

Abstract

Preaching is mandatory for all in ordained ministry. There is no conceivable way that the weekly sermon can be avoided. However, the laity perception is often that the sermon is to be endured in hope that it will not last too long. This dissertation attempts to convince the reader that preaching is actually speaking the very words of God. Hence, if this is accepted, then the sermon should be the highlight of the week with laity looking forward to being taught from God's Word, listening diligently and for longer. It investigates what the preacher should preach and explores ways to assist listeners to listen better. It does not at any stage offer instruction on 'how to preach.' It presupposes that preaching is both meticulous exegesis and clear exposition of the biblical text. It seeks to explore the biblical mandate for expounding the words God has already spoken, in Holy Scripture. The major component of the work is the opening chapter, which is an extended exegesis of Deuteronomy and Matthew. This is based around the Mosaic speeches and the teaching blocks of Jesus. It examines God's words to Israel, as mediated through Moses, and the implications of listening, and failing to listen. An equivalent investigation is made in the Matthean account with an examination of Jesus' ministry being one primarily of teaching. Chapter 2 investigates the primary means that God uses to reveal himself to us and that his spoken words bring creative life. Chapter 3 looks at the Aristotelian art of persuasion in rhetoric and the use of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* in preaching. Chapter 4 examines how the master teacher was using visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles, prior to these terms being coined. The findings are supported by a contextualised piece of field research among sermon listeners in Kilkeel.