

The Purpose Of Preaching God's Word

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Here's what we're going to do. I'm going to tell you right now that we are going to spend several minutes in three different books of the Bible. But I also have several slides in between that will have some verses and things on there, and I'll explain as we go through. Sound okay with you? Very good. I will tell you, I'm going to tell you the three main places that we'll be in and then I will announce them again as we get to them.

The first is Romans 10, so if you want, you can open up there; Genesis 15, a little bit later; and then 2 Corinthians 7. We're not going to look at those entire chapters, but we'll look at some specific verses. Let me show you something first. Let's start with Psalm 138. Now, if you want, you can turn there. If you're one of those, you'll want to go as fast as you can. We're going to move around a bit, but some of these that just have one or two verses, I've got those on the screen for you. Psalm 138:2, look what David says here. David says, "I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name"—and he tells us why—"For Your lovingkindness and Your truth . . ."

Now, just a quick side note, and I've got to make it quick, there is a battle for truth right now. I was asked by a gentleman, "As the youth ministry leader, what's the main thing that you're fighting against, what's the main . . ." I said, "Truth." Artificial intelligence is happening way too fast, and it's getting harder and harder to tell looking at those videos on your social media feed, and you're saying, "I didn't know Trump played basketball against Abraham Lincoln. This is crazy!" And you're asking, "Is this real?" Some of you adults are asking your kids, "Is this real?" And they're looking at you, "Oh, come on."

" . . . truth,"—look what he says—"For You have magnified Your word above all Your name." Now, we sing songs about God's name all of the time. We use it all the time. We talk about God and Lord. We know that there's power in the Name. Amen? David says something astounding here, "You have magnified Your word above all Your name." What does that mean? He means that You have made Your Word more prominent than Your name.

If that is correct...you just agreed with me. We sing songs all the time about God's name and we're praising Him and His name and what the Name means and the different names that He has, but if what David wrote there is true, then it seems to me that it needs our attention. If " . . . You have magnified Your word above all Your name," I probably need to be concerned about doing the same; and if I'm praising Your name and Your Word is magnified, You've magnified Your Word above Your name, I probably should be paying some attention there, too—magnifying His Word also.

I told you that we would be in Romans 10 for a few minutes. Hopefully, you're there. If you didn't turn there yet, you can open up to Romans 10. I'll give you a moment as you're opening up there. Romans 9, 10, and 11 is a fantastic trilogy. It's Paul taking a break kind of from what he had been teaching and begins talking about the nation of Israel and the fact that they rejected

God and God set them aside, but as he continues to develop his argument there, we find out that God's not done with Israel, He's still working and He's going to continue working, and He has a plan. But in the midst of that we find these wonderful verses. We'll start at Romans 10:13 because you see Paul is talking about and to the nation of Israel, the Israelites, saying, "Listen, you can be saved," and he says this in verse 13, he quotes from Joel 2:32, he says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." We were just talking about the "name" a moment ago. That "name" is powerful. If I call on the name of the Lord, I can be saved.

But then look what he says in verse 14. He asks a series of questions. Verse 14, "How then"—if someone can be saved by calling on the name of the Lord, this is good—"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?"—how are they going to call on God to be saved, if they don't even believe in Him yet? And he's working his way backward. Then, he asks another question—"And how shall they believe in Him"—in the first place—"of whom they have not heard?"—so, if they haven't even heard of God, how are they supposed to believe in Him in order to be saved? It's not going to work. He's not done yet. Look at the last question he asks in verse 14, "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" So, there's got to be a preacher in order to preach God's Word to reveal God so that people can know that they're sinners and know that they need a Savior and so that they can be saved.

He goes on in verse 15, "And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"—quoting there from Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15—"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?'"—he quotes from Isaiah 53:1 there.

And then in verse 17 he says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And the word there for "hearing" means instruction, mainly verbal instruction, so Paul is talking about the preaching of God's Word, the preaching of the gospel. But you'll note what he says in verse 17, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In other words, people cannot have faith unless the Word of God is preached and they understand it and then they can place their faith in God. Does everybody understand? Is everybody following? Yes? Okay.

Now, faith is the goal of God's Word. Faith is the goal of God's Word. What is God's Word for? What is it supposed to do? Why do we preach it? Why is it that every Wednesday, every Sunday, you show up here in this sanctuary and your pastor says to you, "Let's open our Bibles to..." Why does the high school ministry, young adults, junior high, the kid's classes, why are we always, every time we have a pool party or we've got a camp, why are we always opening up to the Word of God? This is why, because, "... faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." So, it is imperative that the Word of God goes out so that people's faith is developed. Okay?

Now, when we say that faith is the goal of God's Word, what I'm going to do here from this point on is share with you about two different kinds of faith. Okay? One is a saving faith, we'll have it

on the screen for you there, and then the other is sanctifying faith. Let's look at it. Saving faith is we become aware of our need for salvation from God's Word. I told you that these studies are very basic, very simple. A very simple definition: Saving faith is when we become aware of our need for salvation from God's Word. Okay?

What about sanctifying faith? What is that? Some of this is going to be elementary, my dear Watson, to you because some of you are students. You've been saved for a long time. You understand these things. You say, (yawning) "Okay." Bear with us, please. Some of us are just learning this for the first time tonight—saving faith. But there's also a different kind of faith that's called sanctifying faith, and that is when God reveals Himself and His will through His Word. I'll give you a quick example. How do we know that murder is wrong? How do we know that to take the life of someone else is wrong? God's Word says it, right? So, as we read or study God's Word we learn these things.

We'll look at that sanctifying faith in a few minutes. Let's look at saving faith first. Let me show you James 1. The next passage that we will be in together is Genesis 15. You can turn there if you like, or you can wait until after James. Let me show you James 1:21, "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." You see that there? When we receive the Word, it is able to save our souls. That's saving faith—I hear the Word of God, I recognize that I'm a sinner in need of a Savior, God has provided a Savior in Jesus, I say, "Yes, I want that." That all develops by my reading or studying or hearing the Word of God. The Word is able to save my soul. Nothing else can do that. The greatest authors in the world throughout history, Shakespeare's writings, cannot save your soul, only God's Word can.

Let's look at saving faith. Let me show you this in Genesis 15:1, speaking about one of my favorite Bible characters here, says, "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram"—that's Abraham eventually, but right now his name is Abram—"in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.'" Now, I love this, and I've got to mention this and move on because I love this Abram so much that I'll get stuck here. "But Abram"—after he hears that, what does God say? "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward,"—which is what He had promised him back in Genesis 12 when He first called him, but now He reminds him—"I am your shield"—your protection, I'm your reward. Abram hears that and says, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" In other words, "Oh, okay, God. You're going to be my protector and my reward, oh, that's fantastic, but what else do You have for me?" It sounds like us. You know, "Oh, that's fantastic! I see all the promises there. That's wonderful, but what else do You have? Do you have that new car I've been praying for?" or "Do you have the money?" or whatever. We're always looking for something else, and that was Abram.

What is Abram talking about? Well, God had actually promised him that he would have an heir. God had promised him that he was going to have children, so that's what Abram's referring to, "That's fantastic that I've got You, but what about kids? Am I going to have some kids?" So, he says in verse 3, "Then Abram said, 'Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in

my house is my heir!”—I’ve got a servant in my house. I don’t even have a son, so I don’t have someone to pass these things on to, it’s going to be this servant.

Verse 4, “And behold, the”—what?—“word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This one’—Eliezer—“shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’ 5 Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’” He takes him outside and says, “Look, from end to end, do you see all the stars out there?” Abram says, “I see them.” He says, “That’s how many kids you’re going to have.” And Abram said, “I’m going to need a bigger tent,” no he didn’t say that. He didn’t say that. Look at the next verse, verse 6, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” In other words, that night, standing under the stars, Abram said, “Alright, God, I believe You. I believe You,” and God said, “Then, you are considered righteous.” Why? “Because you have placed your faith in Me.”

How did this all happen? It happened because Abram believed God’s Word. God came and spoke to him, Abram believed it. Abram is known as Father Abraham, not just because he’s the father of the Israelites or the Hebrews, but because he’s the father of faith because in Genesis 12 he was called to follow God and he went. His faith is always being tested, being developed, and here it is a few chapters later in Genesis 15 and now he believes God and what happens is he’s considered righteous. Why? Because he believed what God’s Word said.

So, why do we preach the Word of God or proclaim the Word of God? We do that because it develops saving faith—saving faith, very simply. Okay? Now, let’s move on to sanctifying faith. Saving faith, now sanctifying faith. Look at John 17:17. We have it up for you. This is Jesus talking to the Father. He’s praying and says in His prayer, “Sanctify them”—He was talking about the disciples—“by Your truth. Your word is truth.” What does it mean to sanctify something? To sanctify something means to separate it in order for God to use it. So, we want God to use us, so what are we in the process of doing? We are in the process of sanctification or we are in the process of being separated from the world. Why? Because God is wanting to use us for us to be different from the world.

Isn’t this a crazy thought? That it’s a Wednesday night at eight o’clock and you’re sitting in church. Some of you didn’t grow up yesterday. Wednesday nights were for different things. Isn’t it crazy that you would show up here on a Sunday morning? Sunday mornings used to be for hangovers. Sunday mornings used to be for sports. Thank God we can just record it now and watch it later, right? There’s a game going on right now. My team is playing, but I’m not thinking about it because I’m so dialed in right now to this. But here you sit. You’re being separated from the world. The rest of the world is out there. Who knows? They’re doing all sorts of things, but we’re sitting in here learning. What’re we doing? We are in a sense, we’re sanctifying ourselves, we’re setting ourselves apart. Now, it really is the work of God that’s doing that, that’s giving us the desire to be here, but when Jesus said, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth,” He’s saying, “Use Your Word to sanctify them, to set them apart.”

Here's another one, Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." In other words, I read the Word of God and it gives me direction. Ahhh, back to the title, stopping for directions, yes! The Word of God, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Again, it's sanctifying me. It's showing me the direction in which I should go.

Some of you have already heard this before. How did I end up at Revival? John approached me, asked me to pray about coming. I prayed, and sometime later opened up to Matthew 4 because I was at a men's conference and a pastor said, "Open up to Matthew 4," and I opened up to Matthew 4, and he began to read and God took one of those verses where the disciples left their nets and followed Jesus, and Jesus said, "That's for you. Leave what you're doing and go to Revival." So, God used His Word to direct my path. Okay? That's how that works. Sanctifying me, setting me apart, in order for His use at Revival. That's how that works.

Now, here's the next one, 2 Corinthians 7, and this will be the last one. I gave you three. I told you, Romans 10, Genesis 15, and now 2 Corinthians 7. Second Corinthians, chapter seven, we're going to read quite a bit here. We're going to pick it up at verse 1, so that we understand what Paul's doing, what he's saying here. He's writing to the Corinthians. He says in verse 1, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved,"—he's speaking to Christians, that was one of the many names that was synonymous with a Christian. He says, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation."

Verse 5, "For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest"—that's where Corinth was, in Macedonia—"but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. 6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more." In other words, when Titus showed up we had this good report, and I was so glad to hear it.

Verse 8, "For even if I made you sorry with my letter,"—what letter did Paul make the Corinthians sorry with? Well, probably 1 Corinthians, unless there was some other letter in between there, but as far as we know it was 1 Corinthians. Now, I love the Corinthians because they were a hot mess and because they were a mess of a church, we get to see Paul addressing all of those problems and issues and then we learn. We read through it, we go, "Oh, okay." One of the smartest things you can do is learn from someone else's mistakes, right? Don't make the same mistakes. I love that they were a mess and Paul corrected them. Well, that's what he's starting to talk about here in verse 8. He says, "For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while."

Verse 9, “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance.” Repentance? But he’s talking to Christians, but Christians sometimes need to repent, don’t they, right? He’s not talking to unbelievers, he’s talking to Christians saying, “I sent a letter, and you were hurt by it, but that hurt or that sorrow led to you changing, repenting.” And, repenting is when I’m walking in this direction, I stop, turn around, and begin walking in the opposite direction. That’s true repentance. If I’m walking, and I stop. That’s not true repentance. I may turn around, that’s not true repentance. It’s not until I begin to make my way back the other way, the opposite direction, that is true repentance. He’s saying, “You changed after you read my letter.”

He says in verse 9, “For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation”—that’s hatred. Hatred? It produced hatred? Hatred for sin. “. . . what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

What is the point? Well, we were talking about sanctifying faith, and here’s what happened as Paul’s writing to the Corinthians. We know that God moved on and in and through Paul, and that as Paul was writing this letter, that it was actually God speaking through him to the people. It was the Word of God going to the Corinthian people. And, when they got that letter, and Paul was correcting them, they were sorry at first—in other words, filled with sorrow—but then after they read the letter and said, “No, this is right. This is true. This is what we need to align our lives with,” then their lives changed—sanctification. They heard the Word of God, they heard the message, they read the letter, and changed how they were living—sanctification. That’s what the Word of God does for you and me, doesn’t it? It has changed us.

You know, when I got saved many, many, many years ago—thirty-two years ago, thirty-three years ago—at the time that I got saved I had a filthy mouth. Now, I know that you’re looking at me like, “Oh, dear Chris. He’s such a special soul,” and “he’s just so saintly and godly.” I know that you’re thinking that, you don’t have to say it. But when I got saved, man I was a mess! In about a week, maybe two weeks, but I think it was about a week after getting saved, all of the sudden, I don’t remember where I was but all of the sudden I realized, I started to think, When was the last time I cussed? And I couldn’t remember. I don’t remember. I mean it just used to roll off of my tongue. It was just natural. Some of you were the same. Don’t look at me like that, some of you were that way. What happened? The Word of God got into me, and it changed me.

Other things happened, I used to have my ears pierced and my nose was pierced. If you’ve got piercings, whatever. It doesn’t bother me, but at the church that I was at at the time I was the youngest one there that was serving and there were lots of older traditional Hispanic people there. No one ever said anything. They never judged me. But as I continued hearing the Word of God and the Bible studies, I began to become concerned and thinking, You know what? I don’t want to offend them. I’ve got the freedom to do this, but I don’t want to offend them. And, one

day I showed up to church without the piercings. Whatever, again, you've got them, you've got them. Whatever. It doesn't bother me one bit. For me, in that moment, what I'm trying to help you understand is my life was changing, things were changing - right? - and we're changing. The more that we hear the Word of God, we hear it and then we go, "You know what? I need to align myself with that," and then our life begins to change. We're sanctified. But that happens through the hearing of God's Word.

You know, we all are already preaching. You're wearing what you're wearing or you've done your hair a certain way or your style, whatever it is, you've done that to either declare to everybody that, "Hey, look at me. Look at my style. Look what I've got," and "My hair's nice," or whatever or you've dressed yourself in order to say, "Look, I'm a respectable person," or some of you have gotten dressed in a manner that says, "Please, don't notice me. Don't look at me. I don't want anybody to see me." We're giving a message. Some of us have perhaps sports jerseys on, I'm not thinking about my soccer game, you know, "Go, Niners!" or whatever. We're preaching. We're declaring things. Some of you might have political hats on or you've got a Christian t-shirt with a message. We're all preaching things already.

But then when it comes to sharing the Word of God, we say, "Well, that's just for you, preacher. You do that." But, see, there's a problem with that. I do it, and I love to do it, but here's the problem. I'm going to show you the problem. Take a moment. This is going to be so strange, but take a moment to look around the sanctuary. Look around. Come on, you are not being obedient. Look around. We've got some wonderful people in here, beautiful people, all ages, colors, but now what I want you to do is, you just looked around, you saw. You've got your friends with you or you might have some family members. Now, I want you to ask yourself, Who's not here tonight? Who's not sitting with you? You see, some of you have sons and daughters that are not saved and you're praying for them. Some of you have husbands or wives that are not saved, grandparents that are getting older and they're not saved, neighbors, and they're not here. I cannot go to everybody's family. John cannot go visit every single person and preach the gospel.

I had a lady say to me several years ago at the other church, she stopped me on a Sunday morning after service and said, "Pastor Chris, my friend's son is in the hospital, and I don't know if he's ever heard the gospel. Please, would you go share the gospel with him? Talk to him." I said, "Why don't you do it?" She did this to me. She literally did this, "Me?!" I said, "Yes." I said, "Are you a Christian?" "Well, yeah." "Do you know the gospel message?" She knew where I was going, "Yeah." "Do you know this young man and his dad?" "Yes." "Okay, well, I don't know this young man and his dad. Why is he going to listen to me? He knows you, you go tell him." You see, the problem is even with the youth ministry, the high school ministry, I cannot get to everybody's school to go preach to everybody's friends and share the gospel; and even if I did, why would they listen to me? They don't know me.

That person that's not here with you right now, they don't know it, but they need for you to share the Word of God with them to develop their faith, their saving faith, and then their sanctifying faith. The pastors can't possibly reach out to everybody. It's not going to happen, and you can

send a message, “Well, you know, I’ll send them one of your messages,” and “here’s the YouTube video.” Come on. If you weren’t saved, would you listen to it? Come on. Some people do, I get it, but if they do listen to it, it’s probably because a friend or a family member or a coworker has been sharing with them already. So, the people that aren’t in here right now, the people that you love, the people that are getting older and are going to be leaving this earth soon need for you to share the Word of God with them.

Now, listen, you do not have to know all the Word of God in order to share with them, just share with them what you do know. That’s all I do. On a Sunday and a Wednesday, right now, the only thing I’m sharing with you is what I’ve learned. I’ve spent time studying, and then I show up for the high school class and I teach them what I’ve learned. They can come and say, “Well, you know, we just finished up 2 Thessalonians and, Pastor Chris, I’ve got a question about this other book.” I’m not there yet. Stick around. We’ll get to Revelation in about six years, okay, so just stick around. You don’t need to know all of the Bible, just share what you do know. You’ve got a teacher’s teacher that fills this pulpit every Sunday, every Wednesday, and then you can go and listen to his messages all day long, and you can learn and then share with them what you do know, and that terrifies us, doesn’t it. “Well, what if they ask me something that I don’t have an answer to?” Write this down in your notebooks. You say this. You say, “I don’t know, but I’ll find out.” They don’t have all the answers, so why are they going to expect me to have all the answers? I’ll find out.

Take the studies that you’re hearing and then go and share those with somebody. I told somebody a while back, they were saying, “You know what? Can I copy one of your sermons?” I said, “Please.” I said, “Look, the church has been in existence for two thousand years, do you think that what I’m saying is the first time it’s been said? I probably ripped it off from somebody else. Take it! It’s not mine. Take whatever you’re hearing and go and share that.”

Let me give you a few examples of how you can preach. In other words, or as I said just a moment ago, know God’s Word, learn God’s Word, and then just share what you know about it. That’s it, just what you know. You don’t have to be anything more than what you are. Just share what you know, and if someone says, “Well, what about this?” and you don’t know, you just say, “I don’t know. Let me find out,” or “I don’t know, but what do you think about what I did share with you?” In conversations about current events, as you’re catching up with family and friends, life updates.

Here’s a big one—Social media posts. Some of you are not on social media, it’s okay. You don’t have to be on social media, but if you’re not on social media, there’s a huge audience there. Again, I don’t want to talk you into going on social media, I’m just saying that if you’re on social media, that’s a big audience. You can share the Word of God right there. Share a link to a study or whatever or share a Bible verse or whatever it is. If you’re a student, friends that you’re talking with. Some of you students and adults, some of you dads, C-O-D. Some of you dads know what I’m talking about, Call of Duty. I know because your kids tell. Your kids say everything, right? They tell me what kind of pajamas you’re wearing and everything when we get together.

As you're gaming, everybody games online now, you're gaming with people that you may not even know or maybe it is somebody that you know. Maybe it's your cousin from South Dakota or whatever, you take every opportunity that you can. Again, adults can do that, students can do that.

I always love seeing the Word of God on the back of letterman jackets, that's one I mention every so often—letterman jackets. So, you can walk around, you know the front, you just look like a World War II Army general, all those medals and patches and everything on, and on the back you have a Bible verse on there. You're walking around school and the Word of God is going out all over the school. Students, high school, young adults that are in college still, reports. I mean the teacher or the professor is literally asking you to write a report, "Give us your view or your take on this topic." Huh! I'm glad you asked. Here's what I think. I've got a biblical world view, and this is what I think about this specific topic.

There are so many different ways that we can share the Word of God. It is a matter of life and death. It is literally a matter of life and death. There are literally people perishing and going to hell for eternity that need the Word of God, and they're never going to come in here and listen to me or listen to our pastor or listen to anybody else in this church. They need someone to go out to them and take the Word of God and say, "Man, this is what I heard last night. Check this out! This is what the Bible says," and you share the Word of God with them. So, God help us. Amen?