

## Preaching/Receiving the Word

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he warned of those who would “peddle” (to retail or trade in) the Word of God, 2:Cor.2:17. He also spoke of those who would “adulterate” (lit. *to handle deceitfully*) the Word in 4:2. When he wrote to Timothy, he likewise warned of a time when people “*will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires,*” 2Tim.4:3. Of them he also said they will “*hold a form of godliness*” but will have “*denied its power,*” 3:5.

From these, two things become apparent about the preaching/teaching and hearing/learning of the Word:

1. It must be properly taught/given; and
2. It must be properly learned/received to be effective.

This is surely **not** earth-shaking news, I know. But from these things, there are some very important and relative points of application with regard to *why/how we teach* and *why/how we learn* the Word. For the most part, we will be considering the words and example of the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ.

### A. If “people” (in *general* or *specific*) are not listening and learning:

1. We **can’t** change to message to fit what they want it to be, 2Tim.4:1-2 (on plan of salvation, what constitutes “worship,” or even marriage, divorce, and remarriage for example).

We **can** change our approach, Matt.4:23 – 12:50 → 13:1-3. Jesus had been preaching and teaching in all Galilee. People were thronging to Him because of the miracles He performed, but were not “getting” the message, 13:13. So, He began using parables (simply *earthly stories* with *heavenly/spiritual meanings*) to get His point across. If what we/you’re doing is not working, change approaches rather than the message.

2. We **can’t** “target” certain ages or demographics because we feel the church needs them, Matt.9:9-13. Whether

*young or old, rich or poor, or this race versus that race-* the gospel is supposed to be for everyone (cf. Mark 16:15-16; Gal.3:28).

We **can** “sow the seed” *beside the road, in the rocky places, and even among the thorns, as well as on the good ground* because all deserve the opportunity to listen, learn, and grow to maturity and spiritual reproduction, Matt.13:3-8.

3. We **can’t** become overly concerned with “mass appeal,” Luke 13:22-27; or converting those who are uninterested and/or unwilling, Matt.7:6.

We **can** and should pay special attention to *individuals* who demonstrate interest and willingness, Luke 19:1-10.

4. We **can’t** “soft sell” or “over sell” the gospel and its requirements. It does have some difficult requirements, Matt.10:34-39; and it won’t solve all our *worldly* difficulties, 10:16-23.

We **can** preach and teach “*the whole message of this life*” which is able to “*build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified,*” Acts 5:20 and 20:32.

5. We **can’t** become too concerned with “offending” and “consequences,” Matt.15:7-14. While it shouldn’t be our goal to “offend” for the sake of offense, people must be allowed to see that their “wrong” to be made “right” by the gospel.

We **can** (and must) “*preach the word*” and “*be ready*” to do so “*in season and out of season*”- to “*reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction,*” 2Tim.4:2.

### B. Conclusion

**We must look to and learn from the words and example of Jesus Christ in our efforts to “seek and save the lost” in the right ways and with the right words. Such is not only the “best” way- it is the “only” way to do so.**