

## Preaching and Teaching

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Allow me to preface this lesson by stating that I am not opposed to a single teacher teaching a group of Christians and God-seekers, nor am I opposed to one person preaching and teaching about Jesus to lost souls in hopes that they will receive the life-giving seed of the gospel and allow it to be implanted into their hearts' fertile soil. After all, Jesus sat and taught many people. He taught groups of people ranging from vast multitudes to the intimate inner circle of his closest disciples. The apostles Peter and Paul taught also. In the Greek city of Ephesus, Paul taught in a school every day for two years. I am not opposed to teaching or teachers, by any means. On the contrary, both the teaching of disciples and proclamation of the gospel are central to Christianity.

What I am opposed is the longwinded preaching of hot air to crowds of people seeking spiritual nourishment (or some seeking just to have their ears scratched or to put in their church time, so to speak). Instead, they receive very little of the Word of God but more of a show of how well a preacher can demonstrate a "preachy" voice and present some weird interpretations of isolated Bible passages and make them sound interesting, even if it's only because of his vocal expressions and tones.

A good basic rule to keep in mind is:

1. Preaching is for the lost (preaching or proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ).
2. Teaching is for the saved (instructing Christians on what the Bible says about life and the Faith).

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A general rule is something that is almost always true under normal or ideal circumstances. As with any general rule, there are exceptions to each of these two points. Some people will come to faith in Christ by sitting under teaching and learning the Bible, and there are times that preaching is appropriate for a Christian audience, such as motivating or correcting a dying or sleeping church, warning a church of a coming danger or judgment, or delivering a prophetic word from God. However, the usual should not be to teach the Bible to non-Christians but to preach (proclaim) Jesus Christ to them, and the norm should not be preaching to Christians in the church but teaching, instructing, mentoring, training and guiding them.

The goal of preaching is to make (recruit and initiate) new disciples of the Lord Jesus, and the two-fold purpose of teaching is to provoke spiritual growth and effective ministry. Successful preaching causes the hearers to make a decision to follow and give their lives to Jesus and to follow through by becoming Christians by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and receiving His Spirit to indwell their hearts. The result of successful teaching is Christians who are accurately informed (knowledgeable) about Christ, who are growing stronger and stronger by becoming more and more like Christ, and who are putting their faith into practice by serving (ministering) God and others with their words, their thoughts, their actions, and their lives.