

# What we want from preaching

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## Introduction

*“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)*

*“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” (Luke 6:43-45)*

*‘Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.’ (James 3:1)*

- The Power of the Righteous Tongue (v3-12)
- The Power of the Righteous Life (v13-18)

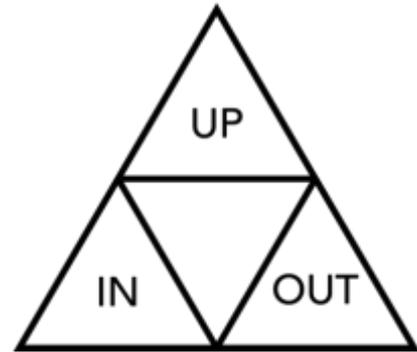
*‘Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom... ‘The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.’ (v13, 17-18)*

*‘Our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord... And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere.’ (1 Thess 1:5-8)*

## Up: Our relationship with God

As preachers we need to maintain a vibrant spiritual relationship. We will be unable to lead people into a deep friendship with God, if we are not experiencing that ourselves.

- Does your experience of preaching tend to affect you positively or negatively?
- How is your Bible reading?
- How is your prayer life?
- How is your worship life?
- How are you experiencing God speaking to you *for* you?



## In: Our relationship with ourself

Question for Reflection: What are your biggest emotional struggles or temptations when it comes to preaching?

Before the sermon

During the sermon

'If you have a hard gig, quiet, a death, a struggle, whatever, you can only be mad and frustrated and gutted until 11am the next day. Then you must draw a line under it and forget about it. As going into the next gig thinking you are [dreadful!] will mean you will die. Equally, if you nail it, slam it, destroy it, whatever, you can only be smug about it until 11am the next day (in the past, I have set an alarm so I could get up and gloat for an extra half hour) as if you go into the next gig thinking you are God's gift to comedy, you will die. That is Millican's Law and it totally works.' (Sarah Millican, *The Comedian's Comedian Podcast*)

## Out: Our relationship with others

There are four types of feedback you may get following a sermon, each of which can bring different personal and emotional challenges.

1. Positive Feedback

Say, "Thank you. Was there something particular that connected with you?"

2. Negative Feedback

Learn to differentiate between feedback that is **critical** and feedback that is **constructive**.

3. Odd Feedback

4. No Feedback

The most helpful feedback is often that which we proactively seek out from people who know us, who we trust to be honest, who we trust to tell us the truth, but who also understand the vulnerability of preaching.

## Workshop

Spend a few minutes prayerfully reading through the prompts below, and asking God the following questions:

- Which of these areas do I need to give attention to right now?
- What would you like me to do about it?

It may be that a particular area stands out, or maybe God will prompt you about something we haven't talked about through the day.

### Up: Our Relationship with God

- Does preaching affect your spiritual life positively or negatively?
- How is your Bible reading?
- How is your prayer life?
- How is your worship life?
- How are you hearing God speak *to you for you*?

### In: Our Relationship with ourself

- What are your main temptations related to preaching?
- Where do you need to be firmer with yourself?
- Where do you need to be kinder with yourself?
- What are your struggles before a sermon?
- What are your struggles during a sermon?
- What are your struggles after a sermon?

### Out: Our Relationship with Others

- Do you find it easy or hard to receive feedback?
- Do you fear or invite feedback?
- Do you find it easy to seek help from others?
- Who do you ask for feedback, or go to when you feel vulnerable?