

Why Listen to Preaching in the Church?

“Congregations never honor God more than by reverently listening to His Word with a full purpose of praising and obeying Him once they see what He has done and is doing, and what they are called to do.” ~J. I. Packer

Dr. Whitney asks, “Why shouldn’t we give preaching a decent burial and eliminate it from our services, or at least minimize it? Why don’t we replace it with drama? Why not downplay it behind ceremony and ritual as many churches do? Why not show Christian films instead of preaching, or show popular movies and make comments about them or relate the Bible to them? Why not take the time formerly spent on preaching and devote it to more professional and entertaining music, exciting testimonies, or at least a pastor/congregation dialogue? Wouldn’t any of those be more appealing in a visually oriented, participative culture than preaching?”

What are the benefits and limitations of each of the above potential substitutes?

For what reason(s) might you reply in the negative to the thrust of his questions?

In saying preaching is superior, Dr. Whitney comes short of saying other means of communication are unlawful. Why might that be?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:21 ... “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.”

Based on the above verse, Dr. Whitney gives **3 reasons preaching is always relevant:**

1. God was pleased to ordain preaching.
2. God’s message is the subject of preaching.
3. God saves people through the message preached.

Explain why each of these is important, making preaching always relevant.

In what ways has God revealed Himself?

- _____ Romans 1:20
- _____ John 1:14, 18; Hebrews 1:2
- _____ 2 Tim 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:21

What are the limits of “general” revelation?

Why is the Bible so crucial? (*cf.* Dr. Whitney: “God revealed Himself to us in Jesus, and through the Bible we learn about Jesus.”)

Why is it pertinent that God had other options available to communicate His message to the world other than through His Word by means of preaching, but still chose preaching? (p.61)

Dr. Whitney: “Preaching should be a primary consideration when choosing a church.” But why?

What are some other things that might outrank preaching when people church shop? (*cf.* p.71)

What are some things a church can do to prioritize preaching?