



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: LESSON 13

Preaching, Teaching and Defending the Bible

The whole counsel of God – pastors, teachers are commanded to preach and teach (homiletics) the whole counsel of God, not only parts they like or are comfortable with (2 Timothy 4:1-4). The Christian practice of lectio continua, the continuous expositions, ensures believers hear the full counsel of God.

Expositional preaching and teaching is when a pastor or teacher teaches through whole books of the Bible, verse by verse. This drives the pastor to teach whatever comes next, preventing the skipping of difficult or unpleasant passages and doctrines. The church hears the whole counsel of God and is edified.

The power is in the word – the power of God is in the message of God (Romans 1:16). The power of God is not found in the eloquence or the knowledge or the oratory skills of the preacher, or of the novelty of the programs offered at the church, but the power of God is in His message. The gospel is efficient and effective, because it carries with it the power of God (Isaiah 55:10, 11; Hebrews 4:12).

Exegetical teaching – The goal of the pastor, teacher or any Bible interpreter must be exegetical teaching. Exegesis (from the Greek ‘to draw out’) is the method by which a student draws the meaning of a passage, intended by the original author, out of the text. Eisogesis (from the Greek ‘to draw in’) is when we put a meaning into the biblical text which isn’t there.

Not dependent on Biblical experts – we are not dependent on the teaching of biblical experts, or on some special knowledge, in order to understand the basic and central truths of the Bible (1 John 2:27). God has revealed His truth in such a way that the simplest can understand it. The Holy Spirit leads and guides believers into the truth. This does not deny the necessity of pastors and teachers in the church.

Importance of Biblical experts – on the other hand, biblical experts, gifted by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11) do play a significant role in explaining the more technical and precise understanding of the Bible to people, teaching the whole counsel of God. So we are commanded to study the Scriptures by ourselves, but are also called to study with other mature Christians, especially under the teaching of church leaders who have thorough understanding of the Bible (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Christian Apologetics – from the Greek word apologia, which means to give a reasoned defense of the Christian faith (1 Peter 3:14-16). As Christians we are to be ready at any moment to give a defense, to say what we believe and why we believe it. We are to give a reason, not a feeling. The word translated reason comes from the Greek word logos (John 1:1). Logos signifies wisdom, mind, logic and reason.

The God of the Bible is a rational and logical being. He has made us in His image. We are rational beings. Rationality comes from God. God relates to His people in a rational way. God Himself thinks, and we as His creatures are commanded to think (Proverbs 3:13-15; Romans 12:2). The revelation of God, in nature or His word, is rational. God’s truth is not irrational, illogical, contradictory or ridiculous.

The Christian faith is based upon trustworthy and compelling evidence. Our faith has substance and is grounded upon reason, the rational character of the truth claims of the Bible (Hebrews 11:1). We are never to negotiate this truth. If our faith is not grounded upon evidence, then we have just taken a blind leap of faith, and actually violated God’s command to think and to give a reason for our faith.

This is the responsibility of every Christian. We are to be ready, at any moment, to give a rational defense of the Christian faith to anyone who asks. And we are to do this with gentleness and respect.