

# The Importance of Preaching

By Henry Mahan

**Bible Text:** Luke 4:18-19

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Let's turn to Luke chapter four and let me read the text again in which our Lord said, verse 18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach." Now this is the day of words like this: sharing, input, group therapy and this sort of thing. And I am sure that there is a place for these things. I am certain of that. But I plan to use all the influence that I have wherever and whatever that may be and every effort that God can enable me to use, to restore to prominence and to restore to religious circles, conferences, meetings and so forth the preaching of the gospel, the preaching of the gospel.

This church has just been blessed to enjoy a whole week of preaching, preaching, preaching, preaching. As I say, there is a place for witnessing, there is a place for music, there is a place for socializing, there is a place for sharing, there is a place for exhorting, there is a place for encouraging one another. There is even a place for entertainment, but I am saying that preaching occupies the supreme place in the program of God for the salvation of sinners.

We have, this week, heard 16 sermons. I am talking about since last Sunday morning, 16 sermons in one week. Actually, when the week was over I was encouraged because many people came up to me and expressed their desire to see it continue another week. I had several people say to me, "Let's have another week. Let's just go on through next week."

I said, "Haven't you had enough?"

They said, "No. Like Peter on the mountain I could camp here forever, just stay right here in this atmosphere of rejoicing in Christ and preaching the gospel of his glory."

Well, I can tell you this, I can tell you this and you can put this down. This is true. I can tell you this that love for the preaching of the Word of God is good evidence of the grace of God in your heart. Love for the preaching of the Word of God. Now I make good on this. But love for the preaching of the Word of God, love for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ is good evidence of the grace of God in your heart. And an absence of love for the preaching of the Word is good evidence of an absence of grace.

Now you can get mad about that and upset all you want to, but I tell you this. Our God puts great honor on the preaching of the Word. He said, "It pleased God," Paul said, "It

pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” And I can go through the Word. I did this the other day. Noah, Noah, he wasn’t called a builder of the ark. He was called a what? A preacher of righteousness. That is exactly right. He is more famous for the ark he built with men, but with God he was called a preacher of righteousness. That is exactly what Scripture says. Noah was a preacher, a preacher of righteousness.

David was king of Israel. He was the sweet psalmist of Israel, but he said, “I preached righteousness in the great congregation.” David called himself a preacher.

Solomon when he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes...turn over there just a minute to the book of Ecclesiastes. I want you to see this. I read it in my Sunday school class this morning, but in Ecclesiastes chapter one, chapter one what does he put first? Solomon was one of the wisest men who ever lived. Solomon was king over all of Israel, one of the greatest, richest, most powerful kings in the world. But what did he call himself first?

Verse one, Ecclesiastes one, “The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.” The first thing he said, “I am a preacher. I am a preacher.”

Jonah was sent to preach, God said, “The preaching that I will bid thee.”

John the Baptist, the Scripture says, came preaching in the wilderness of Judea.

The apostle Paul said, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard and show shall they hear with an input? No, without a preacher, with out a preacher.”

Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Now I know we are living in a day, we are living in a day...someone said not long ago, I believe it was Bishop J.C. Ryle, even in his day 100 or so years ago, “Preaching has been relegated to the scrap heap.” And people come together for social purposes. They come together for worship purposes which is fine. I am not discounting these things. Please believe me. Paul said, “God sent me not to baptize.” He wasn’t belittling Baptists, but he was putting baptism in its proper place. He said, “God didn’t send me to baptize. He sent me to preach the gospel.” That’s why God sent me to preach the gospel. He wasn’t belittling baptism. He said, “I thank God I baptized none of you but one or two or three or four.” But he said, “God sent me to preach. This is paramount, preaching the gospel.”

And here in 1 Corinthians 15 listen to what he says here. “Brethren...moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which I preached to you which also you have received and wherein you stand and by which you are saved if you keep in memory what I have preached to you, what I preached to you. For I preached to you, I delivered to unto you, first of all, that which I received.”

We don’t have an original message. We preach what Christ has taught us.

So Noah was called a preacher of righteousness. David called himself the preacher of righteousness. Solomon called himself the preacher. Jonah was sent to preach. John the Baptist came preaching. Paul said, "They can't hear without a preacher." And he said, "I preached the gospel to you to please God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

But perhaps the strongest argument, perhaps the strongest argument for the honor and the importance of preaching is given by our Lord in Luke chapter four. Our master came back to Nazareth where he was brought up. As his custom was he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and he stood up to read and he selected Isaiah chapter 61 verse one which is a messianic prophecy, a prophecy written regarding himself and his office, the Christ, the Messiah. And he said verse 18, Luke four, quoting from Isaiah 61 verse one, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel."

My friends, I give you Jesus Christ the king, sovereign, omnipotent, with all authority and all power over all the universe. God hath decreed, God hath designed that he shall be Lord, that at his name every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. I give you Jesus Christ the King, supreme, almighty, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, almighty King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That is Christ our God whom we worship and extol forever and forever. I give you Jesus Christ the priest, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, having neither beginning of days nor end of days, having neither mother nor father nor pedigree. He is a priest forever. He is our advocate. He is our mediator. He is our intercessor. Jesus Christ is our great high priest. Because of Christ and through Christ and by Christ we have access into the holy of holies, into the very presence of God before the very throne of grace that we may find mercy and grace to help in our time of need. Christ is our mediator. But I also give you Jesus Christ the preacher. That is what he says here. He says, "The Lord hath anointed me." The Lord God anointed him King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

David was but a type of Christ the King. Solomon in all of his glory and wisdom and power is but a picture of Christ the king. God anointed Jesus Christ to be a priest. Aaron is but a type of Christ and every high priest that went through the veil into the holy of holies and offered an atonement upon that golden mercy seat covering the ark and the broken law was but a picture of Christ. All of the priests with their holiness to the Lord on their foreheads and with their breastplates and with their white linen, with their washings and with their atonement and sacrifices, all of the high priests, whoever offered sacrifices, all of them put together are but pictures of Christ and even Melchizedek, even Melchizedek in his place of honor and prestige is but a picture of Christ and an unworthy picture at that.

But in his offices there is one we must not overlook. He was a preacher. That is what he said, verse one, I mean verse 18 of Luke four. He stood before that crowd of people on that sabbath morning and he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel."

Four things I want you to see in this message, the first of which is this. Our Lord did preach. Our Lord did preach. Turn to Matthew four. Our Lord Jesus Christ preached. I know today the office is looked down upon and a lot of people have caused that. A lot of people have brought shame and reproach upon the office of pastor and preacher. I regret that and I know a lot of people hold preachers in contempt and I know out at the steel mills if a fellow gets religion and maybe he reads his Bible on his lunch hour somebody calls him the preacher or the deacon and that in derision and ridicule.

Some boy has a good voice and he goes to Sunday school on Sunday and all the mommas want to make him a preacher. And I know the office has been brought to a very abusive position. I know that, but our Lord was a preacher, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It says in Matthew chapter four verse 17, "From that time Jesus Christ began to preach." From that time Jesus himself, our Lord, began to preach. And he preached always. He was always preaching. Our Lord preached from the mountains. One time they pushed the boat just a little ways from the land and he stood out there in the boat so the people couldn't crowd around him. They pushed the boat out here in the water and he stood there on the boat in the water and preached to the people on the shore. Our Lord preached in the temple. He preached on the porch. He preached in the streets. He preached in the homes.

Our Lord preached when he spoke and he preached when he was silent. Our Lord preached to the poor and he preached to the powerful. Our Lord preached to kings and he preached to Pharisees. Our Lord preached in his miracles and he even preached from that bloody tree. He was always and ever the preacher because God anointed him to preach.

Turn to Luke chapter nine. Now watch this, Luke chapter nine. And our Lord Jesus Christ sent his disciples to preach. That is what he sent them to do. That is what he sent them to do. He didn't shave their heads and put them in monasteries. No, he didn't. He didn't dress them up, them and their...and the ladies in some unusual garb, make them look like penguins and bald headed hermits and put them in monasteries and convents. He didn't do it. He didn't do it. They just dressed like everybody else and wore their hair just like everybody else and they went out and preached. They went out and preached. He didn't clothe them in long gowns, ridiculous, colorful, red and gold and silver and purple and blue gowns and teach them to say mass and speak in language that nobody can understand and swing a censer and bless the breweries. He didn't send them out to regenerate babies by sprinkling water on them. No he didn't. No he didn't. He didn't send them out to dress in some funny looking outfit and hold up crosses and march in processions and chant words that nobody could understand. No, he didn't. He didn't send them out to build schools. He didn't send them out to clean up governments. He didn't send them out to straighten out the social atmosphere of a community. He didn't send them out to entertain religionists on their road to hell. His instructions were clear. He sent them out, Cecil, to preach. His disciples he sent to preach.

Listen to him in Luke nine. He called his 12 disciples and gave them power and authority over all devils to cure diseases and he sent them to preach. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. And this power to heal, this power to heal was a sign and credentials that God had sent them. The same power he had to heal diseases and to give sight to the blind and to raise the dead God gave him credentials to prove his authority and to prove that he came from God. He gave the disciples the same credentials.

Hold that Luke nine a minute and turn to Hebrews. Let me show you that. Hebrews. I don't need these credentials. All I need is the Word of God. All preachers today don't need anything to prove that God sent them except to tell the truth about God. Preach the Bible. Preach the Word of God. That is all we need.

The New Testament, when these disciples went out, wasn't written. They didn't go out and say, "Now, turn to Luke 4:18. I'll read you my text." They didn't have a text. They took the Old Testament and showed how that Christ was the fulfillment of every prophecy and promise and picture. And everybody had every right to say, "Well, who are you? Where do you get this stuff, you know?"

And here they raised a dead man or gave sight to a blind man or like Saul of Tarsus, or Paul, Paul was sent by the fire and one of those coral snakes latched on him and bit him and he shook it off in the fire. It was a coral snake, shook it off in the fire. And they just stood there and waited on him to die in a matter of 30 seconds or 45 seconds you are dead. But he just went on doing his business eating, you know, or talking, whatever he was doing. And they were amazed. They said, "A God is among us."

He said, "No, a servant of God is among you. I have come to preach."

And they listened to him. He had credentials.

But look at Hebrews chapter two verse one. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip for if the Word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, such a great gospel which at the first began to be spoken by our Lord and was confirmed unto us by the apostles who heard him, God also, also, like he did Christ, bearing them witness that they were servants of God both with signs and wonders and different miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his will."

That is why he sent them with the power to heal. They came back saying, "Well, the demons are subject unto us."

He said, "Don't rejoice that the demons are subject to you. That is nothing, really. Rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

So look at verse two, again, of Luke nine. “He sent them to preach.” He sent them to preach and he said in verse three, “Take nothing for your journey. Don’t take staves nor scrip nor bread nor money nor two coats apiece. When you enter into a house there abide. The people will take care of you. And then depart. And whosoever will not receive you when you go out of that city just shake the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. You are my preachers. You are my ambassadors.”

The preacher is not supposed to have a big bank account. He is not supposed to have a lot of property and houses. He lives by faith. He lives on the gospel. He lives by the gospel. The people of God take care of him. They won’t take care of him, he said, “Shake the dust off your feet and go where they will take care of you, where they will hear you, where they will hear you.”

And they departed and they went through the towns doing what? Preaching the gospel, preaching the gospel. His instructions are clear.

Look at Mark chapter 16 if you will, Mark 16 in verse 15. He said unto them, our Lord had been crucified and buried and rose from the tomb. He is meeting here with his disciples before he ascended back to heaven and he said to them, “Go into all the world. Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Preach the gospel. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

It is wonderful to have the singing and have fellowship and the handshaking and welcoming and our young people have things to do and picnics and gatherings. But, brethren, let me tell you something. It all heads up in this right here, in prepared, empowered, serious, sober, scriptural preaching. Got to have it, preaching. That is what our Lord sent us to do, preach, to preach.

Somebody said, “Jesus Christ lived, the Prince of Preachers. He died and became the theme of preachers. He arose and ascended and he is the Lord of preachers. He is the Prince of Preachers. He is the theme of preachers and he is the Lord of preachers.”

Now back to our text. I don’t want to weary you. But let’s go back to the text a minute and look at something here, the second thing. He said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel. He hath anointed me to preach the gospel.”

Now, brethren, let me tell you something and I know you might think that I ride this too much. But I don’t believe that I do. I think I have got too many opponents on the other side. I think we need to be extremist on this matter because there is too much, too many powerful forces on the other side. Our Lord did not stoop to secular themes. No, he didn’t. Now he would sometimes answer the questions of the lawyers and he sometimes answered the questions of the Herodians and the Pharisees, but he soon got back to his major theme and that was the gospel.

Now let me show you that in Matthew chapter 22. And you know what I am talking about. You know what I am talking about, you know what I am talking about. I am saying this, that our politics and our social obligations are decided at Calvary. That is where they are decided, our politics and social obligations. I have made these mistakes and that is the reason I know something about it. The pulpit ought never endorse political candidates. The pulpit ought never get in political races. The pulpit ought never, never, never, the church ought never endorse any political party, never, never. You can do what the Lord allows you to do, but this pulpit has got no business playing politics in any shape, form or fashion.

Now watch in Matthew 22. This is what I am saying. Matthew 22, it says in verse 15, “The Pharisees took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians saying, “Master, we know you are true.” They will brag on you. “And we know you speak the way of God and you don’t care for any man. You don’t regard any man’s person. Tell, us what do you thin? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?”

Christ said, verse 18, he perceived their wickedness. He perceives the wickedness of Satan. Satan will sidetrack a minister if he can. He will sidetrack a minister. He will side track a church and he will do it by...he will do it in a devious manner. He will do it even with popularity and influence and power. Yes, he will. And Christ perceived their wickedness and he said, “Why do you tempt me, you hypocrites? You are tempting. That is what you are doing.” And he told them...he showed them...he said, “Show me the tribute money.” And they showed him a penny and he said, “Whose image is on there?” They said, “Caesars.” He said, “You render to Caesar the things that are Caesar and to God the things that are God.”

And you know how this conversation went on. Do you know, then someone else came. He put them to silence and the same day the Sadducees came, verse 23. They didn’t believe in the resurrection. They wanted to get him on the Armageddon and prophecy and these things, on the millennium and this sort of thing. So they asked him a question. And then another fellow came to him, verse 34. The Pharisees heard he had put the Herodians to silence and the Sadducees to silence so one of them who was a lawyer asked him, “What is the great commandment? Let’s get on the law here? Let’s get side tracked here on the law and decide which is the greatest commandment, which carries the greatest penalty, the greatest punishment? Let’s see these things?”

He answered then, and then verse 41. Listen. While the Pharisees were gathered together Jesus asked them saying, “What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?”

Our Lord always came back to his theme, the gospel. And I will tell you, our ethics, our politics, our social obligations, our principles our moral behavior is all learned at the feet of a crucified, risen Redeemer. That is where it is learned. We do not so much preach what men ought to do for God as we preach what God has done for men. That is our message.

And I will tell you this. I will tell you another thing. I talked to a preacher who had been to another conference of recent date who came to this conference. And I said, "How was the other conference?"

He said, "Too intellectual, too deep." He said, "It seems to be that they are trying to impress men with their learning, with their spiritual wisdom, with their intellectualism, with their theology."

Let me tell you something. We are theologians only as far as our theology exalts Jesus Christ. I am telling you intellectualism is not of God. It is of man's natural wisdom. And a man who stands in the pulpit and preaches to impress men is no servant of Christ. A man who stands in the pulpit preaching to impress men with his learning, with his knowledge, with his credentials, with his wisdom, is a fool. That is what he is.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 11 verse three. Our Lord Jesus Christ preached so that men...they may not believe him, but they did understand him. And that is more than you can say for today's preachers. You go out after they finish their oration and somebody turns to another one and says, "That was beautiful."

"Yeah, what did he say?"

"I don't know, but it was beautiful."

In 2 Corinthians 11 verse three Paul said, "I am afraid lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity, from the oneness that is in Christ Jesus."

There is nothing in the world simple about the gospel that is profound. There is nothing simple about God becoming a man. There is nothing simple about God dying in the flesh on the cross. There is nothing simple about the resurrection from the dead. There is nothing simple about redemption, regeneration, justification, sanctification. But it can be simply stated. Now that is all there is to it.

Turn back to the text. He said, "The Lord hath anointed me. He hath anointed me, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, it has anointed me to preach the gospel."

And do you know what that word is in Isaiah 61? If you care to, turn over to Isaiah 61. That word there in verse one of Isaiah 61 that word "gospel" in the Old Testament messianic prophecy is "good tidings, good news." That is what it says. Look at Isaiah 61:1. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings, good news." What is that good news? It is good news of an everlasting covenant.

As one preacher said during our conference, before there was a sinner there was a Savior. Before there was a sinner there was a surety. Before there was a sinner there was a Redeemer ordained, anointed, appointed by God.

“Beloved,” Paul said, “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” And this gospel we preach is the good news of everlasting mercies.

Secondly, it is the good news of incarnation. The angel said, “We bring you good tidings of great joy which shall to be all people. Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior Christ the Lord.”

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” That is good news because that is the only way God can save a sinner.

A preacher said not long ago and God help him this is error. It is error. He said, “There are thousands of ways God could have saved sinners, but he chose to do it through Christ.”

That is a lie. There is only one way that God’s justice can be satisfied, his righteousness honored and his law honored and that is for Christ to become a man and do for man what the law requires and what justice requires and satisfy the holiness of God.

If there is any other way that God could save a man other than crucifying his only begotten, well beloved Son, then God is a monster because he should have chosen another way.

You say, “You ought say that.”

It’s so. It’s so. That is a blood awful way to redeem sinners to nail your Son to a cross while people spit on him. There is no other way. If there was another way then it is dishonoring to Christ to claim that he is the only way.

And this is the good news of a perfect righteousness. Paul said in Romans five, “By the disobedience of one many were made sinners. By the obedience of Christ we were made righteous.” This gospel is the good tidings of a perfect sacrifice.

Turn to Hebrews chapter 10, a perfect sacrifice. I am talking about good news, good news. Now if salvation is partly of God and partly of me, then there is no good news because I can’t keep my end of the bargain. If salvation is partly the obedience of Christ and partly my obedience I am done in. There is no good news. But this good news is the good news of a perfect righteousness provided and imputed and imparted and a perfect sacrifice already accomplished. The debt is paid. It is finished.

Hebrews 10 verse 12. “This man, but this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever sat down on the right hand of God.” And we sat down in him and with him. “From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool for by one offering he hath, past tense, perfected forever them that are sanctified.” And God said in verse 17,

“And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission is, where forgiveness is, where pardon is there is no more offering for sin.”

And, brethren, the next line says it is a good news of a faithful high priest. “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, into the very presence of God by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which Christ consecrated, made for us through the vail, that is to say his flesh, having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near. Let us draw near.”

It is a good news of an eternal hope. “Because I live ye shall live. He hath anointed me to preach the gospel, the good news, good news.”

And I will tell you what I would love for you to do. I told my Sunday school class this morning and I wish everybody would, if you will sometime today read Ecclesiastes chapter one and chapter two in which Solomon...Solomon was so powerful, Solomon was answerable practically to nobody. He had possessions and wealth and wisdom and anything at his fingertips, anything at his disposal. And he said, “I gave myself to a lot of things. I gave myself to wisdom.” He said, “I studied all the philosophers and the intellectuals and all these folks I gave myself to knowledge and wisdom. I gave myself to these things.”

Some of you may be tempted in the same direction, but he said, “I found out when it was over it was all vanity, just vanity and vexation of Spirit.” He said, “I gave myself to pleasure. I didn’t leave off anything. I gave myself to pure pleasure. Anything I wanted I took. I gave myself to laughter and to mirth. I delved to the bottom of it and rose to the heights of it and I found out that that is vanity.” He said, “I gave myself to wine. I gave myself to drink. I gave myself to building great buildings and great vineyards and gardens and said I have servants and I gave myself to building great cities and all this sort of thing.” He said, “When I came to the end of it I found out that wisdom and wine and pleasures and laughter and mirth and great works and building is all nothing, vanity, vanity.”

And we need to learn that. We need to learn that so badly, so desperately, that this world, it promises pleasure, it promises prosperity. It promises peace. It promises...it can’t give any of it. It can...all the world can do is finally bring you down to poverty and old age and death and six feet in the ground in a fancy coffin rotting from within and put your soul in hell.

But I will tell you what is important and that is the gospel, the gospel. We come to preach the good tidings, the good news, the glad tidings of Christ and hope eternal.

All right. Look at the next line in Luke four and I will try to bring this to a close. He said, “He sent me, he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to the poor.”

And a lot of writers give several names to these folks who are recipients and hearers of the gospel. One fellow, Calvin I believe it was, called them the gentle. “He sent me to preach the gospel to the gentle.”

And it says over in Isaiah 61, “the meek.”

Someone else says “the humble.”

Someone else said “The afflicted.”

But it all comes down to one thing, one thing and Arthur Pink, I think summed it up better than anybody. He said, “The poor in Spirit are those who know they have nothing, are nothing, know nothing and deserve nothing.”

He sent me to preach the gospel to those people, the poor. People who are aware, who have been made aware of the holiness of God and their poverty, their own sinfulness before him. David said, “My sins are ever before me.”

People who know their filth and guilt and iniquity in God’s sight—I am not talking about in the sight of the world—in God’s sight. People who know that they deserve nothing from the hand of God but his condemnation and judgment, people who realize their inability, their bankruptcy spiritually, their inability to please God or honor him or keep his law in any fashion, they cry with even Paul the great apostle, “Oh wretched man that I am.”

If you are good the gospel is not for you. If you are deserving you will find no good news in the gospel. If you are keeping the law the gospel is not for you. The gospel is for the poor, the poor in Spirit.

And Mr. Spurgeon said, “The more sin you have, the more blessed the good news of a Savior, the more diseased you are the more you welcome the great physician. The poorer you are, the more certain you can be of the riches of his grace because Christ receiveth sinful men, even me with all my sin. Isn’t that good news?”

He said, “Come, for all things are ready.”

Mr. Spurgeon wrote one time, I read it years ago. It just occurred to me. He was invited, he was invited to a ladies house to have tea. She was a very poor widow and, you know, and I am glad today we have programs and social security and these things so that our older people are cared for. But back in those days 140 years ago 130 years ago a woman who lost her husband just...they had no programs to take care...she was...he told about her. He said she was a faithful member of his congregation, but very, very poor, lived on pittance. And she invited him to come to her house for tea.

Now the English, they don’t drink tea. You know, in other words if you come to my house for tea all you expect to get is a cup of tea. But over there they eat tea. They

always serve something with tea. In other words tea actually is the evening meal for most people.

One friend of mine, I believe it was Lee Ann Walmsley when she invites somebody over for tea and all she had for tea they came for supper. And they were...and you know, it was kind of kind of insulted that she didn't spread some food.

But Spurgeon was invited for tea and he was in the kitchen at his house getting read to go, talking to his wife. And he said to his wife, he said, "She is so poor I better slip something in my pocket and take along. So he slipped some cookies...Suzanne, that was his wife's name, Susannah Spurgeon had baked some cookies and cake. He just slipped them in his pocket and took them along.

When he got to the widow's house he went in and sat down and she went back and got the tea and she brought the tea in on a tray, just a pitcher and teapot and two little cups. And she went back in the kitchen. He saw there was nothing and he got out his cookies and spread them out there on the table, on the tray and she came back with her cookies. They weren't much, but she had them. And she saw those. She picked his up and dropped them in the waste can.

She said, "I invited you for tea, not to provide the tea."

He said he learned a lesson. And I am telling you this. Listen to me well, now. When our Lord says to sinners, "Come and dine," he doesn't mean for you to bring the cookies. He doesn't mean for you to bring the bread nor the meat. You come empty handed. He furnishes everything. Now don't you insult.

Spurgeon said, "I insulted that woman. No matter how poor she was I insulted her." And he said, "I was a young preacher and I learned my lesson. I will never do that again."

She threw his cookies in the waste can. "I didn't invite you..." She was highly insulted. "I didn't invite you to provide the tea. I invited you to have tea."

And my Lord doesn't invite you to bring your sordid rags, your dirty, filthy sordid rags of righteousness to his feet. He will throw you out. You come like you are. And he will not only furnish...he not only furnishes the tea, not only furnishes the meat and the bread, he furnishes the wedding garment for you to wear.

What do you furnish? The naked sinner, that's all. Empty handed.

All right. He said, "He sent me to heal the broken hearted." And I am quitting with these comments.

I have heard people say, "He died of a broken heart," not speaking of Christ, but of someone else. "So and so died with a broken heart."

Well, I know that is possible, but I am telling you this. The greatest blessing of all is someone who doesn't die with a broken heart, but who lives with a broken heart. The Scripture says, "The Lord is nigh unto them of a broken heart. The sacrifices of God are a broken heart."

Do you have a broken heart? Are you broken hearted because of your sin? Are you broken hearted because you repent that you can't repent like you ought to repent? That's right. Do you? Are you broken hearted because you don't have faith that you ought to have? Are you broken hearted because you can't keep God's law? Are you broken hearted because you don't love God with all your heart and you don't love your neighbor as yourself? Are you broken hearted because you can't pray like you ought to pray and you don't praise God like you ought to praise God and you don't worship like you ought to worship God? Are you broken hearted because you think things you shouldn't think?

Well, I don't care what breaks your heart, just so it is broken, just so it is broken. And I am telling you this. If you can find it, if you can find it in your heart to believe him and to trust him and to turn to him, he will heal the broken hearted. He will. He delights. He said, "The Lord hath anointed me to preach the good news, the glad tidings to the poor, the poorest of poor and to heal the broken hearted."

Well, I will tell you this. Before God this morning I can furnish the poor in spirit. I can furnish the poverty stricken sinner and I can sure furnish the broken heart if he can furnish the Savior and the great physician. And I am going to trust him just that way, no frills and no fancy talk. I am just going to trust him just that way.

And I believe for his glory, his eternal praise, to manifest the riches of his grace I will be one of those trophies of his grace some day that he will show off in glory and you will be, too, if you can lay hold by faith only on Jesus Christ.

*Our Father, bless the message, the Word to the hearts of these thy people. Use it for your glory to accomplish your purpose. Oh Lord, teach us to preach. Enable us to preach. Open doors for us to preach. Give our people a love for preaching and give it the place it ought to have and the place it deserves and the place our Lord gave it, the place of prominence and use if you please to for Christ's sake. Amen.*