

PREACHING IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS
CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR PREACHING
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In speaking of the ministry of preaching in the New Testament and its role in the life of the church, we need to turn to the preacher *par excellence*, the teacher of teachers, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is found when opening the pages of the Gospels and is the central figure of the entire New Testament. Goldsworthy (2012) points out how Jesus the preacher knew all his people and that the essence of his message was the redemptive work for mankind:

The Gospels highlight the fact that Jesus taught. He was a traveling preacher. And much of what he said was preserved for us in the Gospels. But a fundamental part of this fact was his own conviction that he was keeping the word of the Old Testament. Part of this word is that of Isaiah 61, which he read in the synagogue of Nazareth... the essence of his proclamation is his saving work.¹

Some questions come to mind. Why was preaching always at the fore and was such a high point in the Jesus' ministry? What elements made Jesus' preaching different and contextual? What methods did Jesus make use of in his preaching? These questions will be central for this article.

The Importance of Preaching in Jesus' ministry

The Lord was very clear about the purpose of his coming; to complete his saving work in the world (Jn. 3.16-17), and preaching would have to play a vital role in his ministry. There are two important passages in the gospels that refer to the beginning of Jesus' preaching ministry. Mark 1:38 says: "Jesus replied, - Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." In Matthew 4:12 and 17 we read: "When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum... From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

The Matthew passage may have a connection with John 8:12; 9:5 and Matthew 5:14 where Jesus calls himself the light of the world. Matthew 4:14-16 highlights the prophetic fulfillment of a quote from Isaiah, which has to do with Jesus' visit to Capernaum. MacDonald describes it as follows: "... when Jesus arrived in Capernaum, Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled, and the important thing about that prophecy was undoubtedly what Jesus was doing in his ministry. Jesus' main objective was to make known his teachings, that the message was going to be heard in Capernaum, in this way, the light was reaching that place."² The light of Christ touches, converts and transforms lives, and that is what Jesus did with his presence and word in Capernaum.

¹ Graeme Goldsworthy (2012), *Como predicar de Cristo usando toda la Biblia*. (1era edición). Torrentes de Vida., (pp. 70-71).

² William MacDonald. (1995), *Comentario al Nuevo Testamento*. Editorial Clie (p. 533).

Definitely it is Christ who gives direction and meaning to life, who makes men and women see their true-life condition. This is what Jesus did in a city ‘that dwelt in darkness’ like Capernaum. William Barclay says about what Jesus did in this city "Without a doubt, it was the perfect place to start proclaiming his teachings, in this way, the light came to that place."³ But not only this city was going to experience the arrival and presence of the light of Christ, but also that light was for the whole world, this is what the quotes from John 8:12 and 9: 5 indicate "... I am the light of the world; Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life "and" While I am in the world, I am the light of the world. " John Piper writes about what Christ does in the life of those who comes to him "Jesus gives us the vision to see who we are in him. Only the light of the world can show us who we are and guide us responsibly through life."⁴

Christ also teaches that the church is the light that must shine in this world, according to Matthew 5: 14-16 "You are the light of the world ... Let your light shine before men." In this text the light of which Christ speaks not only has to do with the testimony of life that the church is called to give, (and that possibly some only endorse this interpretation), this text also refers to the message that it gives, since it is a message of light, because it speaks of Christ, our true light. As Díaz Santiago refers to: "The light we have is not only our testimony, but it is the Word, the teaching that he has left us."⁵

Another key passage that talks about Jesus’ ministry of preaching Mark 1:38, where Jesus makes very clear the purpose of his coming into the world: “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” There is no doubt, Christ came to preach the Good News, and this is seen throughout his three and a half years of earthly ministry. Ralph Earle in his commentary adds the following: "commenting on this text, that preaching the gospel was the supreme office of Christ."⁶ If this was the supreme ministry of Jesus (to use Earle's words), this must also be the supreme ministry of the church and of every preacher of God's Word, especially since Jesus leaves it as a command to the church in Mark. 16:15 “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Lloyd-Jones also goes along the same lines as the previous author, stating that, within all of Jesus' ministerial labors, preaching occupied an elementary position, which the church is called to follow: “Jesus' main ministry was preaching, so, although there are other functions within the ministry, the main job of the church is to be a bulwark of the truth ... the good word and doctrine leads to having a living religion.”⁷

The records of the gospels are testimonies of how many times Jesus was ready to share the message regardless of the person in front of him, or circumstance that was presented to him. It didn't matter if it was the Sabbath, or he was in the synagogue, if he was on the mountain or in

³ William Barclay (2008), *Comentario al Nuevo Testamento*. Editorial Clie. (p. 31)

⁴ John Piper (2006), *Gracia venidera, El poder purificador de vivir por fe*. Editorial Vida (p.93).

⁵ Hugo Díaz Santiago (2020), *Predicación expositiva: Su importancia para una praxis pastoral en la Iglesia del Nazareno en México, en el Distrito Noroccidental*. Tesis de licenciatura. (p. 45)

⁶ Ralph. Earle (1985), *Comentario Bíblico Beacon*. Tomo VII. (Segunda edición). Casa Nazarena de Publicaciones (p.150).

⁷ M. Lloyd-Jones (2010), *La predicación y los predicadores*. (2da edición en español). Ediciones Peregrinos (pp.22-26).

a boat on the shore of a lake, he always looked for that moment to share his message. Dr. Christian Sarmiento puts it in a better way:

He broke conventions of "taking opportunities" to "create opportunities." He could take the side of a mountain and turn it into a conference center. He could take Peter's boat and turn it into a platform for evangelism. He turned the edge of a well into a private counseling room to guide a sinful woman to the experience of the water of life. He would take these silent moments in the evening to guide a philosopher, theologian and scientist known as Nicodemus to the experience of the new birth.⁸

If for Jesus this task of preaching, which he assumed in his earthly ministry, was of the utmost importance, how much more should it be the attitude of the life of the church and its ministers and preachers? Therefore, preaching is vastly important, and is at the heart of what the church is and stands for; It is through this ministry that bridges continue to be built between the saving Word of God and the thousands of people who need to meet the Savior of the World. Jesus was diligent in his task of communicating the truths that he wanted to teach. Why did Jesus put such importance on the ministry of preaching? Why did he do it? The answers that readers of the gospels come across are as follows:

In the first place, Jesus was not only a herald, but he himself was the message (Rom. 11:33). If preachers are disposed to preach the Scriptures, they must preach Christ at all times. This work places the preacher in front of the world, a world that needs to hear the voice of God. It is for this reason that the messenger of the church becomes the herald of the Word, as John Stott points out: "Notable among them is that of the herald charged with the solemn but inspiring responsibility of proclaiming the Good News of God...Paul thought of himself and his companions ... as administrators of God's ministries...we preach (*keryssomen*, we proclaim as heralds), and affirms that through this proclamation (*kerygma*) made as heralds, God is pleased to save unbelievers (1 Cor. 1: 21-23)."⁹

Secondly, Christ had a clear understanding of what his Word was capable of doing in the lives of the listeners. It is for this reason that in (Jn. 8:32) he mentions what the Word does with those who meet him: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." It is for this reason that Jesus preached, because it was through his person, his Word and the power of the Spirit that human beings find freedom. Jesus' preaching brings message that frees us from sin, from the clutches and oppression of the enemy.

Distinctive Elements in Jesus' Preaching

Preaching was not a new ministry within the people of Israel, the Old Testament records that some prophets implemented this ministry by speaking about God's messages to the Jewish people. John the Baptist made use of this ministry early in the New Testament (Mt. 3: 1; Mk. 1: 4; Lk. 3: 2-3). Given this Old Testament precedent and the ministry of John the Baptist, what elements were there in Jesus' preaching that made it different for his time? The truth is that Jesus'

⁸ Christian Sarmiento (1992), *El pastor como predicador*. Conferencia, Quito, Ecuador, septiembre (p.7).

⁹ John Stott (1996), *Imágenes del predicador en el Nuevo Testamento*. Nueva Creación (p 27).

preaching was varied, his teachings were a mix between old and new arguments, as well as his unique style among all the preachers of the time, his methods of presentation included a diversity, and spontaneity was in many cases what prevailed. Garvie points out well when giving his contribution on this issue:

The teachings of Jesus were imparted mostly on the way, or in great measure, answering questions or in connection with his miracles; It consisted of isolated sayings, expositions of the moment, illustrations, and parables, rather than lengthy arguments. He emphasized repeating the same thought under different figures, he presented complementary arguments for the truth by means of twin parables. His standout note was spontaneity and not formality.¹⁰

The interesting and objective comment of this author serves to mention some unique elements in Jesus' preaching.

The Originality in Jesus' Preaching.

What is meant by originality in the preaching of Jesus? Leonardo Boff gives a clear and correct opinion on what is unique in his preaching:

When speaking of the uniqueness of Jesus, we must first clear up a mistake. A person is not original who purely and simply says something new. Neither is original synonymous with strange. Original comes from origin. Who is close to the origin... by his life, his words and deeds, leads others to the origin... In this sense, Christ was original. Not because he discovered new things, but because he said things with absolute immediacy and sovereignty. Everything he says and does is transparent, crystalline and evident. In contact with Jesus, each one finds himself and what is best in him.¹¹

The gospel writers with great precision and on numerous occasions recounted how the great crowds who heard Jesus preach or teach were surprised and marveled at the originality with which he spoke to them. To the point that their lives were touched and sorrowful as Blackwood mentions: "The teachings of Jesus established points of human consciousness in his listeners."¹² The content of his preaching and teaching was always linked to the moral and spiritual reality of the multitudes who always followed and listened to him.

It is from this perspective that his messages are cataloged as contextual, because in each of his teachings he reflected the human condition: "The intimacy of moral and religious life on which he insisted so much; the universality of the goodness of God and consequently, of the duty of man that he ordained; the assurance of the forgiveness of sin that he offered; the faith in the grace of God that he required of man, these are all examples of the originality of his teaching."¹³

¹⁰ Alfredo E. Garvie (1987), *Historia de la Predicación Cristiana*. Editorial Clie, (p.54).

¹¹ Leonardo Boff (1981), *Jesucristo y la liberación del hombre*. Ediciones Cristiandad, (p.122).

¹² A.W. Blackwood (1985), *La preparación de sermones bíblicos*. Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, (p.14)

¹³ Garvie, op. cit., (p. 54).

The uniqueness of Jesus' preaching also had to do with the different ways of presenting the Word, his styles were adopted according to the circumstances and needs of his listeners. As Wijngaards puts well:

If we study the gospels, we will see that Jesus did not have a single uniform way of communicating the word...Jesus spoke in the synagogues during the Sabbath service (Lk. 6: 6; 14:10). On such occasions, Jesus followed the procedure of the “rabbis” of his time...When Jesus spoke to the crowds, he would sit in the midst of the people and speak to them. He sometimes did it in the open air (Lk. 6: 17-19), sometimes, from a boat, while the people listened from the shore (Lk. 5: 1-3). Jesus also spoke as a prophet; he taught with authority (Mt. 7: 28-29). In all of these settings there were important differences in Jesus' approach to his words.¹⁴

What was original in Jesus' preaching? Blackwood gives the answer to this question "he fed his own life in God, drinking from the Holy Scriptures."¹⁵ This was the key in Jesus' person, his life evidences a constant closeness with his Heavenly Father, an intimate communion from day to day, from moment to moment. How many times we find in the Gospels that Jesus withdrew, especially at night, to have that closeness to the Father. He did this over and over again, and in the end, this became the focal point in his life and in his ministry of preaching.

We have seen that Jesus, the preacher, was not only unique in the diversity of themes or styles he employed, but also his sense of intimacy and communion with his father. How many of today's preachers have a close relation with God? How original is the preaching that is heard these days in our church pulpits?

Authority in Jesus' preaching.

Jesus preached with authority when he spoke and presented the Word of God. The Synoptic Gospels accurately record this element in Jesus' preaching. Mark 1:22 narrates the first teaching of Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum "The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law." This same comment is also recorded Matthew 7:28-29 after the sermon on the Mount. Diaz wrote about the amazement that the public had of this sermon "The greatest and most famous sermon... the Sermon on the Mount, left its listeners impressed and stunned. The Lord Jesus left the audience in prolonged amazement, at what he was saying and how he was saying it."¹⁶ Luke 4:32 records the same story as Mark, Jesus' preaching and teaching on Sabbath days in the Capernaum synagogue "They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority."

When reading the three biblical texts above, the following question arises: from where did Jesus receive this authority? There are two valid answers to answers. First and foremost, Jesus received this authority from his Father. John Stott mentions "... the Son of God spoke with the

¹⁴ John Wijngaards (1988), *Comunicación de la Palabra de Dios*. Editorial Verbo Divino, (p.54).

¹⁵ Blackwood, op. cit., (p. 150).

¹⁶ M. Eliseo Díaz. (2011), *Los 4 elementos fundamentales en la predicación: Lo que todo predicador necesita conocer*. <http://comopredicarelevangelio.com/es.scribd.com/document/77835955> (p.1)

absolute authority of his Father." ¹⁷ In Matthew 11:27 Jesus declares the following "All things were committed to me by my Father..." By his own words, Jesus shows that he had a deep and strong relationship with the Father, who had given him authority. It is for this reason, that there is no doubt, Jesus preached, cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead, and forgave sins by the authority of his Father. This authority was recognized by the religious of his time who wanted to distort Jesus' statements "... But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, - It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons" (Mt. 12:24). There is a Greek term that the Gospels use to refer to internal authority *exousia*. *Ousia* designates what one is or has. Ex indicates origin or provenance. The *exousia* is the authority that comes from within." ¹⁸ Jesus' authority that came from within him.

Secondly, there is another argument that is not biblical but valid; a person acquires authority when it is backed up by impeccable moral conduct. Correct teaching, will be enhanced by an authentic personality and an exemplary life: "... Jesus displays authority without coercive power. It is what I have previously called moral authority. It is the authority of truth, of authenticity, of exemplarity."¹⁹ Scripture teaches us about Jesus' perfect character and personality.

In conclusion, the authority that Jesus had in preaching rested on four elements, namely, his personality, his moral discernment, his perfect character, and his spiritual vision. All these united to the perfect communion that he had with his Father "God spoke and worked in him, because he said and did only what God had taught him." ²⁰

The Attraction in Jesus' Preaching.

The Gospels testify to the way in which the crowds followed Jesus; they came from various cities as recorded in Matthew 4:25 "Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him." Luke mentions the joy that the people had when they received him "Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him" (8:40). Some questions arise from these accounts. Why was Jesus followed by the crowds? What did he have that made the people follow him? Why did Jesus have a connection with his audiences? It is very likely that people followed him for various reasons "Some followed him for miracles, others followed him for food, and others, because they were fanatics, they were fascinated to see the things that Jesus said and did among the people." ²¹

Undoubtedly, Jesus' preaching also caused surprise and admiration in the crowds, we see this in Mark 12:37 "... The large crowd listened to him with delight." Jesus' preaching and

¹⁷ John Stott, op. cit., (p.23).

¹⁸ Aguirre, Rafael. (2014). *La mirada de Jesús sobre el poder*. Teol. Vida Vol.55 No.1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0049-34492014000100005>. (p. 2).

¹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰ Blackwood, op. cit (p.12).

²¹ Vilchez, J. A. (sf). *Enseñando al estilo de Jesús*. <https://monografias.com/trabajos96/ensenando-al-estilo-jesus.shtml>. (p.1).

teaching was very often attractive. Vilchez points out the reason why Jesus achieved this attraction when he preached or taught:

He made a "felt" connection between himself and people. I use the word felt because this connection is emotional and subjective...He had openness with his listeners, the more access they had with his teacher, the closer they would be to him...He loved his listeners, showed interest in them ... He identified with the needs of his listeners...he interact with his audience, some asked and he answered. All these elements were key for Jesus to have a connection with his audiences.²²

MacDonald also points out that the attraction that Jesus caused in the crowds had a lot to do with his style, a simple language, of course that communicated the great truths of the Word: "How did Jesus speak to the crowds? He got their attention and kept their attention. He did not bore them, his words were simple, specific and direct like the blows of a boxer. He was aware that he had a great message, but he had to communicate it to an audience and so he chose a style, a structure and a language that clearly communicated everything."²³

Although Jesus was undeniably a gifted communicator which enabled him to reach out to the people, we cannot ignore the main element that was behind Jesus' success. Luke 4:32 He always preached with power: "This power was the result of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, without which the most solemn truth falls into emptiness without effect. The Spirit filled him beyond measure, so the truth took possession of him, burning and inflaming his whole being, sending it directly from his heart to the hearers"²⁴

Crane comments, affirming that the life and ministry of Jesus was filled with the presence of God, which had repercussions in the lives of his listeners: "The spirit that possessed him to such a degree, not only filled him, but enabled him to impart it to others. The Spirit was poured into all his words, captured the soul of his listeners, filling their hearts and minds with enthusiasm."²⁵ There is no doubt that Christ was complete with the presence of the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. This made a difference in this life, and it was this that caused people to be attracted to his person and message. Are today's preacher so full of the Holy Spirit that their messages attract listeners? Is it important that today's preaching should connect to their audiences?

It is through this felt connection that the preacher interacts, loves, identifies, and has openness with his people. Do contemporary preachers have intimate relationships with God? This is an urgent question which needs to be answered as the attraction that the preacher has with his audience depends on this communion, as seen in the life and ministry of Jesus.

²² Vilchez, (p.2).

²³ William MacDonald (1995), *Comentario al Nuevo Testamento*. Editorial Clie. (parr. 15).

²⁴ Blackwood, op. cit. (p.15).

²⁵ James Crane (1995), *El sermón eficaz*. (XVI edición). Casa Bautista de Publicaciones (p.42).

The Relevance Jesus' Preaching.

To be relevant implies being connected or appropriate. There is no doubt that Jesus' preaching was always within the framework of reality and the circumstances that surrounded the crowds on a daily basis; it is within this panorama that his messages appealed and were pertinent to the needs of his listeners. His messages, his teachings, his questions and miracles were responses to the needs or dangers of the moment, to the interest and abilities of his listeners. Jesus always looked for ways to respond to the adverse circumstances of each listener. As Wijngaards mentions:

Jesus, to express his thoughts, takes as a starting point the needs of the people. We see this very clearly in the miracles that he performs. Jesus' miracles never begin with an idea launched by himself, but are always responses to a need: the response to hungry crowds, to the occupants of a boat who are threatened by a storm, to a mother who cries at the burial of her son, the blind, lepers, paralyzed or crippled, who suffer and need help. Much of Jesus' concern is realized through such acts of genuine concern for the people.²⁶

His preaching and teachings were appropriate and timely, they were never vague or trivial messages, but serious and timely, all of which touched the lives of many people, whom he guided on the path of restoration and salvation: "His ministerial action, achieved that his message and teaching was of great relevance among the public, and ceased to be trivial like other religious leaders of the time."²⁷

The Jesus that the Gospels present us with, full of power and authority, original in his actions and that attracted his followers, has another element in favor in his ministry; his message was relevant to the people's lives. Why was the ministry of Jesus relevant to the people? Orlando Costas says: "It is evident that Jesus could not preach the message if he did not understand or did not know exactly what the needs and demands of the audience he was addressing consisted of."²⁸ To understand this and know how to apply his message to the needs of the public, Jesus knew his people and their context, since he was the son of Jewish culture; for this reason, Jesus' preaching was contextual based on the knowledge he had of his own people. José Manuel Martínez comments the following on this topic: "Jesus knew the audience to whom his word was addressed, he knew their thoughts and his influences, and the social pressures that were on them."²⁹

I conclude by mentioning that the preaching of Jesus was relevant because it started from a knowledge that he had of his people, because of the fact that he always lived among them and was part of the same culture; for these reasons his message was pertinent, as well as his miracles and actions.

²⁶ Wijngaards, op cit., (pp. 55-56)

²⁷ Garvie, op. cit., (p. 58).

²⁸ Orlando Costas (1990), *Comunicación por medio de la predicación*. Editorial Caribe (p.215)

²⁹ Costas, (p.11).

Methods in Jesus' Preaching

When talking about the different methodologies that Jesus used to teach and preach, we are talking about the teacher of the Word. In the words of one of the most popular pedagogues in Brazil, Paulo Freire, Jesus cannot be better described: "I usually say that, regardless of the Christian position in which I always tried to hold, Christ will be for me, as he is, an example as a pedagogue...What fascinates me about the Gospels is the indivisibility between their content and the method with which Christ communicated it." ³⁰

People were generally around Jesus throughout his public ministry which lasted for a period of almost three and a half years. They enjoyed listening to Jesus, in addition to finding truth and forgiveness in him. Rawlins points out on this point: "He is the perfect teacher; the clearest illustration of the way God communicates with people. The ministry of Jesus is the perfect model of how to transmit eternal truth to sinful and imperfect people who need to be forgiven ... The crowds never tired of listening to Jesus. Sometimes the night would surprise them and still people enjoyed his teachings. " ³¹

Why is Jesus the role model for today's preacher? What did he have that people enjoyed hearing so much? Hernández (et.al.) mention that he enchanted them because his word and teaching transformed the lives of the people who met him: "Jesus was the model of person, who through his language enchanted and transformed those who had a personal encounter with him." ³² That is what preaching is really seeking to create, an encounter and a change in the listener. If people's lives are not being touched, broken and transformed by the power of the Word, it is difficult to think our preaching ministry is being adequately carried out in these times. When God speaks to the people through his Word, lives will be changed; this is the purpose of preaching.

It is worth highlighting an important element in the development of this theme, Jesus surprised his contemporaries with his style and way of preaching and teaching the Word, which were very different from those of his time. Joachim Jeremias mentions: "If we compare the language and style of the sayings of Jesus that have been transmitted to us in the first three Gospels with the way of speaking that was used in the context, we are struck by the fact that, with unusual frequency, they appear on the lips of Jesus." ³³

What variety of methods did Jesus use in his preaching that tested, touched, and transformed the lives of multitudes? We can note with interest that what we have already observed, the different personal and ministerial qualities that Jesus had, which were very

³⁰, Antonio Citado en Pérez Esclarin (2008), *Jesús maestro y pedagogo: Aportes para una cultura escolar desde los valores del evangelio*. Editorial San Pablo, (p.3).

³¹ Víctor Rawlins (2017), *La metodología de Jesús para educar con resultados*.

<https://webdelmaestrocmmf.com/portal/la-metodologia-de-jesus-para-educar-con-resultados/> (p.4).

³² Jaramillo Hernández Robinson and Pinto Marly Duberney (2019), *La pedagogía de Jesús, una propuesta de acompañamiento y compromiso social que orienta, comunica y vive el docente* de ERE de la institución educativa San Francisco de la ciudad de Tuluá Valle. Tesis de licenciatura de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Colombia, (p.10).

³³ Joachim Jeremias (2001), *Teología del Nuevo Testamento*. Vol. I. (7ma edición), Ediciones Sígueme, (p.21).

decisive when applying them in his ministry. In addition, Jesus implemented different methodologies to present the message and the teaching of the Word. One writer mentions: "Jesus used different methods to teach and preach: Parables, questions and answers, from the known to the unknown, contrasts, use of Scripture, lessons with objects, problems, from the general to the specific."³⁴ Here we will discuss some of these methods.

The Parables in Jesus' Preaching.

The parable was one of the main resources and possibly the most used by Jesus in his ministry of the Word "With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand" (Mark 4:33). Using this method, Jesus directed the thoughts of his listeners to the images that he presented to them in his teachings, with the sole intention of relating it to a principle. Jeremias makes an interesting contribution to the purpose of the parables:

His parables take us to the very center of the pulsating daily life. With this closeness of life, with the simplicity and clarity of his parables, with the mastery of his concise descriptions, with the seriousness of his appeals to conscience, with his delicate understanding of the marginalized of religion, there is nothing that has analogy... The first three gospels convey to us no less than forty-one parables of Jesus. Today it is universally recognized that parables... belong to the original source of the tradition about Jesus.³⁵

Before Joachim Jeremias' masterful description of the parables of Jesus, the question arises: What is a parable and what is its purpose? "It is a story that uses an example from the natural world to illustrate a spiritual truth. The real meaning of the word 'parable' is 'put next to, compare'... In the parables, Jesus used a natural example and compared it to a spiritual truth. A parable is an earthly story with a Heavenly meaning."³⁶

Just to cite some examples of this method (Mt. 13:1-9, 18-23): the parable of the sower and its explanation; 13: 24-30 the parable of the wheat and the tares; and Luke. 13: 20-21 the parable of the leaven). Why did Jesus speak in parables to the public many times? Wijngaards has the answer: "Jesus wanted people to think for themselves, and that is why he taught the public in parables. This surprised the apostles. They would have expected plain language, but Jesus knew that the people would only accept his message, if it made them think for themselves. To understand, they had to listen over and over again. To capture, they had to look over and over again. Only then would they be converted and healed (Mt. 13: 10-15)."³⁷

This can be an excellent tool and resource that preachers today could use very well, because in it there is a good purpose, to present, for example, the values of the kingdom, forgiveness, transformation, salvation and love, with images or figures widely used and known our contexts.

³⁴ Sociedad Internacional Misionera. (sf). *Discipulado y liderazgo: Los métodos de Jesús*. <https://misionessim.org/sites/default/files/imagenes/PDF>. (p.1-2).

³⁵ Jeremias, op cit., (pp.44-45).

³⁶ Sociedad Internacional Misionera. (sf). *Discipulado y liderazgo: Los métodos de Jesús*. <https://misionessim.org/sites/default/files/imagenes/PDF>. (p.3).

³⁷ Wijngaards, op. cit., (p. 56)

The Use of Scripture in Jesus' Preaching.

To understand this issue, we must refer to the fact that at the time of Jesus' ministry there was only the Old Testament Scripture, which he knew very well since he used it very frequently. Domingo points out the following:

It was evident that Jesus had extensive knowledge of the Bible and could quote it with certainty. In the account of temptation (Luke 4: 3-12), the Lord responded to the devil's requests with three quotes from the Bible. In other cases, when asked, his answers were What is written in Scripture? or What do you read in it? (Luke 10: 26-28). Jesus shows his authority by presenting Scripture as a guide, and berating those who do not read it (Mt. 21:23, 42) ...It was the typical style of the teacher. To any doubt, the answer is in the reading of Scripture.³⁸

When examining Jesus' life and ministry in the light of the Gospels, it is interesting to realize that he made a lot of use of the Scriptures. He lived the Word, that is why he spoke with the authority that the Word gave him. This was one of the great virtues in the ministry of Jesus, and that's why people followed him. In John 5:39 he himself makes this reference: "You study the Scriptures ... These are the very Scriptures that testify about me." On this subject Domingo writes "As you can see, the Lord knew the Holy Scriptures (Bible) very well, he kept them in mind and fulfills them. What's more, he seems to be obsessed with them, because he constantly quotes them in his conversations and preaching."³⁹

Why did Jesus use the Scriptures in the ministry of preaching? There is an element that we must pay attention to, Jesus made use of Scripture in preaching because he lived the Word, this indicates that he first put into practice the teachings of Scripture, this gave greater authority to his life and ministry.

Today's pastors need to be biblical in the ministry of preaching, to have the Word in their ministry in every sense of the word, but first of all they must live-out and feed on Scripture.

The Questions and Answers in Jesus' preaching.

This was another of the methods that Jesus used frequently in his preaching ministry. His purpose was several, to make the listener think, to receive a response from them, or for his listeners to draw their own conclusions. This question and answer method is an effective way to stimulate people to think about what has been shared and to produce a response and reaction to the Word. The gospels record a good part of the Jesus' words in the form of questions, which he directed to those who approached him. "Many times, Jesus would ask a question to make his listeners think. Sometimes he required an answer (Matthew 16: 13-16). Other times Jesus would

³⁸ Rafael. Domingo (2017), *Jesús leía la Escritura*. <https://nuestra-voz.org/jesus-leia-la-escritura>. (p.7).

³⁹ Domingo (p.2)

ask a question that remained unanswered. They were designed solely to make his listeners think and come to their own conclusions (Luke 10: 25-37; Mark 10: 17-18)." ⁴⁰

There is an issue that arises about this methodology that Jesus implemented in his ministry of preaching and teaching the Word. In addition to the listener making his own conclusions and reflecting on Jesus' questions, what other purpose is sought with this method? Arturo Bravo gives an appropriate answer:

The question and answer method takes us deep inside and forces us to search for our truth. Once again, we find that problems are better solved if the questions are asked correctly. Teaching by asking has the advantage of helping us to seek the answer in the best of us and to build the gospel by lending it our own life. Learning to wonder is a sign of maturity. This allows breaking false securities, taking distance from oneself and discovering the depth that we have. In this quote the meaning and importance of the questions appear beautifully and deeply formulated. Asking implies respecting the interlocutor, because you trust their capacity for reflection and response. ⁴¹

Jesus' questions were often penetrating because at the end, his preaching and teaching sought to change the listener, by stirring up both thoughts and feelings. This method has not gone out of fashion; the contemporary preachers can make use as part of their styles in the ministry of the preaching of the church.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of this topic about preaching in the ministry of Jesus, three things must be highlighted. Firstly, Jesus was clear that preaching was fundamental in his ministry; only through his person and message can light come to the world bringing forgiveness, transformation and salvation. This light was the same one that illuminated Capernaum and the neighboring cities of Galilee, this light continues to illuminate thousands of people without Christ.

Secondly, Jesus' preaching and teaching was attractive to the public of his time; there were elements in it that fascinated and attracted crowds. The generation of his day had never heard someone speak the Word with such originality, authority, and relevance.

Finally, Jesus knew how to combine in his ministry, his gifts as a preacher and teacher, with new methodologies of his time, to present in the best way possible the teachings of the Good News of Salvation.

The modern preachers are called to follow in the footsteps of their master, who is the only true model in this ministry. If they wish to enjoy a fruitful ministry preaching of the Word, they must first have the conviction that God called them to this ministry, in addition to being an

⁴⁰ Sociedad Internacional Misionera. (sf). *Discipulado y liderazgo: Los métodos de Jesús*. <https://misionessim.org/sites/default/files/imagenes/PDF>. (p.2).

⁴¹ Bravo, Arturo. (2007). "El estilo pedagógico de Jesús: Las preguntas." *REXE Revista de Estudios y Experiencia en Educación*, número 12. Universidad Católica de Santísima Concepción. (p.123).

innovator in the content, as well as in the ways of delivering the message. There is a public that week after week gathers around the Word to hear the message through its messenger.

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