

Preaching Values

Key Biblical and Theological Convictions of Village



Village Bible Church
DISTINCTIVES

Preaching Values

While preaching is only one aspect of what must be a comprehensive ministry of the Word of God at Village Bible Church, it is foundational to who we are.

We are committed to biblical preaching.

The preacher's obligation is to communicate God's words in the power of the Holy Spirit, not to communicate his own message.

Biblical preaching relies on an expository approach.

This means that the preacher's task is to "expose" or explain the meaning of God's Word, as it is relevant to the church using sound exegetical techniques. This conviction is grounded in VBC's doctrinal statement, which affirms the completeness, inspiration, inerrancy and authority of God's revelation by means of Scripture.

Both systematic exposition and topical exposition methods have their respective advantages.

Systematic exposition is helpful in:

- Teaching the congregation how to study scripture;
- Constraining the preacher to present God's Word in the context and sequence in which He entrusted it to its original recipients;
- Controlling text selection so that the preacher neither dwells on nor neglects any text;
- Reducing the risks of "proof-texting";

Topical exposition has the advantages of:

- Allowing the preacher to address topics, doctrines, issues and questions by synthesizing answers from the entire deposit of Scripture;
- Enabling the preacher to employ dialogical preaching techniques where he poses the (presumed) contemporary questions of listeners to the ancient scripture, rather than simply translating the answers to ancient questions to a contemporary context.

Both systematic and topical expositions are useful for edifying the church. Sermons that are based on the propositions and principles of the preacher rather than the Bible is always dangerous and not appropriate for public worship in the church.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is integral to the preaching ministry.

The Spirit of God has inspired the biblical authors, and today endows certain individuals with the gift of preaching. The preacher's prayerful preparation and reliance on the Holy Spirit to empower His preaching is essential. The church acknowledges and affirms the preaching gift by calling individuals to the preaching office. The preacher has considerable freedom, under the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit, in matters such as text selection and systematic vs. topical approaches to his exposition.

In addition, the Elders have considerable discretion to call qualified laymen and guest preachers to fill the pulpit. Notwithstanding this freedom, the preacher is expected to collaborate with the Elders in establishing the preaching calendar and focus.

As an element of corporate worship, preaching should be edifying to the body of Christ, the Church.

Preaching should address two specific goals:

1. Teaching believers God's Word. - (This includes information, exhortation and application) – This teaching involves the building up and equipping of the body for worship and service. Significant emphasis must be given to concrete and relevant application in preaching.
2. The outreach to unbelievers – proclaiming the truth of God's redemption by calling for repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ

The Holy Spirit uses preaching to communicate the Word of God in order to build up and equip the believer and to move the unbeliever to repentance and faith. Consequently, the preacher must use language understandable to both believers and unbelievers. Without taking away the ability to teach the meaning of biblical, ecclesiastical and theological terms and concepts, the preacher should anticipate the presence of unbelievers by explaining these concepts and terms in simple language, when possible, or by omitting technical language and "Christian clichés" when appropriate.

Preaching is not the sole ministry of the Word in the church.

There are many other venues by which the word is taught. Preaching allows time for extended exposition, but has the disadvantage of not being interactive. It appeals particularly to the auditory learner, but less so to other learning styles. The church should minister the Word of God in a variety of formats appropriate to the diversity of the body. As such:

1. Preaching must be complimented by teaching in other venues (e.g. small groups, Adult Bible Fellowships and Equipping U) with the goal of bringing individuals to personal faith in Jesus Christ and growing them to full maturity with the ability to adequately understand and apply the whole Word of God. We recognize that this goal requires some coordination of preaching and teaching content.
2. The preaching style should be targeted to the audience (e.g. different styles are already in use in Sunday morning, Youth, and Children's worship services.)
3. Pulpit rotation and guest preachers can accomplish additional diversity.

To faithfully present God's Word, preaching must often communicate more than rational, propositional truth.

Where God has chosen to communicate His Word poetically, emotionally, humorously or dramatically, for example, the preacher has discretion – even an obligation – to communicate not only the content but also the heart and emotion of God's message.

In light of these values, Village Bible Church affirms preaching that is oriented toward systematic exposition supplemented by topical exposition (e.g. doctrines, biblical character studies and cultural, social, family or sin issues, etc.).

Preaching must address the needs and concerns of believers, but not to the exclusion of its evangelistic purpose. Preaching must have its greatest pursuit to be the glory of God through the faithful and passionate exaltation of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus.