

Session 2 - The Essential Practices of Teaching, Preaching and Discipleship

Theologians have different ideas regarding what makes up the essential practices of the church. In Seminar 5, we are looking at eight essentials: preaching, teaching, discipleship, fellowship, care, worship, prayer and mission.

In this session, we will consider the essential practices of teaching, preaching, and discipleship by focusing on four questions:

1. What is the difference between teaching and preaching?
2. How do teaching and preaching guide the mission of the church?
3. What role does discipleship play in the life of the church?
4. How can these truths be applied today?



Teaching and Preaching – The theological foundation of the church is found in God’s Word and all of the essentials of the church stand on that same foundation. It is imperative that the Word of God is both taught and preached to the church. The Word of God is God himself speaking to us, telling us what we need to know. In it we discover the nature and character of God. We also discover the nature and character of people. Both Testaments tell us the story of God’s mission to redeem and call people to himself through Jesus Christ. It tells us the truth of how we are to respond to God and how we are to live our lives in this world.

Romans 13:17 tells us that “faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.” This “message” needs to be both taught and preached because through preaching and teaching Biblical knowledge is passed on to the people in the church.

A preacher explains the Word of God and applies it to the people that assemble together as the church. J.I. Packer wrote that “preaching appears in the Bible as a relaying of what God has said about Himself and His doings, and about men in relation to him, plus a pressing of his commands, promises, warnings and assurances, with a view to winning the hearer ...to a positive response.”

Large Group Discussion – Is there a difference between teaching and preaching? If so, what do you think makes the difference? Record the important contrasts in the space below.

Summary Thoughts - Teaching and preaching are similar as both are means to relay the truth to the church. Preaching is more proclaiming or even “heralding” God’s Word in an assembly. Teaching imparts Biblical knowledge in a relational give and take situation. It is often done in a classroom setting.

“Typically, we distinguish between preaching and teaching. Preaching involves such things as exhortation, exposition, admonition, encouragement, and comfort, while teaching is the transfer of information and instruction in various areas of content. In practice, however, there is much overlap between the two. Preaching must communicate content and include teaching, and teaching people the things of God cannot be done in a neutral manner but must exhort them to heed and obey the Word of Christ.” **R.C. Sproul**

All preaching has teaching within it. And when you sit under a good teacher, you will probably have some preaching as well.

Read the following statements and decide if they apply to (T) Teaching, (P) Preaching or (B) both teaching and preaching. Discuss your answers with a partner.

- _____ Proclaiming something
- _____ Creating a learning environment for the passing on of knowledge
- _____ A means to proclaim the gospel
- _____ From the Greek “*Kerusso*” meaning a king’s messenger proclaiming news in a city
- _____ A more intimate setting geared towards people who are already converted to the faith.
- _____ Nurturing, building up or helping believers to mature in Christ
- _____ From the Greek “*didasko*” means imparting of knowledge and instruction in wisdom
- _____ Proclamations about Jesus or the Father and supporting them with scriptures
- _____ Appeals to the head and the heart
- _____ An exchange takes place between those giving and receiving information

Large Group Discussion - How do teaching and preaching guide the mission of the church? Record the important thoughts from our discussion in the space below.

Personal Application - Whether you teach or preach, you must invest a great deal of time in reading and studying the Word of God. You must think of effective ways to present this to your hearers so that they will not only understand what the Word says but how they are to respond to it. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:15 that you should *“be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”* And James lets us know that this is serious business when he says, *“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”*



Application Questions - Do you think you are more comfortable with teaching or preaching? Why?

What are some things you might do to become a better teacher or preacher?

The Importance of Discipleship

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the Scripture records some of his last words before he ascended back to heaven. Someone's "last words" usually relay something that is important to them, something that they want us to remember and to be sure to carry out as their final wishes. Here's what Jesus said in Matthew 28: 18-20

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

These words are often referred to as *“The Great Commission.”* A commission is a task entrusted by one in authority to be carried out by another. **In this commission, Jesus directs them first to do two things, what are they?**

Then he gives two ways that tell them how they are to do it, what are they? Do you see any resources they will have to help them do this?



What is Discipleship? – Living out the Christian Experience! We might simply say that a disciple is a pupil or a learner and that discipleship is deepening their understanding and growth in the Lord. Usually, a more mature and knowledgeable Christian comes along side another to help them learn and then live out the Christian experience.

A disciple is not a convert. A disciple was a convert. “To make a convert means causing someone to change their mind and hold an opposing belief ... a disciple, is made when the convert sits under the feet of a teacher in order to grow in their knowledge and understanding, and then conforms their life according to that understanding.” William Hendriksen continues, “The term ‘make disciples’ places somewhat more stress on the fact that the mind, as well as the heart and the will, must be won for God.”

Study Scripture with Another Person -What do you learn about discipleship from these verses? Be ready to share your discoveries with the larger group.

Colossians 1:2

John 13:15

Romans 8:29

I Peter 2:21

I Corinthians 11:1

Philippians 4:9

2 Timothy 2:2

I Thessalonians 1:6

2 Thessalonians 3:7,9

From the above verses, what essential truths help us disciple others?

Read the following verses and identify some ways discipleship happens in the New Testament. What is being done in each verse to disciple another person. How can this be done in the church?

Titus 2:4

2 Timothy 2:2

Ephesians 6:4

Matthew 28:20

Hebrews 3:13

I Peter 4:10

Acts 18:24-26



Practical Application: How does discipleship get lived out in today's world?

We are to follow the example of Christ; we are to follow the example of others who follow the example of Christ, and we are to be an example that others can follow. Whose example can you follow? Who can you help by being an example to them?