

Aim for that balance in your preaching, the same balance seen in sermons recorded in the Book of Acts. Very detailed lessons on subjects like establishing authority, and on the work, worship, and organization of the local church won't always have people on the edge of their seat, but they are important, nonetheless.

Speaking of details, don't say what we've heard some say, "If we can just teach people to love God and love others, everything else will take care of itself." Sorry, but for our love to "abound...in knowledge and all discernment" (Philippians 1:9), we've got to know the details. Love, just like zeal and sincerity, needs a partner, and that partner is the truth—in all its fullness (read 2 John). So again, preach the devotional elements found throughout Scripture, but preach the details, too. Well informed, well grounded, and well-balanced Christians will be the result.

Brian Gibson (Plain Words From Gods Word FB Group)

Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Study / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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Brighten Your Corner

An old hymn from the Sacred Selections hymnal is titled *Brighten the Corner Where you Are*. A verse that comes to mind when considering this song is, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (Romans 12.18). A verse which given the context is describing the "Marks of the True Christian" (Romans 12.9-21). At its core the application of verse 18 to each of us individually is "I'm not going to be the problem." We are only responsible for our own thoughts, actions, and behaviors. The actions of others are out of our control, we can only control how we react to them. This world is filled with darkness, rudeness, crudeness, meanness, anger, hate, violence, etc. With so many people walking opposite of God's will it is easy to become discouraged. Disciples of Christ are called to be lights, to shine to remove the darkness (Matthew 5.14-16). While we individually can't shine across the country or world at once, what we can do is our part to brighten our corner of it. Romans 12.9-21 give us some ways we can brighten the corner where we are.

Love genuinely (v. 9) and love one another (v. 10): It is easy for us to spot fake love; words are said but there is no real substance to them. The kind of love a disciple is to show is one that isn't fake or false, but real, true, and genuine, or "without hypocrisy" (NASB1995). Love is to be shown in everything a Christian does. In a world full of hate, we are to show love to all, even those who hate us (Matthew 5.44). We are to show we genuinely care, then we back up what we say by showing they are more than mere words. "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (v. 15). We are to celebrate the successes of others without inserting ourselves, and we need to be there for others in times of sorrow, so they know we are there for them without making it about our own problems. It makes all the difference. Instead of being closed off we need to "seek to show hospitality" (v. 13b). We need to have a welcoming and friendly attitude to all those we encounter, but especially strangers. ...

Our impact on the world lessens when we are more closed off to people. Most importantly we need to show love to our fellow brethren. There is a special bond amongst those of a like-minded faith. Love for all, including our brethren is only shown through actions (1 John 3.18). If we don't love each other, how can we love the people of the world.

Abhor evil and hold on to what is good (v. 9): A person doesn't have to look hard to find the evil in the world. Instead of taking part in or endorsing the evil, the disciple of Christ is called on to "abhor" evil. To "abhor" is to loathe which means to "dislike greatly often with disgust or intolerance" (Merriam-Webster's). To the Thessalonian brethren Paul wrote "*abstain from every form of evil*" (1 Thessalonians 5.22). The evil of sin is the exact opposite of God's nature. We need to view sin the same way God views sin, with disgust and hatred. It is not enough just to hate evil, we must "*hold fast to what is good*" or to "*cling to what is good*" (NASB1995) (v. 9). To "cling" is "to hold or hold on tightly or tenaciously" (Merriam-Webster's). To love the Lord is to hate evil (Psalm 97.10). If we understand the truth of God's word, then we are to hate every false way (Psalm 119.104). In other words, we must hold on to good and never let it go. Peter wrote to "*Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation*" (1 Peter 2.12). Here the Gentiles represent the non-believers, those of the world. The more we hold on to the good the less room there is for evil. The good things of God need to fill our lives, and then they need to be shared with others. "*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good*" (v. 21).

Be fervent in our service for the Lord (v. 11): To be "fervent" as used here is "to be hot, to boil" (Vines). We are called to have zeal and passion for the Lord. We are not to be slothful or lazy when it comes to serving the Lord. "Service to God without enthusiasm does not deserve to be called 'service'" (Harkrider). Zeal can either be good or bad depending on where it is directed. We can either be zealous towards sinful, fleshly, and worldly things. Or we can be zealous or fervent to be the workmanship God created us to be (Ephesians 2.10). Paul in writing to Titus wrote, "*who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works*" (2.14). When we think about all God through Christ has done for us, how can we not be fervent to work for Christ. The more time we spend studying and learning about Christ, the more it should drive the fire in us to be His workmanship. Zeal is contagious. If we are not passionate about working for Christ, how can we expect others to becoming interested in working for Christ. ...

These are just a few of the many ways we can shine the light of Christ to brighten our small corner of this world. As the song goes "Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do. Do not wait to shed your light afar. To the many duties ever near you now be true. Brighten the corner where you are... Brighten the corner where you are! Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar. Brighten the corner where you are." (Verse 1 and chorus of Brighten the Corner Where You Are).

Written by: Derek Steen

Plain Words For Preachers (Part 1)

I originally posted this elsewhere under the title, "Plain Words for Young Preachers," but then thought it best to take the "young" part out. These are things every preacher needs to hear. And because there is so much we need to hear, we'll break this down into three parts.

Some of you preachers are quite talented, which may have helped generate some "buzz" about your preaching. That's not necessarily bad, but it's not necessarily good either. It could be that you're entertaining more than you're edifying, that you're gaining more points for style than substance. Apollos was eloquent, but he was also "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24), and so if it's the Scriptures you're featuring, you should be commended. Speaking of featuring the Scriptures...

"Preach the word!" (2 Timothy 4:2), and that means more than just an occasional or passing reference to it. Make it the featured attraction, and make sure every conclusion, every application is derived from it. Preaching certainly involves reasoning and persuasion; just make sure you reason and persuade from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2), not apart from them. Good illustrations have their place, too, but it's easy to get carried away. Don't let them overpower the message of Christ and turn too much attention toward you (2 Corinthians 4:5). You want your audience to glorify the word (Acts 13:48); you want their faith to "not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:5).

Don't think you have to wow people with every sermon, which is easy to do if you preach nothing but inspirational, motivational, and devotional type sermons. Read carefully through the New Testament epistles. They inspire and motivate (and we all love those passages), but they also inform and educate (not always as exciting). "If you instruct the brethren in these things..." (1 Timothy 4:6, look at context to identify "these things"). ...

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