

Sunrise Community Church Pastor Andrew Kikkert

Jesus is THE Way, not only a statement of faith; the way of life.

Acts 2:14-16

"Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel..."

How do you get some one to listen to you? This is a question that I, as a pastor, ask myself every week. How can I use words, gestures and emotions to hold your attention and communicate the significance of the Scripture? I have to admit, I am often tempted to look at what is happening in other churches in order to see what their methods and approaches are and would they make a difference. Is the secret the use of secular psychology or is it being culturally relevant? Does contemporary music or hymns make a difference? Should we employ innovative advertising strategies to choose topical studies ranging from good marriages to money management in order to get people to listen?

I am not saying the search for reaching an audience is wrong, but the heart of the issue remains the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. The preaching of the Holy Scriptures is the heart of the Church, beginning at Pentecost and continuing to every revival that has occurred until today. From the Day of Pentecost and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer, the Church was formed from the bedrock foundation of preaching from the Word of God. The Book of Acts is the biblical record of apostolic preaching that turned the world upside down.

From the beginning, the apostles continued to preach and teach Jesus is the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4:2). After the persecution of the church begins in earnest, those who were scattered went preaching the gospel (Acts 8:4). The early church picked up where Jesus left His ministry- preaching repentance because the Kingdom of God is near. Jesus told the disciples before He ascended to *"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."* That mandate has not ended.

Preaching has been central in the life of the church in all ages. The Reformation came through the preaching of Luther, Calvin and Knox. The Puritan movement placed high value on sound biblical teaching. The Great Awakening occurred as the result of great preachers such as George Whitefield and John Wesley. The nineteenth century was known by great teachers and evangelists like D.L. Moody and Charles Spurgeon. The weakness of the church today, I believe, is not the result of lack of faith, but rather a turning away of the God-ordained method of evangelism and equipping of people to do the work of God- powerful biblical preaching. Paul said it best when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."*