

# Broadcasting God's Word

by Josh Reimer

## I. Introduction

- a. In the Old Testament, the prophet named Ezekiel had a title besides "prophet." God also gave him the title of "watchman" (Ezekiel 3:16-21).
  1. In school, we probably all learned about Paul Revere. He's the guy who's supposed to have taken that midnight horse ride and shouted, "The British are coming! The British are coming!" Paul Revere is such a key figure not for his military prowess, but for his warning. He was a watchman.
  2. Ezekiel was a watchman for the house of Israel.
  3. When they had punishment coming, it was Ezekiel's job to tell them so they could repent. If he didn't do it, then he was partly responsible.
- b. Imagine there are going to be solar flares tomorrow. Anyone caught outside will be blinded or maybe even killed. This is a life or death situation.
  1. Think about who you would tell.
  2. Think about how you would tell them.
  3. And what if you didn't tell anyone? What would that say about you?
- c. It's not so different with God's word.
  1. It is life or death.
    - A. Mark 16:15+16
    - B. James 1:21: *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*
  2. It needs to be passed on (2 Timothy 2:2).
- d. This is not something we should keep to ourselves.
  1. God's prophets in the Old Testament could not keep it to themselves - even when it caused problems for them.
    - A. Jeremiah 20:7-10
    - B. Amos 7:10-16
  2. Paul couldn't keep it to himself either. 1 Corinthians 9:16: *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!*
  3. If it were a physical life or death situation - like the solar flares example - we would not keep it to ourselves. Why should we keep a spiritual life or death situation to ourselves?
- e. We are going to be looking at broadcasting God's word.
  1. To whom should we broadcast it?
  2. How should we broadcast it?
  3. And what would it say about us if we don't?

## II. To whom should we broadcast God's word?

- a. Let's start with the easiest - those who come right out and ask about God's word.
  1. These are people who would say to us, "I heard something about dangerous solar flares tomorrow. Have you heard anything about that?"
  2. The Eunuch (Acts 8:26-31, 35-38).

3. Cornelius (Acts 10:17-24, 36-44).
  4. In both of these examples, the preacher was told who to teach. They had willing - even eager - audiences.
    - A. These opportunities may be rare today, but we need to be ready for them.
    - B. If someone comes to us asking about the gospel, what excuse could we have to not tell them about it?
    - C. 1 Peter 3:15: *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*
  5. Who might this be for us? If any visitor sets foot inside this building and says they are looking for a church or looking for the truth, we need to be ready. Or if anyone responds to one of our mail-outs, what excuse could we have not to share the gospel with them?
- b. We could also broadcast God's word to those who might be interested.
1. When Paul traveled to a new city, he seemed to usually start by teaching at the synagogue.
    - A. Acts 9:20, Acts 13:5, 14-16, Acts 14:1, and many more.
    - B. Why would he choose to preach in the synagogue?
      - I. Not because he favored the Jews (Acts 14:1, 17:17).
      - II. There were people interested in worshiping God there. Not all of them turned out to be interested in the gospel, but some were and so that's where Paul went.
  2. Paul also taught at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:16-22, 33+34).
    - A. In the synagogues, not everyone believed in Jesus or the gospel, but at least they all believed in the one true God.
    - B. That wasn't the case here. These people were polytheistic and they seemed to just be interested in hearing all different kinds of religious beliefs or doctrines.
    - C. Of course, Paul jumped at this opportunity.
  3. In these two examples - teaching in the synagogues and at the Areopagus - Paul broadcasted God's word to people who didn't seem to be actively seeking out the gospel, but who were interested in God or at least religion.
  4. Who might this be for us? Perhaps friends, family, or co-workers who we know are religious but maybe not according to the truth. People we know who are like how Paul described the Jews in Romans 10:2: *they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge*.
- c. The third group we could broadcast God's word to would be whoever is around.
1. Anyone we are around a lot or spend time with on a regular basis could be someone we could broadcast God's word to.
  2. Once again, we will look to Paul as an example (Philippians 1:12+13).
    - A. Paul may have been a captive, but that didn't stop him. It just meant he had a captive audience in his guards.
    - B. It seems that anyone who was around Paul had an opportunity to hear the gospel.
    - C. This is an example we can benefit from in our efforts to broadcast God's word.
- d. Finally, we could broadcast God's word to each other as a reminder.
1. Surely we would remind people who already knew about the solar flares - don't forget to stay inside tomorrow!

2. Peter understood the importance of reminders (2 Peter 1:12-15, 3:1+2).
  - A. Peter acknowledged that they already knew these things, but he reminded them again anyway.
  - B. Both chapters 1 and 3 talked about stirring them up with these reminders. Like today, I know that most, if not all, of us here already know the things I'm pointing out. But hopefully this reminder will stir us all up to broadcast God's word all the more.

### III. How should we broadcast God's word?

- a. The word "broadcast" implies public and that is certainly be a good way to do it.
  1. For our solar flares illustration, newspapers, t.v. and radio stations would make public announcements. And we would probably all send out mass emails to everyone we know.
  2. When we want a message to get out, telling it publicly is obviously the fastest way to hit the most people.
  3. And we already saw how Paul used public speaking in the synagogues and at the Areopagus.
  4. Jesus also spoke to the masses. When he fed the five thousand in Matthew 14, there were five thousand people to feed because they had followed him to see him and hear him speak.
  5. And this church does make an effort to get the word out publicly. We have a web-site, we put ads in the paper, and we send out mailings.
- b. But publicly is not the only way to tell God's word. Even though it doesn't reach as many people all at once, private teaching often seems to be the most effective.
  1. This is how Philip taught the Ethiopian Eunuch, as we already saw.
  2. This is how Paul taught the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-34).
    - A. Paul didn't say, "I see you are interested in the gospel, why don't you come to the synagogue next week and hear me speak?"
    - B. No, he went right to this man's house and taught him the word there on an individual basis.
  3. Another example is how Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos privately (Acts 18:24-28).
    - A. Why did they take him aside to explain this to him privately? We don't really know.
      - I. It could have been to avoid embarrassing him.
      - II. It could have been because it was more convenient - there would be fewer distractions.
      - III. Or it could have been because Aquila and Priscilla were shy.
    - B. Whatever the case may be, we can see they did this privately and it was effective.
- c. Another way to broadcast God's word, which could be public or private, is through writing.
  1. It's a good thing for us that teaching was done through writing in the early church, because that's where the bible came from.
  2. When the Ethiopian Eunuch or the Philippian Jailer or Cornelius wanted to hear the gospel, it was spoken to them. When a man named Theophilus was interested, it was written down for him (Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-4).

3. Paul liked to travel around to teach God's word and encourage all the Christians. But he couldn't be everywhere at once, so he wrote letters (Romans 1:8-15).
  - A. It's pretty clear that Paul wanted to be in Rome to preach the gospel.
  - B. It just hadn't worked out so far (vs 13).
  - C. But Paul was still able to teach them by writing this letter.
4. And writing doesn't have to be just for teaching things that the audience doesn't already know.
  - A. It can also be for encouragement. Paul seemed to include both of these things in his letters (Philippians 1:3-6).
  - B. And recall what we read in the letter that Peter wrote - he wasn't just giving them new information that they didn't have. He was sending reminders to stir them up.
5. One advantage writing has over speaking is longevity.
  - A. We still have these letters that were written so long ago because they were held on to and passed around (Colossians 4:16).
  - B. Paul's letters had universal benefit and so they were passed around, even though they were written to specific targets. Peter's letters seem to be written to just whoever could benefit from them (1 Peter 1:1+2, 2 Peter 1:1).
6. How can we broadcast God's word through writing today?
  - A. We can do it publicly through the ads we put in the paper or we could write letters to the editor or things like that.
  - B. And we can very easily do it privately. It's so easy to send off an email, a card, or a letter. As we have seen, it doesn't have to be addressing a problem, it can just be encouragement.

#### IV. What if we aren't broadcasting God's word? There must be a reason.

- a. Maybe we are afraid people will think we are crazy and we will become outcasts. But this is not a valid excuse.
  1. People thought Paul was crazy and that didn't stop him (Acts 27:24+25).
  2. And Jesus even warned His followers that they might not be very popular (John 15:18+19).
  3. 1 John 3:13: *Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.*
- b. Maybe we are afraid we won't do a good job.
  1. And it's true that not everyone should be a teacher. James 3:1 says: *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*
  2. But when we reach a certain maturity level, then we should be teaching (Hebrews 5:12).
  3. And we may be afraid we won't do a good job, but we need to get over that. In the parable of the talents from Matthew 25, the master was not pleased with the servant who was too afraid to use the talent he had been given.
- c. Maybe it's because we don't like giving bad news.
  1. The gospel isn't bad news - the word "gospel" actually means good news.
  2. But I think we understand that those we share it with may not view it as good news - especially when it means they have to turn their lives upside down.
  3. But the bible has a lot to say about those who would hide or distort the truth just so they can tell people what they want to hear.

- A. Remember how we began this lesson. Ezekiel was a watchman and if he didn't warn people that punishment was coming, he was responsible.
- B. A man named Hananiah did the opposite. At this time, Jeremiah was bringing a very unpopular message - that the people would be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. Hananiah interrupted him to teach a different message (Jeremiah 28:10-17).
  - I. Hananiah told the people what they wanted to hear, but that didn't make it true.
  - II. He might have eased their worries a little bit at the time, but he wasn't doing them any favors by hiding the truth from them.
  - III. And he wasn't doing himself any favors either, as we can see.
- C. Some people will just look for the most convenient message that excuses them from having to do anything - like the message Hananiah was speaking. But that shouldn't be the message we are speaking (2 Timothy 4:1-5).
  - I. Paul is encouraging Timothy to preach the truth, whether it's popular (in season) or unpopular (out of season).
  - II. And he acknowledges that there will be people who are not looking for the truth, but instead for the message that they have predetermined they want to hear.
  - III. But that can't be the message we are teaching. And I think that's why Paul uses the encouraging words he uses in verse 5. It may not always be easy, but we need to teach the truth.

## V. Conclusion

- a. We've looked at some different people we can choose to broadcast God's word to.
  - 1. We can tell it to those who ask us about it - and there would be little excuse for us not to tell it to those people.
  - 2. Or when we see that people are interested in religion, we can use that as a starting point to teach them the gospel.
  - 3. We can just tell it to just whomever we spend time with.
  - 4. And we can even tell it to each other, as encouragement and reminder.
- b. We've also looked at different ways we can broadcast God's word.
  - 1. We can tell it publicly.
  - 2. We can tell it privately.
  - 3. We can tell it in writing.
- c. There are many potential audiences and many potential methods.
  - 1. We may not have opportunity to hit each and every possible audience or to use each and every method.
  - 2. But let's not let the opportunities that we do have pass us by.
  - 3. Remember, this is life or death. There are souls at stake and people who need to hear the gospel (Romans 10:14+15).