

Sanctifying Jehovah in Worship (9): Receiving the Preached Word

As a Christian, preaching of the Word of God plays a central role in the worship of God. In fact, one of the chief reasons why he comes to church is to worship God in the hearing of the preached Word. Thus, a believer cannot wait for the Lord's Day to come so that he can be found sitting under the preaching of God's Word. For in the Word is the gospel where he is comforted that his sins though great is may be, are forgiven by God on account of Christ's death on the cross an also through it, his faith is nourished and strengthened.

As it is the responsibility of the preacher to prepare hard for the public proclamation of God's Word so is the responsibility for the believer to listen well to the preaching of God's Word. In this regard, I would like to bring a relevant verse of Scripture to your attention. It is found in Acts 17.11, "*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*".

With Readiness of Mind

Here we learn that the Berean believers received the word with readiness of mind. Firstly, this means that they were eager to hear what was preached and was ready to hear the preached Word. They looked forward to go to church to hear the preached Word and they wonder why does not the Lord's Day come sooner! Notice also they were ready in their minds, that is, to concentrate and understand what the what the preaching meant from the viewpoint of a passage of Scripture.

Accepted the Preached Word

Secondly, they accept the Word, which was preached. This means that they listen to that word by faith and believing the very Word of God. Their hearts were open to receiving the Word of Christ in order for them to face the many spiritual battles ahead. And now we face the issue of what we may consider to be a bad sermon. Let me quote Rev. Daniel Kleyn, a minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches,

"Sometimes we view some sermons, or a certain minister's preaching, that way. We might feel the preaching is too deep; in our opinion it is dry and abstract, having too much doctrine and not enough application. Or else we might consider the sermons to be too shallow. Or too long. Or too difficult to follow. It may happen that a personal dislike of the minister, or of some of his preaching habits, may get in the way of hearing the sermon. It may also happen that we become so accustomed to a preacher that we can just about predict what he is going to say. For some or all of these (and/or other) reasons, we find it very difficult to listen to the word, and feel we are not being edified and fed.

We must not let this happen. We should always listen to the preaching with readiness of mind. We have to forget about our prejudices. We have to put away our negative opinions about a minister or his preaching. Instead of listening in order to find fault, we must listen in order to find food. If a minister would preach heresy, then there is of course reason to reject what is preached. But if the truth is proclaimed, we must eagerly receive it. We must not allow anything to get in the way of receiving spiritual food for our souls".

Listen with Discernment

Thirdly, we are to listen with discernment. We do not listen blindly to what is preached. The Berean Christian did no such thing but they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether the preached Word agreed with the Holy Scriptures, in that text and in light of the whole bible. Beloved, listen to every preacher with an open bible, comparing the preaching with the God's revelation in God's Word and do not allow a preacher's reputation come in the way of listening to the preaching of God's Word with discernment. What if we have doubts over what we have heard? Then, it is our responsibility not to leave it alone but to clarify our doubts with the preacher so that our minds can be at ease.

Applying it into our Lives

Hearing God's Word must come with the obligation of doing it. This is what James says, "be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves". This is what the Lord expects of us. And in order for us to obey the Word, we must know how this passage of Scripture applies to my our life. Sometimes, the minister does not specifically state the application and sometimes he does. But in any case, the believer is to mediate on the preached Word and apply that Word in his own life.

Beloved, receiving the preached Word is an important part of our pursuit in growing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God highly commended the Berean Christians for they were noble. May this be our Lord's commendation of us, that we are eager to hear the preaching of God's Word and live it our in our lives. May the Lord help us.

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