

Garlock, JohnKeys To Better Preaching

4. What is Preaching All About?

The opening chapter of a preaching manual defines what preaching is and where its power comes from. It frames preaching as the meeting of three 'Words' and lays out a simple biblical method, then defines homiletics and the divine principles behind any living sermon.

Key takeaways

- Preaching joins three Words: the Living Word (Christ, whom every sermon should lift up), the written Word (the Bible, the foundation of every true sermon), and the spoken Word (the live oral delivery, which is a sermon's essence).
- Nehemiah 8:8 gives a three-step formula: read the text clearly, give its sense (exegesis), and cause people to understand and apply it. Simple, but it demands prayer and real preparation — 'just say Blessed be the Lord' is a dangerous shortcut.
- Homiletics is the science and art of preparing and delivering sermons. As science it must obey the rules of good communication; as art it leaves room for each preacher's own style. (Not to be confused with hermeneutics — biblical interpretation.)

- Preaching is proclamation and prophecy — announcing good news with strong conviction and speaking for God, not merely researching or arguing.
- God communicates through revelation (He unveils truth), mediation (He uses human messengers), and illumination (the Spirit makes the Word personal to the hearer).

Passages worth keeping

“Preaching at its best is a manifestation of the Living Word, developed from the written Word, and delivered by the spoken Word.”

The chapter's central definition of preaching.

How it connects

The preacher stands in the prophetic line — like the prophets, his task is to speak what God wants people to hear, whether correction or encouragement.

Scripture referenced

- **Nehemiah 8:8** -- The three-part formula: read distinctly, give the sense, cause understanding.
- **2 Kings 7:9** -- The lepers at Samaria — the duty to share good news.
- **John 15:21–27** -- Father, Son, Spirit, and disciples as God's communication partnership.

- **1 Corinthians 1:21** -- God saves 'by the foolishness of preaching.'
- **John 17:8, 18, 20** -- Jesus prays for the preacher and those who believe through his word.