

The Necessity and Power of Preaching

Let's turn to our Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 4, 2 Timothy chapter 4. I've already gone through verses 1 through 5, and this is a rich section of the Word of God as well, so I will dig into some of this. Verse 2 in particular, 2 Timothy chapter 4, verse 2. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. Preach the Word.

Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. Let us pray.

We do come before you, God, this evening. We come before you thankful for the opportunity to hear your Word, and to be blessed thereby, we pray, by the power of the Spirit within us. May we learn how this is done and why it's important in the Christian life, God, in this sermon.

All the more that we would glorify and praise your name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, how you have granted us many such things in our life to help us grow spiritually. One of the important ones is certainly preaching of the Word. Our God and Savior, continue to bless our church and our denomination and our presbytery and all the churches of Jesus Christ across the globe with the gifts of the Spirit, including the preaching of the Word.

Amen. Paul's reminder here to Timothy and insistence is rooted in time and command, but also in necessity. That is, the proclamation of the Word is a moral necessity as God has given it to us.

Thus the Apostle speaks of his own necessity in 1 Corinthians 9.16. Yea, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. Now when I use the word necessity, I don't mean the same degree as eating, although it's a parallel to eating. You can go without eating many hours in a day.

Sometimes you skip a meal or two, in fact. You can even fast at times. And so with the preaching of God's Word, you can skip these things in our life.

Churches have this historically, often not intentionally, like during times of war and social collapse. You don't have access to a pastor. It is not a good thing.

So certainly you can survive by fasting and you can survive as a believer without preaching, but as you know, it's often not a good thing. So there's a necessity in that sense in how God has so designed it in Christian life. But it is important, that's what I want to highlight with that word, the importance of preaching the Word of God as we read here.

Preach the Word. It's not a suggestion to Timothy or to the Apostle Paul himself or to any minister of the gospel because it's not just for ourselves that we preach, like we want to hear our own voice, although I suppose some do. No, we do it for your sake, for the elect's sake.

Preaching the Word is indeed part of the Christian life. It's for our maturation and growth. Let us see how and why.

The Necessity of Preaching

So the first point here, the necessity of preaching. I'm going to go over a little bit of the necessity, by example, from the Old Testament to the New Testament era. Yes, there were not pastors or ministers, the way we understand it, properly defined in the New Testament era, in the Old Testament.

I mentioned this before. The closest we have is a prophet. There were more than a pastor, but there were at least a pastor slash preacher.

By pastor, I mean preacher. One who teaches and exhorts and proclaims, especially, the will of God to his people. But of course, they did more than that, as we know.

They prophesied. I do not prophesy. So they're the closest.

A lot of overlap. So you can learn about the importance of the word uttered from the mouth of a man with feet of clay. From the Old Testament era, even up to today.

It's what God deigned, by example, by the dint of example, all those prophets of old, shows us how God considers it important enough that he gave it to the church. He gave men who speak the truth. The flesh of man, of course, desires that he save himself.

The efforts of self-salvation. But God will not give it to him. Rather, he gives it to those who trust in Jesus by the word.

The word of life. And the word of life, of course, written. We are blessed with it.

But spoken as well. And it was often spoken. And primarily spoken.

Not only from God to us. I'm reading through Alsted, Johannes Alsted, a German theologian from the late 1500s. A new publication of his work.

Which goes over natural theology. It expresses how much you can learn of God outside the Bible. And one of the things he expresses there, with respect to the Bible, of course, is the words that God speaks to us.

From the very beginning to Adam and Eve, to us today. Speaking is important. And he did it through the office as well.

We have many of the Old Testament saints over and over again. Hearing from the Lord and speaking to the people. God could have spoken from heaven.

And he did a few times. We know one great incident. The Exodus.

And it terrified the people. God continues. And has, from of old, spoken through men to us.

Isaiah 61. We read, So here, clearly, we have the prophecy of Jesus. And his anointing to what? A specific act.

To teach, to preach, to bring glad tidings to the poor. The good news to the spiritually starving. And we read, And we have four books devoted to his earthly ministry.

Jesus, as we know, fulfillment of the prophecies of old. That prophecy in particular, and others as well, was the prophet of all prophets. The greatest of all prophets.

A prophet that is the end of all prophets, as it were. And he did what? He spoke the Father's truth to his people. So he is the great example of the importance and necessity for our spiritual maturation as his people to hear the Word.

Jesus often says what? This is what the Word of God has said. This is what the Father has said. He quotes the Bible.

We went over this before, right, in his great temptation. He does not quote himself. I'm the Son of God.

Listen to me, devil. He quotes the Bible. And he preaches the Bible to his own people.

Showing by his own example the importance of hearing the Word of God. Reading, of course, is important as well. But the emphasis, again, during this time especially, is because there was no written Word.

It's to preach. Preach and preach. But there's other prophecies of undershepherds.

Because it's great to have Jesus and be like, hey, all I need is Jesus. I've got the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

What more do I need? Jesus is preaching to me through the Word of God. You need men. That's how God has designed it.

It's even part of prophecy of old. Jeremiah 23, 3. Jeremiah 23, 3 we read. But I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries where I have driven them.

This is during the exile. And bring them back to their folds, and they shall be fruitful and increased. It's a picture of the future New Testament age, ultimately.

And I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them, and they will fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking, says the Lord. The prophecy continues, making it very clear what age he speaks of. Verse 5, the next verse.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a branch of righteousness. A king shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. Clearly, during the times of Jesus.

Jeremiah prophesies God will set up shepherds, plural, over the people. And of course, the great shepherd is Jesus Christ. This is how God has prophesied, it's how he's exercised it of old and prophesied it for us in the New Testament era that we would be fed the truth by

Jesus through his shepherds, or under-shepherds is what we historically call them, to make it clear that we don't think they're like a pope.

And it's fulfilled in Ephesians 4.18, amongst other places in the New Testament era. Therefore, he says, when he ascended on high he left captivity captive and gave gifts to men. When Jesus ascended into heaven and gifts were given to men, that is to his church, and he gave himself, that he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

Christ blessed the church with teachers. Various offices of the time of course, apostles were super-pastors, prophets were just underneath that, and then you had evangelists, pastors and teachers who were ordinary men, but they all had the same function to preach, to teach, to exhort the word of God to whoever would listen to hear thereby and to find Jesus and more than find Jesus in the sense of, great, we have a convert, this is wonderful, but you continue to grow once you become a Christian, you don't outgrow pastors until you get to heaven. It's another way of looking at it.

So that's necessity by example, by history, by prophecy. We have necessity of course by command. Clearly here preach the word.

Paul's emphatic here, this is what you must keep doing. Yes, pastors counsel as they have ability and insight in some particular matters and they can do other things as well, they certainly administer the sacraments, but preaching is the core of it. The command of old again, from the Old Testament examples as well, the preaching and teaching was done not only by prophets, we forget sometimes the priests were instructed to tell the people and teach them the law of God.

So they were more mundane that way, they weren't uttering prophecies and the like unless there was a special movement of the spirit at times. They just simply had the word, they had access to the Torah in the way the average person did not. They didn't have the publishing houses that we have today, it's easily accessed.

So they were called and urged to teach the people of God, reminding us again it wasn't just even one, but another office. In this office the priest of course was not exactly a pastor, but did things similar to a pastor, such as teaching. They were by lineage of course, prophets were not by lineage and they were however the spirit of God moved amongst his own people.

And if they wanted to learn of God's will, and a good Jew did of old, they had the prophecies of Christ, they had the calls of repentance and they got them from the prophets and the priests as well. They needed to listen to those preachers of old to grow thereby. And we are not better than they.

They needed them, we need them as well as today. And so God has given the office there. What the Lord gives to the church, and he gave them the church of the Old Testament, we'll see of the New Testament as well.

It's important I have to give the Bible verses for the New Testament because things have changed. We don't have priests anymore and we don't have prophets, but we can still learn by dint of the similarity of the function that they had that we too need the same kind of thing. We need instruction as well by a man.

The Lord gave to the church good things. What he gives to the church, they are good. And if they are good and they are given from God, we ought to want them.

Even if he doesn't say you should want to have godly men and pastors, that should be the necessary implications of him giving them to us because they're not for his benefit. They're for us. If he gives a gift, why would we turn it down? I just read that in Ephesians.

God, the Holy Spirit, has given us many gifts. It's not just ministers, it's also ruling elders and deacons. Even more broadly than that, this principle of gift giving by the Holy Spirit, as we know in 1 Corinthians and in Romans, is for all the church.

You all have various and sundry abilities and gifts, even some that the pastor doesn't have, believe it or not, that are helpful and functional for the body of Christ as opportunity arises often. So, you're not forgotten either. New Testament command.

Let's make it clear then. Matthew 28, 18, and 20. You recognize this, of course.

Matthew 28, the end of his book. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

In law I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Amen. Who was Jesus speaking to in Matthew 28 at the end? This is where it's important.

Dr. Copp has always loved to do this with myself and others when we were in his house or spending time with him and he had a question. He's like, here's the Bible verse. What does it say? Who's speaking? About what? To whom? That is not the 120 in the upper room.

That's in Acts 1. Right? No. It is, in the prior verse, 17, Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.

And then verse 18, And Jesus came and spoke to them. Who's the them? The eleven disciples with a capital D. Or the apostles. They were the recipients of the great commission in the name of the church.

So it's given to the church generally and given to the church officers in particular, especially the minister. That's the historical understanding. And I've mentioned this before.

It's been a while, I think. But it's important because you should not have the burden that a minister has or an evangelist that we typically call someone who goes out to start a new church. Because you don't.

You simply are not given that. You have your duty, as 1 Peter shows us, to be a good husband, be a good wife, be a good worker, be a good servant, be a good citizen. As opportunity arises to what? To be able to give an answer of the hope within you.

You even hear the English there. It's the passive. So as opportunity arises, oh, you can respond to it.

Whereas the pastor, what? Looks for opportunities. I hope someone can hear me. Would you sit down and listen to me? I want to talk to you.

Unfortunately, they tend to flee. But that's significant. That's important.

The office and the great commission of preaching and making disciples. What teaching in particular uses that word in verse 19. And I pointed out last time, last week that yes, although sometimes you can make a sharp distinction between teaching and preaching, often in the Bible, it seems, they're just overlapping ideas.

The point is to utter the truth, whether that's to motivate the heart or inform the mind as relevant to the circumstances in the need of the people who are here or listening. So it is given to the church and this is the context in which Paul urges the young pastor, Timothy, to preach the word, to be ready in season and out of season, right? When it's not convenient and when it is convenient. In the middle of the night when someone needs to hear the truth.

Convince, rebuke, exhort and with all longsuffering in teaching. We have again in Acts 1.8 But you shall receive the power when the Holy Spirit hath come upon you. You shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth.

When the disciples were up there gawking with the ascension of Christ Jesus and God through the Holy Spirit is telling them I'm going to equip you so that you can preach and spread the good news from Jerusalem, the center there. You see the language to all Judea and Samaria. It branches out in the larger region to the end of the earth.

And that's actually the flow of the book of Acts. You see them geographically moving. Jerusalem to Samaria.

They're actually Samaritans who were converted and is filled with the Holy Spirit. They only had the four corners of the earth. Paul is in Rome.

That's far away from them. Months away by travel. And they're all witnesses of what? Christ's ministry of the gospel.

That you'll be witnesses to me. Some of course witnesses in the unofficial sense that we're all witnesses of Jesus. We can speak of Christ.

It's not like I can't talk to you. You've got to talk to my pastor about the gospel. No, no.

You're supposed to be able to give an answer to the hope within you. 1 Timothy 3 or 1 Peter 3. Right? But of course if it gets a little long and involved, okay let's do some Bible studies. My pastor can do a Bible study.

Sure. Then you bring him in. So we have this relationship and we work together as God's people.

So witness often is not even used technically in the Bible. Just kind of anybody who has seen this truth and knows the truth of God. But other times it seems to be more technical as in the case of an officer.

And of course you know the other passages. We already went over that in 1 Timothy 3 for example. Where we read, it is a good thing to desire to be a bishop that is an overseer which is sometimes another word for shepherd of God's people.

It's a faithful saying. When a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded and the like.

It's explicitly given for a reason because it is a new office that wasn't there of old. He's not a priest. He doesn't give sacrifice.

He doesn't give intercession in the way a priest does. He's not in the temple which is great. I don't want to have to slaughter animals.

And he's not a prophet. I don't have to run around eating locusts and honey like John the Baptist did. I'm something kind of in the middle as a pastor.

And we have similar functions. We both, all three, preach, teach and exhort. And so the giving and description of the qualifications of this office makes sense from the progression of God changing the church from the Jewish era to the New Testament era where we are now an international church in that sense.

And we have this office. Titus 1-6 has similar descriptions and lists of qualifications. We'll get to Titus next after 2 Timothy.

And these are all things that are observable and publicly evaluated or supposed to be. Elsewhere we have again a reminder in other places of the Bible, the assumption of the offices and the use there in Acts 15 for example in the Jerusalem Council where we have the apostles and the other brethren and it speaks of pastors and ruling elders all combined together and they are making decisions for the entirety of the church. This is significant in terms of the fact that the other officers that are not supernatural like an apostle or a prophet were involved in the decision process of the early church.

And again, if you had a prophet, I know if I had a prophet and if I had an apostle, they'd be like, why are we getting together with this assembly of Jerusalem? Why don't you just talk to the Holy Spirit and give us the answer? Come on. But he didn't. He had to use ordinary human reasoning and debates and whatnot and they finally settled on biblical

argumentation and all agreed, yes, we need to do this and handle this matter before us in a proper way.

And so you put all these pieces together you have what we have in the New Testament era with church officers and the authority that God has given them, of course a limited authority in Christ and always in accordance to the Word of God. Necessity of preaching I want to unpack from other perspectives, not only from the history and the practices of God in the Old Testament church, New Testament era as well as the explicit commands and giving of the office itself as we had gone over in several verses but also the necessity of preaching and teaching by comparison to other things and other functions of the pastor in particular. And this is what I mean.

I mentioned it before, the church officers, pastors, in particular ministers they can counsel, they administer the Lord's Supper. I do this in the name of Christ. But when I counsel, I'm going to bring up the Bible.

He says preach the Word. It's the Word of God. The Holy Writ.

And when I give the Lord's Supper, I'm going to what? Preach the Bible. I'm going to get the Bible. Usually especially the Gospel because that's what's focused there in the Lord's Supper.

The shedding of Christ's blood. The other functions these other functions that we do need the Word of God and the truth. So there's teaching there and counseling there's preaching there from the pulpit.

But the baptizing and the Lord's Supper in comparison to preaching plays second place by a long shot. I'm not saying you don't do it. I'm just saying if there's going to be a deficiency somewhere, it better not be in the preaching.

And this is what I mean. 1 Corinthians 1.17, Paul the Apostle himself says, "...for Christ did not send me to baptize." What? Christ did not send me to baptize. 1 Corinthians 1.17. Well I've got to keep reading the rest of the context.

But to preach the Gospel, to proclaim the truth therein, not with wisdom of words unless the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. But of course we know that I read that in Matthew 28. He literally says you must baptize the nation.

So what's Paul saying here? So this is where human language comes in and it becomes very helpful. We understand God uses human language and we talk this way. It's called hyperbole.

Exaggeration for effect because these numbskulls at the churches of Corinth weren't getting it. Or maybe sometimes we're numbskulls and we don't get it. We need some hyperbole to wake us up.

Cut off your right hand if it offends you, Jesus said. Is he saying it's okay to mutilate yourself? Go for it. He's saying it's so serious.

And Paul's saying it's such an important matter that I preach the Gospel. That baptism pales in comparison. Because they were doing what before? We read in verse 12 and elsewhere in 1 Corinthians.

Now I say this, that each of you says I am of Paul. I am of Paulus. Or I am of Cephas.

Or I am of Christ. They're the super holy. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? See he brought in baptism as well.

So apparently they were bragging about who baptized them, who their favorite pastor is, and who the one they liked to listen to. That's what you get from all those verses there in chapter 1. We went through Corinthians a couple years ago. And that makes all the sense now.

Paul is saying, look what are you bragging about baptism when it really comes down to the Gospel and that preached? That's the only reason why you're baptized. It's because of the Gospel of course. 1 Corinthians 2, 1-5 Another reminder.

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus and Him crucified. The Corinthians were in awe of great orators. And the importance of preaching is greater than baptism, if you had to have a competition.

The importance of preaching is greater than great orators, if you had to have a competition. So by comparison, and here they were bragging it came to you, it did not come with excellence of speech. It wasn't like these great Greek orators.

They had these entire classes and ways of teaching. It was their long tradition. Declaring to you the testimony of God.

And he said that earlier as well. When I read that passage about I didn't come to baptize but to preach. Not with what? Wisdom of words.

I wasn't trying to wow you with my great oratory skills. And see if I can pass and get an A in my class or something like that. Like you would do in college.

People were obsessed with great delivery. But rather they should have been obsessed with great substance. What is being preached and taught.

More than how. The preaching and the power of preaching. The second point.

The Power of Preaching

That's why the title of the sermon is Necessity. And the power of preaching. The what of course? You got to know what the what of.

What are you preaching about? Law and gospel. Heard this before. Because it's important.

Law and gospel. Acts 20 verse 27. For I have not shunned to declare to you.

Paul tells the leadership at Ephesus. I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Not just part of it.

All of it. All of it that's of course as needful. He would partition it out.

You can't say everything in one sermon. That's not his point. Clearly.

Not just the good news all the time or the law all the time. But both as appropriate. In good proportion.

I'm reminded of this when it comes to preaching in good proportion. And I know it can be tricky at times. It depends on your audience.

People aren't always to themselves. It feels like one way or the other. Where the pastor has to look at all of you at once and your own past and your history.

What the congregation is. I'm speaking to a lot of strangers like at a wedding. We went to a wedding recently a couple weeks ago.

I'm going to clearly adjust everything so that they hear clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ. You need to repent and believe if you wish to go to heaven. But other audiences that know these things need to hear other things and we have this in the epistles.

Paul spends all this time speaking about other things. I'm reminded of this passage with respect to proportion of preaching and content. Proverbs 25.16. It's going to sound a little gross.

Proverbs 25.16. Have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, lest you be filled with it and vomit. I ran across that recently in fact on social media. I was quite surprised over the weekend.

In one sense, I knew it existed. I knew this kind of preaching existed. I heard it from friends of mine.

Where you went through an entire sermon and you missed the actual application. In this case the gentleman preached this text and just turned it on its head because he had to keep talking about it's everything about the church and it's everything about Christ and it's not really the relationship between the husband and the wife. It's really about the relationship between Christ and the church.

I'm like, no, literally the text says the husband this and the wife that. It's not complicated. Why are you making it complicated? Because the glories of Christ are so much more glorious.

Shouldn't I always be preaching about them? No, you preach the text. If God wanted that the whole entire Bible would use those words. But he doesn't.

He gives you all kinds of variety in the Word of God. What you need to know and grow thereby. Lest you vomit it all out.

If you eat all the good stuff, as it were, honey all the time. Jesus tells us elsewhere from another perspective, not as disgusting, Matthew 13.52 Matthew 13.52 Jesus said elsewhere there in this parable Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven. So he's using the Old Testament language of scribe.

It would be leadership who's going to the Word of God. Every scribe, ones who know the Word of God, that would be like me, concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old. Not just all the new great stuff of the New Testament.

Not just all the old stuff of the Old Testament. But both of them as needed in proper proportion to their audience. So that's the content.

Law and gospel in proper proportion to who needs to hear it. The power of preaching in particular of course, the power therein is granted in so far as it is a command of God to have this office when he raises men up and he gives them this authority. If he doesn't give them the authority, there's going to be power behind it.

It's going to be there for an effective reason. It won't fall flat, in other words. He even says that elsewhere.

We can quote a number of prophecies about the Word of God. I have when I went over 2 Timothy 3, 15, 16, and 17. But the Word of God shall not come back to him not in void, in Isaiah.

But not just in broad, but also in particular through the mouth of his prophets and today his pastors. So God giving this command means he's serious about it and he's going to back it up. There's going to be power behind it.

There's another way of describing it. It will do what its intended purpose is. Either to bring conviction upon hearers or encouragement or other things as needed by God's Word.

1 Corinthians 1.18 ties, we'll see here, preaching the message of the gospel. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. That it is true makes it powerful in changing of lives.

The power of preaching is not the preacher per se, nor his words as such, but the truth of the substance of the matter of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But those who are being saved, you brothers and sisters, know the power therein of the message of Christ preached to you. Please God, through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe, Paul writes in the next verse.

Note the connection. Please God, through the foolishness of the message. Yeah, what message? The good news of Jesus Christ, of the call of repentance, of embracing Him and not your own works, that He lived and died for you.

That's the message. But how is it described there? Please God, through the foolishness of the message preached, that's the delivery, to save those who believe. And it is foolishness.

It was foolishness to the Greeks, because they didn't believe in it. And it was foolishness to the Jews as well. As Paul reminds us.

And even for we who are not preachers, the gospel, of course, is the power of God to save lives. You can read it, and it's a good thing to have before you to meditate upon it. This is true.

So let's look at two ways here whereby the power of God and the gospel is found in particular. It's not just found by the mere words per se, as though these were magical incantations. And if you can just read the right ones, that you can somehow save yourself.

But rather, it's the Spirit of God working behind it. The words that I speak, we read in John 6, to you are spirits, and they are life. It is the word of God, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit that makes the difference.

That actually has the power of preaching behind it. And through it. And unto God's glory.

And hence, Paul tells them in 2 Timothy to preach the word of God, and indeed, all of it. And so it's the gospel, it's the content and the power therein, unto salvation, of course, with respect to our saving of our soul, and that by the Spirit, the power of the Spirit, whom God has sent forth in the preaching of the word. You can read, you can meditate, you can preach and proclaim, day in and day out, convincing, rebuking, exhorting, with all longsuffering and teaching, and if God, the Holy Spirit, is not behind it, people will not change.

Because the ultimate efficacious power, that which makes it work, is the Spirit. Everything else is but an instrument in His hand. If He deigns not to make it work, it will not work.

So at the end of the day, you're not dependent upon the pastor, per se, and how powerful of a preacher he is. You're dependent upon the Holy Spirit. That's the point.

Always remember that. Again, John 6:63, "...the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing, the flesh of man who tries to save himself of his own accord." Ephesians 1:13, tying right into this morning's sermon on Ephesians 1:3-14, the Spirit's sealing of hearing and believing. "...you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having believed," so while believing, "...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance." The hearing of believing is accompanied by the Holy Spirit.

And the truth therein converts our souls. Now part of preaching of the truth of law and gospel, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, is not just simply using a bunch of words that I hope are flowery and get your attention. Paul already talked about that in 1 Corinthians 1 I read to you.

I didn't come to you with all this wonderful wisdom of words. We would perhaps say flowery words or something to kind of wow you. But by proper and careful argumentation and reasoning.

Our God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is known as the Word or Logos. Which you can get the word logic from. Because the two kind of go hand in hand.

You've got to use words with logic. But of course it's more than just I am logic in the beginning. Clark did that.

But it's no less than that. That's for sure. Acts 18.4. This is very fascinating.

Go through a number of passages in the book of Acts with this word search. And he, that is Paul, reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. People were saved because Paul reasoned.

Or sometimes it may even be translated argued. Not argued in the sense of let's look for a fight. But we went back and forth and we debated the premises and the argument.

Looked for the facts and everything else. And he convinced them. That's how God designed the universe.

It's the power of logic. Logic doesn't even work without God. It's part of his universe.

It's how it's designed. We are rational creatures. And so teaching and preaching and proclaiming has a part of its method that it would be used as Paul does.

You reason. I gave the reasonings this morning for the Trinity. I gave syllogisms.

That's the same word being used here in Acts 18 and elsewhere. But of course at the end of the day it's not the logic per se but the Spirit of God. Never forget that.

The Spirit gives us the truth and opens our hearts to that truth. Preaching. It's necessary relatively speaking and powerful always by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Never lose sight of the fact that the gospel is God's power to save and nothing else will do. Not entertainment. Not dynamic personalities.

Not self-help programs and the like. But ministers who are faithful as Timothy here to preach the word. Not their own opinions and not gimmicks.

Pray, brothers and sisters, that the Spirit would indeed use their efforts and our efforts to change the lives of many and to help us draw nigh unto Christ. Let us pray. Father, Son and Holy Spirit may your truth and life be proclaimed and propagated here at Providence and our Presbyterian, our denomination and throughout all the various churches of America and the world.

God Almighty. May the Christians not be deceived by those who wish to bring entertainment and distractions but ever listen to the substance of the matter. Is it true? What saith the Lord God Almighty in his word? And there is a faithful preacher.

Father God, we ask that this would continue to be the case for us. Bless us, we pray by the blood of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Let us rise and let us sing hymn 438-438.