

Reformat – Apostolic Preaching (Part 1)

Jeremiah 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall **return** unto me with their whole heart.

Malachi 3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. **Return unto me, and I will return unto you**, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

Illustration: Computer Reformat

The ministry of the church stands on three pillars – Apostolic preaching, Apostolic pattern, and Apostolic power. Remove any one of them, and the church is ineffective in fulfilling its mandate.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a **threefold cord** is not quickly broken.

Illustration: Three Legged Table

Today we will look at Apostolic preaching. Preaching involves a WHO and a WHAT. The “who” is the preacher, and the “what” is the message.

One of the most common words used for pastors in the Bible is also translated “shepherd,” one who tends flocks, feeding, guiding and supervising them. The concept of shepherding is one of the oldest in the Bible. The “shepherding ministry” was an abomination to the Egyptians, just like the “pastoral ministry” is offensive today to a godless world.

Genesis 46:34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for **every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians**.

Sheep are different than any other animal. Without a shepherd ...

- they wander astray and cannot find their way home.
- they are helpless and defenseless against their enemies.
- they cannot cleanse themselves.
- they cannot lead themselves.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and **submit yourselves**: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

You need a pastor preaching God's Word to you in order to be saved!

There are several enemies of the sheep mentioned in John 10:

- THE STRANGER (v.5) whose voice the sheep do not recognize, so they wander away.
- THE THIEF (v.1,9,10) who steals from the flock by craftiness.
- THE ROBBER (v.1,9,10) who steals from the flock by violent force.
- THE HIRELING (v.12,13) who leads the flock only for pay, and flees when the wolf comes.
- THE WOLF (v.12,13) who devours and scatters the flock. (Did you know the phrase “a wolf in sheep's clothing” came originally from the lips of Jesus in Matthew 7:15?)

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in **sheep's clothing**, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

It seems like everyone is an “armchair preacher/pastor” today, knowing exactly what should be done in the church. That's an Absalom spirit!

2 Samuel 15:2-6 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Preach to me, preacher! Don't just tell me what I WANT to hear, tell me what I NEED to hear!

2 Timothy 4:2-3 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, **having itching ears**;

Preaching involves a “who” – the preacher who stands up to declare God's Word. It also involves a “you” – the people who HEAR the Word and DO the Word willingly. They have an “attitude of Amen!”

Preaching also involves a “what” – the message that is preached. This must be Biblically correct if it is to have Apostolic power!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable **for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction** in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Doctrine – what to believe
Reproof – what not to believe
Correction – how not to behave
Instruction – how to behave

Upon the return of the exiles from Babylonian captivity, their primary focus was to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. That part of their story is found in the book of Ezra, a record of this rebuilding project which took 20 years from its inception until the Temple was completed. It was then dedicated in the year 516 BC. God's promise of their return, and of their Temple's restoration, had been fulfilled.

However, two full generations had elapsed – 90 years since the first families' return, and 70 years since the completion of the Temple. And as the Jews gathered for joyous worship, one thing was still missing – the walls of their city still lay in ruins. The city sits in embarrassment. Here is a people who have been able to reestablish their WORSHIP (temple), but unable to reestablish RULERSHIP (walls). THEY HAVE COMPLETE REBIRTH, BUT NOT COMPLETE RECOVERY.

And as such, they are a type of those in the church who are saved – but still broken. They have been fouled up by accident, dented by disobedience, smashed by sin, ruined by rebellion, or injured through ignorance. They may well have been forgiven for the foolish seeds of sin sown “B.C.” – before Christ – but the harvest of “sowing to the flesh” doesn't disappear overnight. There is still some “rubble” around.

Rulership means the recovery of self-control, personal identity, stabilized temperament, outward holiness and inward character, all of which was lost in the fall. Rulership is not just being a believer, but one with maturity. Not just a city, but one with walls. A city without walls was open prey to oppressors. A city without walls will eventually forfeit its Temple!

INTO THE RUBBLE WALKS A PREACHER NAMED NEHEMIAH WITH A MESSAGE AND A MISSION FROM GOD!

In chapter 3 of Nehemiah, the Bible tells us in great detail about the gates of Jerusalem being rebuilt. Why? Because there is a picture here of what Apostolic preaching is supposed to do for us.

The Sheep Gate – Maturity

Nehemiah 3:1

The Fish Gate – Evangelism

Nehemiah 3:3

The Old Gate – Doctrine

Nehemiah 3:6

The Valley Gate – Compassion

Nehemiah 3:13 (Hanun – “to stoop in kindness to another”)

The Dung Gate – Repentance

Nehemiah 3:14

The Fountain Gate – Holy Ghost

Nehemiah 3:15

The Water Gate – Baptism

Nehemiah 3:26

The Horse Gate – Lifting of Burdens

Nehemiah 3:28

The East Gate – The Coming of the Lord

Nehemiah 3:29