

Session 5: Great Expectations—Evaluating Preaching in Light of the Judgment of Christ

2 Timothy 4; Acts 17

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1. Is judging preaching a scriptural idea?

- 2 Timothy 4 highlights the priority of preaching among ministerial duties.
- 2 Timothy 4 puts those who preach the Word under the weight of a solemn charge and subjects them to the most rigorous evaluation.
- 2 Timothy 4 teaches us that when the Lord Jesus appears He will judge both living and dead preachers.

2. On what basis will the Lord Jesus evaluate preachers and their preaching?

- Question #1:** Is the preacher faithfully preaching the Word? (content)
* That requires the listener to be a student of the Word.
* otherwise, will be led astray (cf. 3:15-16).
* Not everyone has this desire + mindset.
- Question #2:** Is the preacher faithfully preaching the Word even when it's not popular or well-received? *preach in good times & bad times (e.g., 3:1; 4:3-4)
 - Our assessment of preaching is often very subjective in nature.
 - Preaching cannot be evaluated on the basis of how people respond to it. (vv. 3-4) *A marketing mentality ("If they won't listen to me, I need to change.") will not work here, esp. concerning the message.
- Question #3:** Is the preacher bringing the Word of God to bear on my life through reproof, rebuke, and exhortation?

- "**Reprove**": Does he convince people of their error and wrongdoing?
- "**Rebuke**": Does he insist that those doing wrong stop doing wrong?
- "**Exhort**": Does he tenderly urge the truth on those who listen and appeal to them to respond rightly?

* This is why preaching isn't always well-received.
* That's why the preacher must do this w/ patience (end of v. 2)

3. The Bereans in Acts 17 serve as a New Testament example of how to hear the preached Word of God and then evaluate it.

- a. They were enthusiastically predisposed to embrace the word of God.
* They were inclined to hear before the sermon started.
- b. They conducted a daily, careful, thorough investigation of what Paul preached, examining Paul's words against God's words.
* This is the same standard as II Tim. 4:1-2

* When both messages matched, they embraced it!

4. There are several significant questions that come out of the Berean example:

Am I pre-disposed to hear + accept God's word when it's preached?

- a. Like the Bereans, do I have an open mind when I listen to preaching?
↳ open to God's voice, even when the mouthpiece "struggles."
- b. Like the Bereans, do I have a critical mind when I listen to preaching?
* Am I an active listener?
- c. Like the Bereans, do I have a critical mind w/ a critical spirit when I listen to preaching?

* BOTH are then necessary!

* their pre-disposition to hear kept them from a critical spirit. * I Thess 5:20-2
* their critical mind kept them from error + deception

4. What questions does this discussion raise in your mind?

- book (a) Adams, Jay. Be Careful How You Listen: How to Get the Most Out of a Sermon.
- b. Anyabwile, Thabiti. "Expository Listening" in What Is a Healthy Church Member?.
- pamphlet (c) Ash, Christopher. Listen Up! A Practical Guide to Listening to Sermons.
- d. Beeke, Joel. The Family at Church: Listening to Sermons and Attending Prayer Meetings.
- e. Bergmeier, Thadeus L. Helping Johnny Listen: Taking Full Advantage of the Sermons We Hear
- f. Ramey, Ken. Expository Listening: A Handbook for Hearing and Doing God's Word.
- g. Ryken, Philip. "How to Listen to a Sermon." <http://goo.gl/d8uEp>
- h. Thomas, Derek. "How to Listen to a Sermon." <http://goo.gl/ncjll>

Conclusion

- 1. We should have high expectations (ies scriptural) for those who preach the Word of God to us.
- 2. We should have equally high expectations for ourselves as those who listen to the Word of God.
- 3. Let's pray that God would help us become receptive but discerning hearers of the preached Word.