**PREACHING AND BAPTIZING**

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**Introduction**

The subjects of preaching and baptizing are vast. Many books have been written about both subjects. We will not try to study these subjects exhaustively, but will limit our treatment to how they relate to discipleship. Furthermore, in discussing preaching, we will not try to include Bible studies. We want to know how preaching and baptizing are related to discipleship.

**Definitions of Preaching and Baptizing
with Biblical and Theological Foundations**

**Preaching**

Preaching is one of the main purposes Jesus had in mind when he called and trained his twelve disciples (Mk 3:14-15). Preaching is a very familiar term to us. It is one of the main things that disciples do and train other disciples to do in obedience to our Lord Jesus. To precisely know the meaning of the term “preaching,” it is necessary to understand the Biblical concept of the term in the Old and New Testaments. To gain this, we will analyze the word in Hebrew and Greek. For this purpose, we use two Bible dictionaries: “Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary”[[1]](#footnote-0) and, “The Lexham Bible Dictionary.”[[2]](#footnote-1)

**1) Preaching in the Old Testament**

There are few references to the term “preaching” in the Old Testament. In some passages of the Septuagint (LXX), the Hebrew word “basar” (בָּשַׂר) which means “bear tidings,” is translated in the Greek word “euangelizomai” (εὐαγγελίζομαι), which means “bring good news” and “proclaim the gospel” in English. In the New Testament, the Greek word “euangelizo” (εὐαγγελίζω) is translated as “preach” and “proclaim.” Thus, “basar” (בָּשַׂר) can be understood as one of the Hebrew words that are equivalent to “preach” in the Old Testament. One example is Isaiah 40:9: “You who bring good news (מְבַשֶּׂ֣רֶת) to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news (מְבַשֶּׂ֣רֶת) to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, ‘Here is your God.’” In this verse, “basar”(בָּשַׂר) is translated as “bring good news.” Another example is Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news (לְבַשֵּׂ֣ר) to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.” In this verse, “basar” (בָּשַׂר) is translated as “proclaim good news.” Analysis of the Hebrew word “basar” (בָּשַׂר) indicates that it is related with “good news.” To bring or proclaim bad news cannot enter into the definition of “preaching.” An important element of the definition of preaching is to preach good news, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Another Hebrew word equivalent to “preach” is “qara” (קָרָא), which is translated in Greek “kēryssō,” (κηρύσσω) which means “announce” and “proclaim.” The Hebrews understood the word “qara” (קָרָא) as “to read aloud the Torah.” One example is Jeremiah 11:6: “The Lord said to me, ‘Proclaim (קְרָ֨א) all these words in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: “Listen to the terms of this covenant and follow them.”’” Jonah 1:2 has a clear translation of “qara” קָרָא as “preach”: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach (קְרָא) against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” The analysis of the word “qara” (קָרָא) indicates that this word is related with “the word of God.” To preach other things than the word of God cannot enter into the definition of “preaching.” But it does not mean that the preacher cannot speak of secular narratives if he or she has a clear purpose of preaching the word of God and the secular narratives are useful for that purpose. On the contrary, if a preacher does not speak of the message of God during his preaching activity, it hardly can be considered as preaching.

**2) Preaching in the New Testament**

In the New Testament, about 30 different words describe the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles. Among them the Greek terms used most frequently to convey the act of preaching are “kerygma” (κήρυγμα) or “euangelion” (εὐαγγέλιον). The Greek verb “kēryssō,”(κηρύσσω) appears 61 times in the New Testament (NRSV), and it is translated into “preach” and “proclaim.’ The verb “euangelizo” (εὐαγγελίζω) appears 54 times in the New Testament (NRSV) and it is also translated in “proclaim,” “announce,” and “preach.” These terms can be grouped under either proclamation to evangelize or doctrine to teach. Mark 3:14 says, “He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach (κηρύσσω).” “Preach” is to proclaim good news and to evangelize. 1 Corinthians 15:1-7 represents the core of the gospel message. It also includes clear doctrinal teaching on the fulfillment of messianic prophecies. So, the preacher can deliver a message of salvation to evangelize and a doctrine to teach the truth of the gospel. Generally a message of salvation is directed to unbelievers and a doctrine is directed to believers. The apostolic preaching in the book of Acts was essentially pertaining to the death and resurrection of Christ.

The proclaiming of baptism of repentance that John the Baptist delivered involves not only the declaration of a message from God, but also interpretation and application of that message. The preaching of Stephen in Acts 7:1-53 represents the best of the Old Testament tradition, weaving narrative and historical portions of Scripture together with contemporary interpretation and application to the present situation. The responsibility of a preacher includes not only interpretation of a passage, but also application of its message to the present context and situation of the audience. John Stott says that preaching is to build bridges between the word and the contemporary world.[[3]](#footnote-2)

**Baptizing**

To define the concept of baptizing, it is necessary to distinguish baptism with water from baptism with the Holy Spirit. The topic of baptizing in this document came from Matthew 28:19 which says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Baptizing in this verse is a commandment of Jesus and is understood as baptizing with water, because the baptism with the Holy Spirit does not depend on us, but on the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the gift of God (Ac 11:16-17). Therefore, the definition of baptizing in this document will be limited to the baptism with water.

Baptism is the Christian rite of initiation practiced by almost all who profess to embrace the Christian faith. In the New Testament era persons professing Christ were immersed in water as a public confession of faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, washing away the guilt of sin. The term baptism derives from the Greek “baptizo” (βαπτίζω), which means “wash” and can refer to either the forgiveness of sins or mundane purification before eating meals (Lk 11:38). The related word “washing” refers to the act of dipping or immersing an object in water as part of a purification ritual. The word “baptizo” (βαπτίζω) appears 74 times only in the New Testament (NRSV: Mt 3:6,11,13; Mk 1:5; 16:16; Jn 1:25,33; 4:2; Ac 2:38,41; 8:12,16,36; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15; 1Co 1:17; 10:2; 15:29; Gal 3:27; etc.). However, the use of water as an instrument for religious and physical cleansing is prevalent throughout the Pentateuch (Nu 19:10–13; 31:23–24; Lev 11; 22:4–6; 17:15; 15:6–8,11–12,13,16; 15:21–22,25–27; 14:8–9; 8:19–21; 15:31; 14:5–6,50–52; 15:13; Dt 21:4).

John the Baptist began baptizing in the Jordan River and the Church maintained this practice in its post-resurrection worship and elevated it to prominence as the first public act of identification with Christ. The act of baptizing declares the nature of the Messiah’s mission, which is to be crucified, buried, and resurrected. Romans 6:3 says, “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” In addition, the baptism is a most important declaration of the Trinitarian nature of God. Matthew 28:19 says, “...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Baptism is not just an individual matter, but it involves being made part of a new community, a new family, and a new body.[[4]](#footnote-3)

**The Necessity and Centrality of Preaching**

**The Necessity of Preaching**

God has chosen to spread the good news of the gospel in the world through preaching. Since the gospel is the only way of salvation from sin and death, and preaching is the way that salvation is given to mankind, preaching is necessary for the salvation of mankind. Romans 10:14b-15a says, “And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?” 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.”

In the Bible we find a strong emphasis on preaching as the primary activity of Christian ministry. We can see this as we consider Jesus’ example, Jesus’ command to his disciples, and the apostles’ examples, including Paul. We can also see the necessity of preaching in Christian history and UBF ministry history as well.

**1) Jesus’ Example of Preaching**

Jesus began his ministry by preaching the message, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Mt 4:17). Jesus’ main ministry activity was proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, healing diseases and driving out demons. He did these things wherever he went. Jesus stated that preaching was the purpose of his coming into this world  (Mt 4:23;9:35; 11:1; Mk 1:14-15; 1:38-39; Lk 4:43-44; 8:1). The prophets foretold that the Messiah would be filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaim justice to the nations (Mt 12:18; Lk 4:18-19). Jesus’ preaching drew many listeners (Mk 2:2). Jesus taught the word of God from the beginning to the end of his ministry (Lk 20:37-38).

**2) Jesus’ Command to Preach**

While on earth, Jesus sent his disciples out to preach that the kingdom of heaven [or God] has come near (Mt 10:7; Lk 9:2). The purpose of their being with him was to ultimately be sent out to preach (Mk 3:14; Lk 9:2). Jesus expected his disciples to proclaim the kingdom as a first priority over everything (Lk 9:60). In his discourses on the signs of the end of the age which preceded his coming again, he urged his disciples that the gospel must first be preached to all nations, and then the end will come (Mt 24:14; Mk 13:10).

After his resurrection, the Risen Christ commanded his disciples to preach the gospel to all nations. This was a command which should take first priority. The purpose of preaching was to make disciples of all nations (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:18-20). Jesus foretold that his disciples would preach the forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, by the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:46-49; Ac 1:8). Jesus sent his disciples as the Father had sent him (Jn 20:21-23). Jesus told Peter to “Feed my sheep,” which certainly includes providing spiritual food through preaching (Jn 21:15-17). Peter recognized that Jesus’ command to preach his person and message was a command (Ac 10:42).

**3) The Apostles’ Example of Preaching**

The apostles proclaimed that Jesus is the Messiah everywhere in Jerusalem after his resurrection (Ac 5:42). Philip the Evangelist, and later Peter and John proclaimed the Messiah in Samaria (Ac 8:5,25). Philip preached the gospel throughout Judea from Azotus to Caesarea (Ac 8:40).  Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and to his household (Ac 10:36 ff.). In addition to these, there are many more instances of the twelve apostles’ preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth recorded in Christian history.

Apostle Paul was called to proclaim Jesus’ name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel (Ac 9:15). Paul began to obey this command immediately, proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of God (9:20).  Paul’s preaching in Damascus was fearless (Ac 9:27). On his first missionary journey Paul began by preaching the word of God in a Jewish synagogue (Ac 13:5). Paul preached the forgiveness of sins through Jesus (Ac 13:38). Paul preached the gospel throughout his first journey (Ac 14:7,25). Paul preached the word of God in Syrian Antioch (Ac 15:35). Paul described his ministry as “preaching the gospel” (Ac 16:10; Ro 1:9). In Thessalonica, Paul went into the synagogue and reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and that Jesus is the Messiah (Ac 17:2-3). Paul went on to preach the word of God in Berea (Ac 17:13). Paul was eager to preach the gospel in Rome (Ro 1:15). Paul recognized that Christ Jesus gave him a priestly duty to proclaim the gospel of God (Ro 15:16). Paul fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum (Ro 15:19). Paul’s ambition was to preach the gospel where Christ was not known (Ro 15:20). Paul gave a priority to preaching the cross of Christ over baptizing (1Co 1:17,23). Paul said, “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1Co 9:16).  Paul considered celebrating the Lord’s Supper as proclaiming his death until he comes (1Co 11:26).

**4) Historical examples**

In the history of the Christian church, it has often been noted that genuine spiritual revivals have happened where there was a strong emphasis on the preaching of the word of God.

George Whitefield: A. Skevington Wood comments on the sore spiritual condition endemic of that time and place: Christianity for the most part ceased to be a vital force. The spiritual life of people had largely been smothered by the dense atmosphere of materialism . . . There can be no serious uncertainty concerning the need for revival. Such a need was divinely met, and revival did come. And, when it did, it was Whitefield’s preaching that God used as an instrument to bring it about. In light of this, one commentator contends that the “history of preaching since the apostles does not contain a greater and worthier name than George Whitefield.”[[5]](#footnote-4)

Jonathan Edwards: Most of his early labor went into writing sermons. These sermons emphasized that God would judge sin, that God’s will determined who would be saved, and that sinners must prepare themselves to receive the grace of God, though only grace through faith could actually provide salvation. Edwards labored over his sermons twelve to fourteen hours per day, spending little time on pastoral visits to his congregation… Edwards’s work was rewarded in the winter of 1734-35, when the youth of Northampton experienced an outbreak of religious enthusiasm.[[6]](#footnote-5)

**The Centrality of Preaching in Ministry**

**1) Jesus’ main focus was on preaching**

Jesus began his ministry by preaching the good news that the kingdom of God is near (Mt 4:17; Mk 1:15). Among Jesus’ last words from the cross was a promise that a repentant thief would enter paradise (Lk 23:43). Jesus’ main focus from the beginning to the end of his ministry was to preach the good news; it was why he came (Mk 1:38; Lk 4:18-19).

Hughes Oliphant Old, who wrote a seven volume series on the history of preaching, wrote this, “Jesus was preeminently a preacher of the Word...He was in fact, an itinerant preacher of the gospel. His three-year ministry was above all a preaching ministry. Those who continued in his ministry, the apostles, were preeminently preachers as well, as evidenced by the Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament Epistles. Christianity from its earliest beginnings was a preaching religion. At the center of its worship was the reading and preaching of Scripture. It was by preaching above all that it witnessed to the glory of God in the risen Christ. The kerygmatic dimension of its worship was characteristic. All of which went back to the fact that Jesus was preeminently a preacher.”[[7]](#footnote-6)

**2) The Apostles’ Example**

From the beginning of the church, the apostles’ teaching and preaching were central to ministry (Ac 2:42). When the church grew and there was an issue about the distribution of food to widows, the apostles made a deliberate decision to entrust the food matter to deacons and to devote themselves to the ministry of God’s word and prayer (Ac 6:4). When they did, the church grew (Ac 6:7). Though Peter and Paul both performed healings and even raised people from the dead, they are primarily known for their preaching and their messages.

**3) The relationship of preaching to other ministries**

Although Jesus was primarily a preacher and teacher of God’s word, he also healed the sick, drove out demons, raised the dead, and ministered to people practically in various ways. There may be various ministries that a church is involved in, including relief for the poor, working for social justice, healing, driving out demons, and more. Yet the preaching of the word of God is to be the power source for them all. Ephesians 4:11-13: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” John Stott: “If it is true, as Jesus said, endorsing Deuteronomy, that human beings do ‘not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’ (Mt 4:4; Dt 8:3), it is equally true of churches. Churches live, grow and flourish by the Word of God; they wilt and wither without it. The pew cannot easily rise higher than the pulpit; the pew is usually a reflection of the pulpit…”[[8]](#footnote-7)

**4) Preaching in Christian History**

Origen: Origen was one of the early church fathers and a founding member of the School of Alexandria. From youth to old age, he preached every day, while at the same time laboring over his varied and immense works.[[9]](#footnote-8)

Augustine: If we had nothing else from Augustine than his Sermons, of which some three hundred and sixty remain that are reckoned genuine, we should recognize him as a great preacher, as a richly gifted man, and should feel ourselves powerfully attracted and impressed by his genius, his mighty will and passionate heart and deeply earnest piety.[[10]](#footnote-9)

Martin Luther: He said, “It is better to omit everything but the Word. Nothing deserves to be fostered more than the Word; for the entire Scripture shows that this is to be in common use among Christians, and Christ Himself says (Lk 10.42) that one thing is needful: that Mary sit at the feet of Christ and hear His Word daily. This is the best part that is to be chosen, and it will never be taken away. It is an eternal Word. All the rest must pass away, no matter how much work it gives Martha to do” [#884 What Luther Says].[[11]](#footnote-10)

John Calvin: It is important to understand that Calvin actually considered his preaching ministry the most important thing which he did, more important than the theological treatises, than his massive correspondence, than even the Institutes. Christians of Calvin's day understood this. His sermons in French editions, and in English and Latin translations, went through many printings in the late sixteenth century. His sermons on Job, for instance, went through five editions in a very short time; Admiral Coligny, the French Protestant leader, read through those sermons continually until his death. Calvin wanted first of all to be thought of as a pastor bringing God's Word to God's people in the local church. One incident illustrates this. In 1538 Calvin and Farel were ejected from Geneva. In 1541 Calvin was called back. On that first Sunday back in the pulpit of St. Peter's, on what did Calvin preach? Was it a rebuke to the citizens of Geneva for their fickleness, or a vindication of his previous ministry? No, Calvin began again exactly where he had left off three years before, picking up on the next verses in the text, as if to show that he saw that there was nothing more important than his task of feeding God's flock from the Word of the Lord. Calvin sought to not let his personal feelings shape what texts he chose in preaching, but what edified God's people.[[12]](#footnote-11)

John Wesley: John Wesley was one of the most famous preachers of the 18th century and the founder of the Methodist Church. It was said of him that in regards to preaching, “he never slowed down, and during his ministry he traveled over 4,000 miles annually, preaching some 40,000 sermons in his lifetime.”[[13]](#footnote-12)

Billy Graham: From the 1950’s until now, Dr. Billy Graham has regularly been recognized as one of the most influential people in the world. He calls himself an “evangelist” and has an unwavering commitment to preaching the gospel as of first importance. He has preached the Gospel to more people in live audiences than anyone else in history—nearly 215 million people in more than 185 countries and territories—through various meetings. Hundreds of millions more have been reached through television, video, film, and webcasts.[[14]](#footnote-13)

Tim Keller: He said, “While we will always require a host of varied forms of Word ministry, the specific public ministry of preaching is irreplaceable….a church’s gospel ministry should be ‘pulpit-centered, but not pulpit-restricted.’”[[15]](#footnote-14)

John Piper: “Therefore God has ordained that the form his Word should take in corporate worship is not just explanation to the mind and not just stimulation to the heart. Rather the Word of God is to come teaching the mind and reaching the heart; showing the truth of Christ and savoring the glory of Christ; expositing the Word of God and exulting in the God of the Word.”[[16]](#footnote-15)

**5) Preaching in UBF Ministry History – Dr. Samuel Lee’s Example**

Although Dr. Samuel Lee did many things well, his primary focus was on the study and teaching of God’s word and especially on the preparation of the Sunday message. One of his lifelong key verses was 2 Timothy 2:15: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” As his co-worker for 18 years, I am one of the witnesses of his devotion to the word of God and wholehearted preparation and delivery of the Sunday message. He began preparation on Tuesday and finished the following Monday. His weekly schedule included the following:

* Tuesday: Bible reading out loud repeatedly with a native English speaker for several hours. Reading from the previous Sunday’s message for several hours with a group of young missionaries.
* Wednesday: Prayer and research until the outline of the message became clear.
* Thursday: Writing the first draft of the message which usually took about ten hours.
* Friday: Revising of the written message for several hours. Listening to the testimonies of about 12 students based on his Sunday message.
* Saturday: Rehearsal for several hours.
* Sunday: Delivery with whole heart and soul and strength. After delivery prayerful review of the message contents and delivery.
* Monday: Listening to more than 20 testimonies of staff and fellowship leaders based on his Sunday message. When the Sunday message was well received, he was full of joy. If there was something unsatisfactory, he would work tirelessly and with all his strength to correct it and improve.

Dr. Lee devoted at least 30 hours per week to the preparation and delivery of the message which involved me, his assistant. In addition, he spent countless hours in prayer, private meditation, research and study. He meditated on the word of God day and night. He often had inspiration in the middle of the night or at other unusual times. I often received a phone call after midnight to come and pick up his revised manuscript for typing. Of course, this was possible for Dr. Lee as a full-time staff member. Lay missionaries and shepherds, who must work full time, cannot follow this pattern. But it is helpful for us all to know.

History has shown that Dr. Lee’s Sunday messages delivered in the Chicago UBF Sunday worship service have been life-transforming. Many were converted to Christ and became his disciples under Dr. Lee’s preaching. His preaching of God’s word became the foundation for the Chicago UBF church. For example, he preached through all of Luke’s gospel 8 times from 1977-2001. Today the word of God is going out from Chicago UBF to the ends of the earth.

To be sure, Dr. Samuel Lee set a wonderful example as a gospel preacher. He also trained many younger leaders to be effective preachers. To do this, he encouraged people to write thoughtful personal reflections on Bible passages and to share them publicly. He listened carefully to the reflections to see if people really understood the Bible passage and applied it practically. When he was confident that they were doing so, he encouraged them to teach what they learned to others through one-to-one Bible study. He also raised many young people as Bible preachers, giving various kinds of opportunities to speak publicly. He invited UBF leaders from all over the world to receive training and become effective Bible speakers.

**The Two Ditches to be Avoided**

After understanding the necessity and centrality of preaching in Christian ministry, we should caution against two extremes to be avoided. We can think of these as two ditches along the side of the golden road that leads to fruitfulness and blessing in ministry.  On one side is the ditch of actionless passivity. We should examine to see if we are lacking the practical obedience and action that should proceed from powerful preaching. James 1:22 says, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” After hearing that we should love our brothers, we should take practical action to do so. After hearing that we should go into all the world and preach the good news, we should take practical steps to obey. Many good works that bless our families, church and community and even the world should flow forth as the fruits of powerful preaching.

On the other hand, there is the danger of being overly active without really giving a first priority to hearing Jesus’ words. We can call this the ditch of disconnected activity. This was the problem of Martha. She was so busy with practical preparations that had to be made that she was upset at Jesus for not rebuking Mary to help her. Jesus told her that “few things are needed--indeed only one,” and that “Mary had chosen what is better...” (Lk 10:42). We should be sure to give our hearts fully to hearing Jesus’ words and understanding them before we become busy doing many things.

**Public Sermons and Personal Evangelism**

Considering the definition of preaching and the context where it is practiced in our ministry, two types of preaching can be observed. One is Public Sermons and the other is Personal Evangelism. The Sermon is carried out in Sunday Worship Service, Bible Conferences, Fellowship Meetings, Morning Prayer Meetings, etc. The characteristics of Public Sermons compared to Personal Evangelism are: First, Public Sermons are practiced in a formal structure and environment, while Personal Evangelism is practiced in an informal structure and environment, generally. Second, Public Sermons are mainly one-sided preaching, while Personal Evangelism is mainly bilateral dialogue. Third, Public Sermons are focused on the message of God in consideration of the context of audience, while Personal Evangelism is focused on the audience using the word of God. Fourth, Public Sermons are directed to both believers and unbelievers, while Personal Evangelism is directed to unbelievers primarily. Fifth, Public Sermons take as topics the gospel of salvation and the doctrine of the Bible, while Personal Evangelism focuses more on the gospel of salvation.

**Public Sermons**

Considering the vital necessity of preaching, and its centrality in ministry, it follows that the greatest effort and most intense prayer must be invested in preaching. Though there are various forms of preaching, we want to focus this discussion on the preaching of a public sermon.

Before speaking to others, any preacher of God’s word must first present himself to God and receive his approval. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (ESV). Obtaining God’s approval is vital. God’s approval is accompanied by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul testified, “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power…” (1Co 2:4). The Holy Spirit’s power and God’s approval in preaching cannot be overemphasized.

Though being approved by God is essential, it is just the starting point of preparing and delivering a message. There is also a lot of hard work required. A preacher should be “a worker who has no need to be ashamed.” This means that he has spent sufficient time and effort in the preparation and delivery of his message. Some people think that preaching is done from the mouth. But the kind of preaching that God approves comes from one’s whole being--his mind, heart, soul and strength. Furthermore, preaching can be thought of as a professional craft. Just as a skillful carpenter takes pride in a job well done, so a preacher can find satisfaction and joy in preparing and delivering a great message. This requires ongoing effort to improve. Just as a doctor or engineer needs to constantly learn about his field, make progress, and grow, so a preacher must continually make progress in preaching God’s word. Since UBF ministry appeals to college students, most of the members who commit their lives in this ministry become successful professionals. They are required by their profession to constantly learn, grow and develop. They expect a senior pastor or full-time preacher to do the same. As St. Paul urged Timothy, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching....Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress” (1Ti 4:12-15).

Though the Holy Spirit’s role is central, there is a significant responsibility that falls on the preacher as a human being in deciding how to preach and what to preach. There are many kinds of preaching: expository, evangelistic, catechetical, festal, and prophetic, to name a few.[[17]](#footnote-16) Among them, the expository method is highly recommended as the best way to let the Bible speak for itself, for it emphasizes studying, understanding and preaching from the Bible in a way that most closely follows the original writer’s inspiration.

What should we preach? Jesus commanded to “preach the gospel to all creation” (Mk 16:15). Simply speaking, the gospel is the good news of Jesus’ suffering and death for our sins and his resurrection from the dead, defeating the power of death. Whoever believes in him receives the Holy Spirit, and a new life, and becomes a child of God. God’s reign is restored in the hearts of individual people, churches, communities and nations. Jesus himself proclaimed “the kingdom of God.” To those who have accepted the gospel, we are called to teach obedience to all that Jesus commanded (Mt 28:19). We can say in public sermons: Preach the Word; preach Christ every time; preach Christ from all of Scripture.

**Personal Evangelism**

Evangelism is the way to spread the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us.[[18]](#footnote-17) There are different approaches to evangelism, depending on the worldview, the scope of mission field, and the character of the person evangelizing. Those who see evangelism as a spiritual war against Satan will emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer the territory of Satan and release the people from oppression.[[19]](#footnote-18) On the other hand, those who have a more peaceful and harmonious worldview will try to pay attention to the context, emphasize two-way interaction of giving and receiving, and try to have better relationships with others.[[20]](#footnote-19) The scope of mission field affects the approach to evangelism. Global and regional contexts need to be considered, as does the temperament of the people being evangelized. The way of evangelizing in Latin America cannot be same with the way in Europe. Nevertheless, Christians should preach the gospel to everyone, regardless of race, language, nationality, etc. The character of the person evangelizing will also affect the way of evangelizing. For example, John Wimber emphasizes the power encounter with the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, McNeil focuses on the conversation of Jesus with a Samaritan woman.[[21]](#footnote-20)

Evangelism is the work of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So it is helpful to examine how the Triune God works in the preaching of the word of God and how we can experience his work during our preaching practices. The narrative between Jesus and a Samaritan woman is an excellent example of personal evangelism with the work of the Triune God. In the progress of a long dialogue between Jesus and a Samaritan woman, Jesus told her, “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks” (Jn 4:23). In this verse, the Triune God opened the woman’s spiritual eyes by the work of the Holy Spirit, and through the conversation with Jesus, who led her to worship God the Father. She met the Messiah and testified that Jesus is the Savior of the world to the Samaritans.

Another key question is how we can carry out evangelism effectively to college students in this postmodern society. Over the last decade, Everts and Schaupp have listened the stories of two thousand postmodern people who have come to follow Jesus and they propose five thresholds of the postmodern path to faith, which are: Threshold One, Trusting a Christian; Threshold Two, Becoming Curious; Threshold Three, Opening up to Change; Threshold Four, Seeking after God; Threshold Five, Entering the Kingdom. Beyond the Thresholds, they propose “Living in the Kingdom”, that is Discipleship.[[22]](#footnote-21) They claim that the postmodern skeptics need to restore trust in Christians and to become curious about Christians’ lives in order to have spiritual desire to be changed. Their proposal is helpful because it is written for a postmodern generation in the contemporary context of the United States.

Our society and our mission fields have changed radically. The lifestyle and needs of college students in this era are totally different to those of ten years ago. If we do not understand the changes of our mission fields and if we do not change ourselves for the mission of preaching in this postmodern world, we cannot carry out evangelism effectively.

**Personal Evangelizing Training**

Everyone in UBF is offered endless opportunities to grow as a shepherd or a shepherdess through various training such as weekly Bible studies, writing and sharing Bible reflections, writing daily bread and preparing conference messages, going out and inviting Jesus’ sheep to the Bible studies and shepherding them to grow in Jesus’ words.  Everyone has opportunities to deny himself or herself and follow Jesus. Shepherding one sheep can take 5 years, 10 years, 20 years, even more.  Especially through outreach, one to one Bible studies, and taking care of needy sheep, a person can be trained constantly to grow to be like Jesus.  Also, a sheep can grow to be a shepherd more effectively through common life with other disciples, sharing various godly training together. Let’s consider two examples of personal evangelizing training.

**Example 1**

One shepherd invited a student to Bible study, but the student was not much interested in it. Then the shepherd invited him to ping pong fellowship.  The student liked it and then later came to Bible study.  He studied once a week in the beginning, and then later twice a week. He wrote and shared Bible reflections with his Bible teacher. Then the student experienced a great change in his life. He was freed from addiction to video games and pornography. Rather, he desired the words of life. His shepherd went to his house in the early morning every day to take him to daily bread. Later his shepherd accompanied him as he invited other college students to Bible study. He grew as a shepherd who served about 10 students with 1:1 Bible studies weekly. He also prepared and delivered conference messages, and preached the word of God to his family as well.

**Example 2**

A shepherd invited an unbelieving student who had lots of doubt about the Bible.  That shepherd struggled with him, having Bible discussions regularly until late at night.  That student’s heart softened and he began to consider the Bible more seriously. His heart was moved by his shepherd’s sacrificial effort, which required him to sacrifice time. The student felt the love of God and believed that the word of God is true. Although his habit was to wake up after 10 am, he started daily bread training and also went out to invite students to the Bible studies.  Later he went to Brazil as a missionary to serve students.

**Baptizing**

Baptism is a holy sacrament/ordinance appointed by Christ to mark one’s acceptance of him as Lord and Savior and entrance into the Christian community (Mt 28:18–20). It is a sign of new birth in the Holy Spirit; union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection; union with his church; single devotion to Jesus as Lord, and the start of a new life in Christ (Ro 6:3–7). UBF practices baptism, known as believer’s baptism, in obedience to the command of Jesus. Believers are those who have personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and confess the Apostle’s Creed in good conscience as a valid statement of their faith. UBF also practices dedication of children to the Lord by believing parents who so desire. We also respect the faith of those who practice infant baptism. UBF does not insist on, but permits re–baptism for any believers who are compelled by their conscience to do so. While there are some historical conflicts regarding baptism, UBF does not advocate any position held by genuine believers to the exclusion of any other, while not agreeing with the teaching of baptismal regeneration. In terms of forms of baptism, UBF recognizes immersion, pouring, and sprinkling each as being valid. While UBF pastors will have their own convictions about baptism, they are encouraged not to advocate a specific teaching to the exclusion of others, but to provide thorough education to baptismal candidates and to respect the candidate’s freedom of conscience in regard to how the baptism is carried out.

The Bible is relatively silent on who is authorized to conduct the ordinances of baptism and communion. However, in mentioning appointing elders and overseers it says the candidates should be qualified and their appointment should not be hasty (1Ti 3:1–13; 5:22). Moreover, in historic Christianity, having only ordained ministers perform the ordinances has been advocated as an orderly and reverent expression of the faith. UBF respects the Christian church’s traditional practice of these ordinances by qualified ordained ministers of the church.

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