**PREACHING AND BAPTIZING**

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Mt 28:19-20a)*

**Introduction**

We will explore the topics of preaching and baptizing in light of discipleship developing definitions, necessity and centrality of preaching, public sermons and personal evangelism, and baptizing.

**Definitions with Biblical and Theological Foundations**[[1]](#footnote-0)

* **Word study on ‘preaching’ in the Old Testament** 
  + The Hebrew word בָּשַׂר /basar/ is to ‘proclaim ***good news***’ (Isa 40:9; 61:1).
  + The Hebrew word קָרָא, /qara/ is to ‘preach ***the word of God***’ (Jer 11:6; Jonah 1:2).
* **Word study on ‘preaching’ in the New Testament** 
  + The Greek verb ‘κηρύσσω’ /keruso/ mean either proclamation to evangelize or doctrine to teach (Mk 3:14; 1Co 15:1-7).
  + The preaching involves not only declaration of a message from God, but also interpretation and application of that message (Ac 7:1-53). The responsibility of a preacher includes application of message to the present context and situation.
* **Word study on ‘baptizing’ (baptism with water):** 
  + Baptism is the Christian rite of initiation practiced by almost all who profess to embrace the Christian faith.
  + The Greek βαπτίζω /baptizō/ means ‘wash’ or ‘baptize’ and refers to the forgiveness of sins.
  + The act of baptizing declares the nature of the Messiah’s mission, which is to be crucified, buried, and resurrected, e.g. Romans 6:3. In addition, the baptism is the most important declaration of the Trinitarian nature of God, e.g. Matthew 28:19. Baptism is not just an individual matter, but it involves being made part of a new community, a new family, and a new body.[[2]](#footnote-1)

**The Necessity and Centrality of Preaching**

* **The necessity of preaching:** The gospel is the only way of salvation from sin and death, and preaching is the way that salvation is given to mankind (Ro 10:14b-15a; 1Co 1:21).
  + **Jesus’ example of preaching:** Jesus’ main ministry activity was proclaiming the good news of the kingdom (Mt 4:17; 4:23; 9:35; 11:1; Mk 1:14-15; 1:38-39; Lk 4:43-44; 8:1).
  + **Jesus’ command to preach:** Jesus sent his disciples out to preach that the kingdom of heaven [or God] has come near (Mt 10:7; Mk 3:14; Lk 9:2). He urged his disciples that the gospel must first be preached to all nations (Mt 24:14; Mk 13:10). The purpose of preaching was to make disciples of all nations. (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:18-20).
  + **The apostles’ example of preaching:** The apostles proclaimed that Jesus is the Messiah everywhere in Jerusalem after his resurrection (Ac 5:42; 8:5, 25, 40; 10:36 ff.). Apostle Paul was called to proclaim Jesus’ name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel (Ac 9:15). Paul described his ministry as “preaching the gospel” (Ac 16:10; Ro 1:9). Paul recognized that Christ Jesus gave him a priestly duty to proclaim the gospel of God (Ro 15:16).
  + **Preaching in Christian history:** We can learn valuable lessons from many preachers in Christian history: George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards (See comprehensive document for more information.)
* **The centrality of preaching in ministry** 
  + **Jesus’ example:** Jesus’ main focus from the beginning to the end of his ministry was to preach the good news (Mk 1:38; Lk 4:18-19).
  + **The apostles’ example:** From the beginning of the church, the apostles’ teaching and preaching were central to ministry (Ac 2:42).
  + **Preaching in UBF ministry history – Dr. Samuel Lee’s example:** Dr. Samuel Lee’s Sunday messages delivered in the Chicago UBF have been life-transforming. Dr. Samuel Lee’s devoted at least 30 hours per week to the preparation and delivery of the message weekly. In addition, he spent countless hours in prayer, private meditation, research and study.
* **The two ditches to be avoided:** We should caution against two extremes to be avoided: the ditch of actionless passivity and the ditch of disconnected activity.

**Public Sermons and Personal Evangelism**

Two types of preaching can be observed: one is public sermon and the other is personal evangelism.

* **Public Sermons**
  + A preacher has to spend sufficient time and effort in the preparation and delivery of his message. The kind of preaching that God approves comes from one’s whole being - his mind, heart, soul and strength.
  + There are many kinds of preaching: expository, evangelistic, catechetical, festal, and prophetic, and so forth. Among them, the expository method is highly recommended as the best way to let the Bible speak for itself, for it emphasizes studying, understanding and preaching from the Bible in a way that most closely follows the original writer’s inspiration.
  + We should preach the gospel that is the good news of Jesus’ suffering and death for our sins and his resurrection from the dead, defeating the power of death.
* **Personal Evangelism**
  + There are different ways of evangelism, depending on the Christian worldview, the range of mission field, and the main agent: spiritual war, two-way interactions, relationship, and so on.
  + Evangelism is the work of the triune God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit together, e.g. John 4:23.
  + Effective evangelism to college students in a postmodern society: five thresholds.[[3]](#footnote-2)

**Baptizing**

* Regarding the ordinances of baptism and communion, as well as wedding and funeral ceremonies, UBF broadly embraces various genuine Christian traditions, putting the doctrine of the unity of the church above any specific doctrine of ordinances.
* UBF encourages our ordained pastors to conduct baptisms and communion for the spiritual life and health of the local congregations, as our Lord Jesus Christ commanded (Mt 28:19; Lk 22:19; 1Co 11:23–29). Each chapter has freedom to decide how often and when appropriate to conduct these ordinances.
* UBF practices baptism, known as believer’s baptism, in obedience to the command of Jesus. UBF also practices dedication of children to the Lord by believing parents who so desire. We also respect the faith of those who practice infant baptism. UBF does not insist on, but permits re–baptism for any believers who are compelled by their conscience to do so. In terms of forms of baptism, UBF recognizes immersion, pouring, and sprinkling each as being valid.

1. Two Bible dictionaries were used for the word study. See C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler, eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers and Meeks, C., 2003), and J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, W. Widder, eds., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. González, Catherine Gunsalus, and Justo L. González, *Resources in the Ancient Church for Today's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Everts, Don, and Doug Schaupp, *I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us About Their Path to Jesus* (Downers Grove, Il: IVP Books, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)