

Colossians 1:23-29

The Listening Church

“Since then your serene Majesty and your Lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed. Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.” (Luther’s Works)

I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And then, while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip [Melanchthon] and my Amsdorf [Nicholaus von], the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing. The Word did it all. (Theology of the Reformers, 53.)

1. Preaching is a Way of Endurance for the Church (24-25)

1 Tim 3:12

N.T. Wright notes, “For Paul, the word of God is power let loose in the world embodied in the true gospel message (1:6). (TNTC, 95).

2. Preaching is a Way to Maturity in Christ (26-29)

NT Wright again, “Paul does not go about his work half-heartedly, hoping vaguely that grace will fill in the gaps which he is too lazy to work at himself. Nor, however does he imagine that it is all up to him; so that unless he burns himself out with restless, anxious toil nothing will be achieved. He knows that God’s desire is to bring Christians to

maturity, and that God has called him to have a share in that work. He can therefore work hard without stressful motivation of either pride or fear.” (TNTC, 97)

Richard Baxter, in the Reformed Pastor reminded his fellow pastors, “We must be serious, earnest, and zealous in every part of our work. Our work requireth greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us bring to it. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of the congregation, and to deliver a message of salvation and damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plain, that the most ignorant may understand us; and so seriously that the deadest heart may feel us; and so convincingly that the contradicting cavillers may be silent. (The Reformed Pastor, 117)

3. Preaching Always Concerns Christ (28-29)

Luke 24:32