

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

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MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

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The Word

During one of my seminary classes, one of my instructors said that I was negative because I disagreed with him on whether or not preaching is the word of God. My perspective is that preaching is not the word of God. There are some good reasons for my position on this but I did not have the opportunity, at that time and place, to express the reasons for my point of view. My main perspective is that there are many different interpretations of the scriptures. If preaching is the word of God, then all contemporary preaching would be congruent in the same manner as the Old Testament prophets were harmonious with one another. They all complemented each other because all of them delivered the word of God. However, within the realm of contemporary society there are many variances of interpretation of the scriptures. Therefore, my perspective is that preaching is but one of many of the countless interpretations of the word of God.

I prefer to refer to the Bible as "The Word of God." The Bible is the foundation of our doctrine. It forms our faith and guides us in worship and righteous daily living. Whereas, some churches insist on what they perceive to be correct theological doctrine, statements of belief, and creeds, the Bible is our guiding document. We all benefit from daily reading, re-reading, and personal study of the Bible. A group study of the Bible is also very beneficial, not so that we can all agree and set an established doctrine, but so that we can learn together, learn from the perspectives and interpretations of each other, and help develop a holistic understanding of the scriptures.

When I was a teenager, my best friend's father was a Baptist minister. One day he told me that the answers to every problem that I will run across in life are addressed in the Bible. At the time, I did not fully understand what he was teaching me, but I remembered the lesson. As I matured and read more of the Bible, it gradually became clear to me that what he said was true. The problems of life repeat for the individual, churches, communities, nations and states, as well as the whole world. They repeat because the divine nature of God does not change and the sinful nature of humanity is always present. God reveals the divine self in the Bible through real human beings and we understand God through them and Jesus.

The central figure of the Bible is Jesus Christ. As opposed to establishing a creedal focus point in our lives, we can keep Jesus as the central focal point of interest in our individual lives, the life of the church, and in our theological doctrine. Human preferences and opinions differ extensively and unfortunately these differences divide people, fellowship, and the Christian faith. If we pick and choose favorite scriptures to follow, we will never agree and will remain doctrinally divided. When we come across challenging situations in life, we could speculate on what Jesus would do, but that is subject to speculation, interpretation, and personal bias. One thing that we can agree on, if we are indeed truly willing to surrender our selfish desires and follow Christ, is what Jesus said and what Jesus did. If we as individuals focused on what Jesus said and did, we would surrender selfish wants and desires and live our lives modeling his life and lessons. Being focused on Jesus, we love everyone, forgive everyone, and teach everyone to obey him and follow him. If we as the united body of Christ in the holistic church focused on what Jesus said and did, we would all be united together as one body as one single denomination instead of being splintered off into so many different factions. We can learn unity from the Bible if we follow this basic principal of pin pointed theological doctrine that is focused on the life of Jesus and the word of Jesus.

Thank you,
George