>16</sup> Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

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The attitude of the modern age is to give shorter and shorter sermons. “People can’t give you their attention for more than 30 minutes.” Or 20. Or 15.

You’ve probably heard the line, “sermonettes by preacherettes”?

We are told we live in a visual society; you need to pay attention to the short attention span and rapidly changing world in which we live... etc.

I have a clip from an old-time movie on my computer that kind of sums up how I feel about this:

“Modern methods... Intensive training... Poppycock!”

In reply to those who say people can't pay attention, I say, people can learn.

And there is nothing more vital in the service of the church than knowing and hearing the word of God. In these words we have life.

*A Church Organized around Preaching*

*why we call ourselves 'the Bible-preaching centre'*

Now for the text where we will set our theme for our message

Read Jn 17.17

**Proposition:** The preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the Bible, is the centerpiece and focus of all our ministry.

Our message today is going to consist mostly in reading various scriptures with various brief comments on each one.

I want you to be following along with most of these, so I'm going to put some on overheads for you, but you can follow along also in your own Bibles.

## **I. The Importance of the Word of God**

- A. The importance of the Word revealed through Moses (Dt 4.2; 6.9; 11.20)
- B. Songs of the Word (Ps 12.6; 19.7ff., Ps 119)
- C. The Word gives life (Jn 5.24, 39-40; 6.63, 66-68)
- D. The Word gets to heart issues (Heb 4.12)
- E. The Word must not be tampered with (Rev 22.18-19)

## **II. The Imperative of Preaching the Word of God**

- A. The Lord came preaching (Isa 61.1-3, Lk 4.18-19)
- B. The Lord sent his disciples out preaching (Lk 9.1-2, 59-60)
- C. The Apostles were constantly out preaching, in all circumstances (Ac 5.19-20)
- D. The charge passed on to succeeding generations of preachers (2 Tim 4.2; Titus 2.15)
- E. The task given due weight for any man who preaches: it is as the oracles of God (1 Pt 4.11)

### III. The Impact of Hearing the Word of God

- A. The Word cleanses those who hear it in faith [contra Judas] (Jn 15.3)
- B. The Word sanctifies those who hear it in faith (Jn 17.17)
- C. The Word is God's gracious saving agent to bring about eternal life (Rm 10.14-17)
- D. The Word dwelling in the heart 'richly' produces every kind of spiritual fruit (Col 3.12-17)
- E. The Word ought to be earnestly desired by all believers (1 Pt 2.2)
  1. You should love the Word – read it
  2. You should love the Word – hear it preached
  3. You should love the Word – give it out

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the Bible, is the centerpiece and focus of all our ministry.

Look last at Neh 8

In this chapter, we see the people of God assembled, the captivity is over, the temple is rebuilt, now the walls are rebuilt, and they are having a Bible conference.

- Notice their eagerness (8.1)
- Notice what Ezra did (8.2-3)
- Notice what Ezra and the scribes did (8.8) — the Law written in Hebrew, they spoke Aramaic now
- Notice the reaction (8.9-12)
- Notice their eagerness to obey (8.13-18)

This Word of God will change your life if you will yield to it. That's why we preach. That's why we exhort. That's why we try to be people of the book, carefully and completely teaching the whole counsel of God.