

How to Listen to a Sermon  
Dr. Barry D. Lovett

*Dear brothers and sisters, when I came to you, I did not come preaching God's secret with fancy words or a show of human wisdom.<sup>2</sup> I decided that while I was with you I would forget about everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross.<sup>3</sup> So when I came to you, I was weak and fearful and trembling.<sup>4</sup> My teaching and preaching were not with words of human wisdom that persuade people but with proof of the power that the Spirit gives.<sup>5</sup> This was so that your faith would be in God's power and not in human wisdom.*

*<sup>10</sup> But God has shown us these things through the Spirit. The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God.<sup>11</sup> Who knows the thoughts that another person has? Only a person's spirit that lives within him knows his thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.<sup>12</sup> Now we did not receive the spirit of the world, but we received the Spirit that is from God so that we can know all that God has given us.<sup>13</sup> And we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom but with words taught us by the Spirit. And so we explain spiritual truths to spiritual people.<sup>14</sup> A person who does not have the Spirit does not accept the truths that come from the Spirit of God. That person thinks they are foolish and cannot understand them, because they can only be judged to be true by the Spirit.*

1 Corinthians 2:1-14 (NCV) selected verses

THE FUNCTION OF PREACHING IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD.

### **Ten Ways to Survive a Boring Sermon**

1. Pass a note to the organist asking if she takes requests.
2. See if a yawn really is contagious.
3. Slap your neighbor and see if they turn the other cheek, if not, raise you hand and tell the pastor.
4. Collect your neighbors bulletins and design and test a series of paper air planes.
5. Raise your hand and ask for permission to go to the restroom.
6. Whip out a hankie and blow you nose. Vary the pressure exerted on your nostrils and trumpet out a rendition of your favorite hymn.
7. Twiddle your thumbs
8. Twiddle your neighbors thumbs
9. Start from the back of the Church and crawl under the pews all the way to the front.
10. Crack your knuckles.

How to improve what we get out of a sermon.

1. Keep you eyes open.
2. Heads up.
3. Don't make your grocery list
4. Ask yourself what is God saying to **me**.
5. Pray that God will speak to you.
6. If there's something you don't understand, talk to the Pastor afterwards.

Preaching is not teaching.

Preaching is not delivering an inspirational/motivational message.

The sermon you think is good is not likely to be the one that will do you the most good.

Preaching is not attempting to convert people to the Christian faith.

OK so What IS the primary function of Preaching?

*“When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming (preaching) to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”(Vs.2)*

Preaching is the proclaiming of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Preaching is the revealing of the power of God.

*<sup>3</sup> So when I came to you, I was weak and fearful and trembling. <sup>4</sup> My teaching and preaching were not with words of human wisdom that persuade people but with proof of the power that the Spirit gives. <sup>5</sup> This was so that your faith would be in God’s power and not in human wisdom.*

*“Ten years from now I would not like to go into the ministry. Our television experience has created such an expectation of how dynamic and charismatic the preacher is going to have to be that nobody will be able to live up to the job description. The pressure that creates on preachers is immense and terrible.” - Jack Hayford*

Preaching is God’s Word, spoken through a person (vs. 13).

The preacher’s authority comes when he... 1. SPEAKS ACCORDING TO GOD’S WORD, 2. SPEAKS BY FAITH. 3. IS AFFIRMED BY THE CHURCH.

WHAT IS THE TASK (responsibility) OF THOSE LISTENING?

WE ARE TO HEAR IT WITH EXPECTATION.

Visible signs that communicate your expectation.

1. Body language
2. Taking notes
3. Facial expressions
4. Where you sit.

THE CONGREGATION THAT PRAYERFULLY EXPECTS AND FAITHFULLY RECEIVES AND OBEDIENTLY APPLIES GOD’S WORD IS REGULARLY SPOKEN TO BY GOD.

Lace / Lydia, after the service is over, as people are leaving can you put up the following...

## **Sermon Notes Answers**

The function of preaching is often **misunderstood**.

How to improve what you get out of a sermon.

1. Keep your **eyes open**.
2. Keep your **heads up**.
3. Don’t make your **grocery list**.
4. Ask yourself what is God saying **to me**.

5. Pray that God will speaks to you.
6. If there's something you don't understand, talk to the Pastor afterwards.

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The preacher's authority comes when he...

1. SPEAKS ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD,
2. SPEAKS BY FAITH.
3. IS AFFIRMED BY THE CHURCH.

What is the task (responsibility) of those listening? We are to hear it with expectation.

The congregation that prayerfully expects and faithfully receives and obediently applies God's Word is regularly spoken to by God.