

Ten Theses on Preaching the Gospel

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1. The task of preaching is the delivery of the free and immutable gift of mercy on account of Jesus, crucified and risen, to all who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
2. Preaching is an extension of what Christ does and who he is, and of what scripture declares God has been making of us from the foundation of the world.
3. Preaching is not to be equated with the presentation of information about the Bible, a psychological examination of people's motives, or moral exhortation for the amendment of life, for while these things are useful they cannot create saving faith.
4. When it comes to the content of the gospel to be preached, there is nothing new under the sun, and preachers need not trade in novelty; the new has no primacy simply because it is new.
5. Preachers who assume a free will on the part of their hearers will always confuse law for gospel and will instead deliver advice, wisdom, or exhortation while also making the cross a mere adjunct to personal improvement or an exemplar of purposeful living.
6. The gospel preached in its truth and purity has no relevance to those who are self-made or self-sustaining, but for those who exist under judgment and pain, loss and death, it is life itself.
7. Preachers who seek religious activity or social action on the part of their hearers as the goal of their preaching make Jesus' crucifixion and death into a small thing of no effect.
8. Only preachers who have suffered under the judgment of the law and been freed from it by the proclamation of the gospel are able to hand on what they were first given to people in similar straits.
9. Faithful preaching assesses its effectiveness not by worldly results but recognizes the preached word as a planting of God's promise that will grow unseen in those in whom it is planted.
10. The preacher who understands these theses will thenceforth regard delivering the gospel as a privilege and delight.