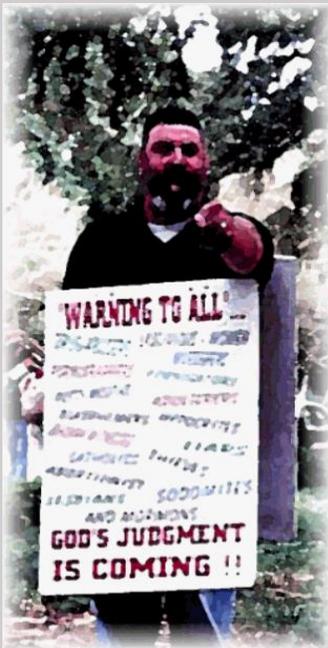


# STREET PREACHING

## THE BIBLE HAS THE FINAL AUTHORITY

In the Bible times life was much simpler than it is today. Communication of ideas and information was found in a limited scope. In today's world things are much different. From the written page to communication in even space, the transfer of information is radically different.



Why then should you consider or emphasize the description of *PREACHING* found within *SCRIPTURE*? Should there be *STREET* or *PUBLIC PREACHING* today? The most obvious answer, as we will fully document, is God's instruction within *SCRIPTURE*. In this paper we will show the weakness found in contemporary approaches vs. the strength and power found in *GOD'S* way. The common understanding of the word "*PREACH*" is relegated to a select few: Pastors, Evangelist, etc. Additionally, the idea of *PREACHING* has been re-defined as witnessing, which for all practical purposes has eliminated the practice as found in Scripture. These two points quench those who read and would follow the men in the Bible, leaving no example to follow. The high tech world of books, radio, and TV has become the main venue for getting the Word out. While looking like the most obvious way, their substitution for *GOD'S* way has left most of the world unreached.

All of these approaches share a common ingredient: they only communicate to those who want to hear or those who are already believers. Ninety-nine percent of the audience is hearing information they already possess. Literature is useful, but only to those who take the time to read it. Witnessing is good, and should be the mainstay in a believer's life, but again it is very hard to reach more than a few. While *GOD* uses the above described to reap some of those who are ready, the rest of the world goes without. In addition, the methods of today are very expensive, and a poor use of *GOD'S* money and the church's time.

Public preaching is the most effective way to get the Gospel to the most people in the shortest time at the least expense. ***AND PUBLIC PREACHING IS THE NUMBER ONE***

**METHOD OF OUTREACH USED THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE, OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT...** What then is **PREACHING**? According to Noah Webster, "Preach" comes from a Latin word meaning to "proclaim publicly...a sermon urging acceptance or abandonment of an idea or course of action, specifically in an earnestly tiresome and officious manner." "Officious" it seems is the key word in much of what is **BIBLICAL** preaching. The Prophets through **CHRIST** and the New Testament church told it like it was and paid the price for their boldness and "officious" manner; as it is defined: "volunteering one's services where they are not asked for or wanted; meddlesome and high-handed." We possess the truth and as such it requires such an approach.

As we have outlined, **PREACHING** today is narrowly defined and misunderstood to the exclusion of the above definition, and typically refers to invited people, invited speakers, and scheduled services. **BIBLICAL PREACHING**, however, conforms to the above definition, and is often to hostile crowds outside "religious" services, to those who would seek to even kill the messenger. With these things in mind, let us now explore the subject within **SCRIPTURE**.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is rich with accounts of public preaching.

***Proverbs 1:20-21** Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words...*

“**CRIETH**” means shouting out loud.

“**WITHOUT**” means outside.

“**CHIEF PLACE OF CONCOURSE**” means where the biggest crowds are.

***Proverbs 8:1-3** Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city...*

Old Testament prophets often **PREACHED** at the Gates of the city. The gates were the busiest place in town. The cities in **BIBLE** times were surrounded by walls for protection, and all traffic in and out of the city went through the gate. It was the place to be to get a message to all visitors (Gen 19:1), as well as the citizens (going in and out to work in the fields), and the king and all dignitaries. All kinds of activity took place at the gates:

**Business Transactions:** (Gen 23:10; 2 Kings 7:1)

**Community Meetings/"City Hall":** (Gen 34:20; 2 Sam 19:8; Proverbs 31:23; Lam 5:14)

**Legal Decisions/Court:** (Deut 22:15; 25:7; Ruth 4:1; 2 Sam 15:2; Amos 5:15; Zech 8:16)

**Public Executions:** (Deut 22:24)

**Public Mourning:** (2 Sam 18:33)

**Daily Chores:** (2 Sam 23:15; 1 Kings 17:10)

**Religious Meetings/Idolatry:** (1 Kings 22:10; 2 Kings 23:8; 2 Chron 18:9; Acts 14:13)

**Beggars:** (Ps 69:12; Prov 22:22; Amos 5:12)

**Wartime Negotiations:** (Isa 22:7; Jer 1:15)

These then are some of the things that took place at the gates. A man **PREACHING** at the gate would not only reach large crowds, but also have an impact on and a outreach to such varied arenas as: the business community, court decisions, idolatrous meetings, soldiers, government, etc.

***Amos 5:10** They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.*

Amos was a **STREET PREACHER!!!**

***Isaiah 29:21** That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.*

Isaiah was a **STREET PREACHER!!!**

***Jeremiah 17:19** Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem..*

***Jeremiah 7:1-2** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.*

Jeremiah was a **STREET PREACHER!!!**

An interesting point about these men is that most of them spent most of their time not reaching those in other countries, or the most reprobate sinners, but God's "chosen people," who had the Bible, as they entered the house of God to worship the Lord!

***Jeremiah 22:1-2** Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates...*

***Jeremiah 36:10** Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house, in the ears of all the people.*

The **PROPHETS** of **GOD** in the Old Testament did not use "low-key," "subtle" (see Gen 3:1) approaches, such as literature tables, passing out tracts, invitations to religious meetings, traveling Gospel singing teams, etc. These things have some limited value, but again, what is the *main* method of outreach in the Bible? What is the most effective way to reach the most people at the least expense (and *accurately* reflect the real character of God)? What is the one approach that gets the least amount of teaching, promotion, and encouragement?

## **STREET PREACHING!!!**

***Jeremiah 11:6** Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.*

***Jeremiah 2:1-2** Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.*

***Isaiah 58:1** Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*

In Judges 9:7 when Jotham had a message to get to a crowd of people in Shechem (who wanted to kill him), how did he do it? Not with literature, or invitations to religious services, or any other "subtle" methods.

***Judges 9:7** And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.*

Jotham found a safe place from which they could all hear him, and **LIFTED UP HIS VOICE**. Jotham was an open air preacher (ca. 1300 BC.).

The best example in the Old Testament of a foreign missionary is **JONAH**. God sent him to warn Nineveh. Did he rent a hall and invite people to come to a scheduled meeting, enticing them with "special music" and Gospel entertainment? No, Jonah was charged to preach to Nineveh (as we are to the world!), not only to those who would attend his meetings, but to the whole city. The Bible says Nineveh was "an exceeding great city of three days journey" (Jonah 3:3); i.e., it took 3 days just to walk around it. Diodorus confirms that Nineveh was 60 miles in circumference (Herodotus records that a day's journey was 20 miles). Jonah 3:4 says "Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he **CRIED**, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Jonah went "a day's journey" into Nineveh, a city of 3 day's journey, and **CRIED!** He was **PREACHING** as he was walking, i.e., **OUTDOORS!** Jonah was a **STREET PREACHER**, walking the streets as he preached his message of judgment and truth.

Before moving to the New Testament perhaps it would be good to say that a lot of what you may have seen in your life passing for street or public preaching leaves a lot to be desired. This is lamentable, but in some ways understandable, and even has its excuse in brothers and even sisters who are at least trying. Much is needed in understanding this subject, and as such this paper will serve as a beginning.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT?**

With the subject firmly established within the largely Hebrew mission in the Old Testament, and its mostly limited focus in the Middle East, we now turn our attention to the New Testament. Beginning with John and moving to our commission to the whole world: we are instructed in the N.T. to...

**Mark 16:15** *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Our job is to **PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE IN THE WORLD!** Simple logic will show the best way to accomplish this is to find where the most "creatures" are in one place at one time and proclaim the message loud enough for them all to hear.

**Col. 1:28** *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus...*

The first preacher in the New Testament was John the Baptist. Once again, his preaching was lacking comfortable buildings, music, entertainment, etc.

John the Baptist was an **OPEN AIR PREACHER!!!**

*Matthew 3:1-2 In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Matthew says Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan came out to hear John preaching (Matthew 3:5-6). John was baptizing in the river Jordan. Jews who traveled back and forth to Galilee refused to take the direct rout through Samaria (John 4:9), but rather went to the Jordan River and followed it up to and from Galilee, so John picked out a place to preach repentance and baptize at a place of heavy traffic, with large crowds. There is not much "one-on-one witnessing" talked about in the Bible; the emphasis is on "Preaching To Crowds." We are not saying to stop witnessing one-on-one. We do it; we encourage it; there is plenty of training and promotion of witnessing, in churches, **BIBLE** colleges, seminaries, workshops, books in the Christian bookstores, and all put heavy emphasis on this approach. Again, our interest as we see **GOD's** interest is given to this **MAIN** method of outreach in the scriptures: open air preaching.

The personal witnessing experiences of **JESUS CHRIST** get a lot of attention, as well they should, but in the four Gospels, covering 2-3 years of **CHRIST's** ministry, we find three cases of personal witnessing: Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and Zaccheus. The Gospels spend much more time pointing out **CHRIST's** dealings with "**MULTITUDES**:" Matt 4:25; 5:1; 8:1, 18; 12:15; 13:2, 34; 14:14; 15:10, 30-35, 39; 17:14; 19:21 21:8, 11.... Also notable is that Jesus' one-on-one situations usually came out of these "multitude" situations. JESUS was with a large crowd when He looked up and saw Zaccheus, and invited him to come down (Luke 19:1-5). And He was in Jerusalem, crowded with Jews from all over the world for the Passover, where He drove the moneychangers out of the temple and preached, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise," and after causing that little stir, Nicodemus came to Him by night (John 2:13-3:1). En route back to His home in Galilee after that incident He stopped and exposed the secret sins of the woman at the well (John 4).

Jesus' most famous sermons were delivered **OUTDOORS**. For example, the sermon **ON THE MOUNT** (Matt 5, 6, 7). In Luke 6:17 he preached to a "great multitude" in "the plain" (outdoors). The "Olivet Discourse" (Matt 24) was delivered on the Mount of Olives (outdoors). In Matthew 13 His well known parables were preached to "great multitudes" by "the sea side" (outdoors). He sat in a boat and taught the multitude on the shore. The four Gospels are often described as John and the "three synoptic Gospels," meaning Matthew, Mark and Luke are similar to each other, yet not much information in John is

found in the "synoptics." The reason is simple: Matthew, Mark and Luke devote most of their attention to Jesus' ministry in Galilee, where He lived most of the time. But several times a year, all the Jews in the world would go to Jerusalem for the feasts (see Exodus 23:14, 17). Christ would go to Jerusalem and **PREACH** to these large crowds gathered there. Everything in John is concerned with these trips of Jesus to Jerusalem during these feasts. The Passover is mentioned in John 2:13; 6:4; 12:1. The feast of Tabernacles is mentioned in John 7:2. Another feast is mentioned in John 5:1. Hanukkah is mentioned in John 10:22. Jesus Christ came to Jerusalem to cleanse the Temple (at least twice, John 2; + Matt 21, Mark 11, and Luke 19), and **PREACH TO THE MULTITUDES**.

***John 7:37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.***

***Matthew 10:27** **What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.***

His apostles carried this out in the book of Acts! On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), we find one of the greatest examples of **STREET PREACHING** of all time. The charismatics read Acts 2, see tongues, and say: We need to speak in tongues like they did in Acts 2. Some fundamentalists read Acts 2 and see 3000 added to the church in one day, and they say: We need to have large church growth like they did in Acts 2. What is missing is the recognition of the delivery and method of **STREET PREACHING** found in Acts 2. Tongues drew a crowd, Peter preached **REPENTANCE** (Acts 2:38), and the church grew.

It is notable that preaching repentance involves the whole counsel of **GOD**. In addition to the Gospel, Christ preached "the Kingdom of God." This involves the whole of God's character and all instruction on all subjects found in scripture.

***Acts 17:16-17** Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.*

Yes, the apostles' evangelism often involved "**DISPUTING**" and judgment, not just preaching God's love (see Acts 6:9; 9:22, 29; 11:2; 15:2, 7; 17:2; 18:19, 28; 19:8-9; 28:23; see Neh 13:11, 17, 25; Prov 28:4; Eph 5:11; 1 Thess 2:2; Jude 1:3, 9; see also examples in Matt 22; John 7, 8). Why the market? Crowds! The apostles wanted to get the Gospel to the most people at one time, so they went to the markets where crowds gathered, and disputed, preaching the kingdom and wisdom of God in the open air!

In summation then, hopefully you have eyes to see the obvious:

1. Modern Methods are:

Expensive.

Limited to reaching a few of the many who we are commanded to reach.

Inefficient.

Time and labor intensive.

Bureaucratic.

Deceiving, in that they have a great show of power, and when in fact they are weak.

2. **BIBLICAL** Methods are:

Inexpensive.

Unbureaucratic.

Strong and in line with the power and content of the message (Heaven and Hell!).

Able to provide place for the defense and explanation of all Biblical matters (see Paul at Mars' Hill Acts 17).

Able to provide for rebuke, exhortation and warning to all people and situations as required, (Ezk 3:15-21..Watchman!).

Time and labor efficient.

Wise with the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:21).

In conclusion, we can focus on how things could be. Public open air street preaching of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God is imperative for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This is an attainable goal within each of your groups, fellowships, and churches. It is not unreasonable to think that of every 50 or so believers ONE could do this work. The help of God is available, and when you add them up a city of say the size of Los Angeles would net at least 500 to 600 men to shoulder the plow in this untouched field. The impact of such a group would be immediate and powerful: from the simple Gospel to the public rebuke of evil, God's mind and being would be shown to all.

There are many practical details to such an undertaking and ministry which, as has been stated, will follow in future articles. Sufficient to this initial paper is the firm establishment of this "lost doctrine" and, which has been shown, has its place in both truth and much need. Remember...<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Written by *Cornerstone Ministries*, Norwalk, CA  
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