

# Preaching Christ in a Post-Modern World

## Notes on Lecture 16

### Lecture 16

#### **Adoring Christ: Spiritual Reality**

By Tim Keller

The goal of the sermon is to get people to worship.

A sermon isn't a sermon until you call people to adore Christ. A sermon is a lecture when Christ is not adored.

Willow Creek approach: "You can evangelise non-Christians or edify Christians"

Conservative approach: "All people need to worship through the same material"

If you preach Christ, you'll be evangelising and edifying at the same time.

Post-modern people like to know how Christianity works.

PM people try on Christianity as a dress. They'll try it out to see if it works.

You can only change a person's life by changing what they worship and how they worship.

#### **Text, Context and Subtext**

Be clear about the text, context and subtext

- 1) The text: know what the text is saying. Be clear on theology
- 2) The context: know how to present the text to the people
- 3) The subtext: have the right heart for the text (Christ) and the right heart for the context (people)

#### **4 Subtexts**

##### 1) Social Reinforcement

The purpose of the sermon is to say: "Aren't we great?"

The preacher builds community and belonging by using familiar language and over endorsing the goodness of the church.

"We're here to remind ourselves that we are unique people"

##### 2) Selling

Promotion the products of the church

"Don't you feel that this is a great church?"

"See how worthy I am of your respect"

The sermon is trying to give teaching to win people over to the individual church.

##### 3) Training

The purpose of my sermon is to teach people things they don't know

"I want to inform you of things you don't know"

##### 4) Worship

This subtext points to Christ and says "Isn't He great?"

"Don't you see that your problems are rooted in not worshipping Christ?"

## Spiritual Reality and Edwards

Religious Affections by Jonathon Edwards:

We have always done what we wanted to do.

Edwards argued that there is no ultimate opposition between head and heart. The heart always leads the will to act. Actions are grounded in emotions- always!

If someone says, "I know God cares for me, but I can't help but feel unloved." Edwards would say "You clearly don't know that God cares for you. You haven't felt that reality. Once you feel that God cares you'll act as if God cares."

Acting directly on the will won't really work. We need to aim for the heart.

If someone is not being generous it's due to sinful emotions. It's because their hearts find something more attractive than Christ. Once people really see and feel 2 Cor 8:9 giving becomes frequent and a happy experience!

Sensing Christ is the only way to motivate the will. The task of the preacher is to present the beauty of Christ so that He becomes the object of our heart's greatest affection. Presenting Christ as more excellent than everything will weaken the Christians love for things other than Christ.

"Excellency is that which is appreciated and rested in for its own sake."- Edwards

The nominal Christian is someone who finds grace useful to get the things that the heart finds excellent and beautiful. Christ should not be the means to the end. He is the end!

Spiritual reality is more than rational conviction.

2 fold knowledge of good according to Edwards:

- 1) That which is notional: understanding something rationally.
- 2) That which is pleasing to the heart: delighting in him.

You can rationally know that honey is sweet without feeling it. You can't feel that honey is sweet unless you rationally know it's sweet.

### 5 tips for heart preaching

- 1) Use reason- be clear and logical.
- 2) Use analogical illustrations- relate the truth to another discourse. Doing this engages the senses.
- 3) Use narrative- use stories.
- 4) Transfer the affections of the people from sin to Christ- show that sin is not satisfying- show people that Christ's beauty satisfies.
- 5) Worship as you preach- show the people that you are sensing Christ – taste the food that you're feeding to the children.

Our problem: we forget spiritual knowledge.

2 Peter 1:8-9 is not talking about someone who has forgotten that they are saved. Rather, the Christian here is not being continuously refreshed with Christ.

Video is more attractive than audio. The Bible sometimes can go straight to audio- it is heard and not fully experienced. We need to see Christ on video this is to experience him. We worship when we treasure God. This is when we find him more beautiful than anything else.