

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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What Is Your Sermon Sunday?

By Mike Roberts



There is a dangerous temptation that quietly works its way into the heart of every preacher. It is the temptation to preach what people prefer to hear rather than what people genuinely need to hear.

In a culture driven by preference, comfort, and approval, even preaching can slowly become shaped more by audience expectation than by divine burden. Sermons can become polished presentations designed to encourage attendance, maintain momentum, or avoid discomfort. Yet when we study the ministry of Jeremiah, we are confronted with a prophet who preached with an entirely different priority. Jeremiah did not preach according to popularity. He preached according to necessity.

That reality forces every preacher to ask a serious question: "What is your sermon Sunday?"

Not simply: "What can I preach?" or "What will people enjoy?" but rather: "What does the congregation spiritually need to hear?"

Jeremiah ministered during one of the darkest spiritual periods in Judah's history. The people still attended the Temple. Religion was active. Worship activities continued. Yet beneath the outward appearance of spirituality was a nation filled with idolatry, compromise, injustice, and rebellion against God. The tragedy was not that Judah had abandoned religion; the tragedy was that they had substituted religious appearance for genuine repentance.

What made Jeremiah's ministry so difficult was that he often stood in direct opposition to the messages people preferred. While false prophets promised peace, safety, and blessing, Jeremiah preached repentance, judgment, and

surrender to God's discipline. False prophets told the people what would calm them. Jeremiah told them what could save them. The difference was not merely tone. It was truth.

Modern church culture faces a similar danger. Congregations can become accustomed to sermons that inspire emotionally while never confronting spiritually. Churches can unintentionally reward messages that are comfortable, motivational, and affirming while resisting preaching that exposes sin, calls for repentance, or demands surrender. In that environment, preachers must constantly guard their hearts from becoming servants of preference rather than servants of truth.

Jeremiah reminds us that faithful preaching is not determined by applause, visible response, or immediate popularity. Jeremiah preached for decades with little outward success. He was rejected, opposed, isolated, and often emotionally exhausted. Yet he remained faithful because his

assignment was not to manufacture acceptance but to deliver God's Word.

That is one of the most sobering lessons for modern ministry.

A preacher's responsibility is not merely to discern what people want discussed. It is to prayerfully discern what God is saying to His people in the present moment. Sometimes that message will encourage. Sometimes it will comfort. Sometimes it will strengthen. But at other times it must confront, correct, warn, and call people back to covenant faithfulness.

Jeremiah also teaches us that true preaching requires spiritual courage. It takes courage to preach against cultural drift. It takes courage to address hidden compromise. It takes courage to speak about repentance in an age that prefers affirmation. Yet throughout Jeremiah's ministry, God continually reminded the prophet not to fear the faces of men but to faithfully proclaim the message he had been given.

Every preacher eventually decides which voice matters most: the voice of public approval or the voice of divine commission.

One of the most revealing moments in Jeremiah occurs when false prophet Hananiah publicly contradicts Jeremiah's warning from God. Hananiah preached the message everyone wanted to hear that peace was coming quickly, Babylon would

fall, and everything would soon return to normal. Jeremiah's message sounded heavy, difficult, and unpopular by comparison. Yet history proved that truth is not measured by how comforting it feels in the moment.

The Church today desperately needs preaching that carries both truth and burden. Not angry preaching. Not sensational preaching. But preaching shaped by conviction, Biblical authority, and genuine love for God's people. Jeremiah wept over the same people he warned. His message was severe because his burden was sincere.

That is the deeper issue behind the question: "What is your sermon Sunday?"

The answer should not primarily come from trends, pressure, reaction, or convenience. It must come from time spent before God with an open Bible and a discerning heart. Great preaching has never simply been the art of saying impressive things. Great preaching is the faithful delivery of what God knows His people need most.

The modern church does not merely need better communication. It needs prophetic clarity. It needs Biblical conviction. It needs courageous compassion. And it needs preachers who would rather be faithful than merely well-received.

Jeremiah's ministry reminds us that the success of a sermon is not

always measured by immediate acceptance. Sometimes the most important sermons are the ones people resist first but remember later. Faithful preaching plants truth deeply enough that God may use it long after the sermon has ended.

So before preparing the next outline, choosing the next title, or selecting the next text, every preacher should pause long enough to ask: "What is my sermon Sunday?" And even more importantly: "Is this what God wants said to His people?"

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