

The Wonder in Gospel Preaching

“There is a wonder in the preaching of the Gospel. Those who have been appointed to the task of preaching know that they face an amazing dilemma. As far as they know, no one is able to hear what they say with the ears of faith. They wait on the Spirit of God as they preach to spiritually dead men and women, all the while, directing their hearers to do the impossible! This would seem a most daunting job, one fraught with assured disappointment and a sense of futility, were it not for the language of life that is built into the Gospel. For the preacher there is hope in the words employed by the Scripture. The language itself speaks to LIFE! Though no one is privy to the inward workings of the Holy Spirit, nor can anyone see a person being given life through the Word, the preacher is yet told to use language that only the spiritually living can hear. To the dead sinner the command is ‘Come to Christ’, ‘Believe on Christ’, ‘Call on the Name of the Lord’, ‘Repent’ and ‘Turn’. These are admonitions to the living. The Gospel addresses living needs, such as hunger, thirst and relief from burdens. Such terms are exclusive to the realm of the living. The dead do not know nor can they experience such things.

Sweet dilemma this ...knowing that God alone gives life, the preacher is told to speak in a manner as if everyone to whom he speaks can hear. The preacher is thus, gloriously insulated from the burden of making folks hear, which to him, is an impossibility anyway. However, at the same time he is commanded to speak to his fellow sinners as if they can respond. ‘Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ Ephesians 5:14.”

– Pastor Tim James, Sequoyah Baptist Church in Cherokee, NC