



"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

—Winston S. Churchill

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This Gospel of the Kingdom Shall Be Preached

During the last few decades of the church of [God](#), one of the scriptures most quoted or referred to has been [Matthew 24:14](#): "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all [the world](#) as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." Consider what this prophecy does not say. [Jesus Christ](#) does not mention *who* will have done this preaching. He does not say whether it will be done by one individual, two individuals, one organization, seven organizations, or by an angel. He just says it will be done.

[Matthew 24:14](#) also does not tell us the *time* involved in preaching [the gospel](#), except to say that it happens before the end. It does not indicate whether it is preached over the course of several decades, whether it takes 3½ years, or whether there is a singular announcement that all the world hears at the same time.

This verse also says nothing about *how* this preaching will take place. There is no mention of television stations, radio programs, websites, Internet TV, or any other technology. The verse simply says that it will be done. Only God knows the rest.

We know that when Jesus was on earth, He preached this gospel of the Kingdom. However, something essential happened *before* He began preaching the gospel and performing the various signs that showed He was from God. [John 10:36-38](#) shows that Jesus was *sanctified* before He was sent into the world. In other words, He was set apart in order to do *all* that He did—including the preaching of the gospel.

The gospel accounts overflow with statements that show that all of His words and actions had their source in the Father (see Luke 18; [John 5:19](#), 30, 36-37; 8:18, 28, 38; 12:49). His preaching of the gospel is no exception. The content of His preaching, and the power to do so, both came from the Father. The preceding verses set the stage for understanding Jesus Christ's preaching. When Jesus went about preaching the *gospel*, the only reason it had any effect is because He had been *sanctified* to do it.

What this means is that regardless of what human instrument God uses, or what method He employs, the reality is that it is the *Father* who preaches the gospel. If He is not the source of everything in the effort—the way He was for Jesus—then it is a work of man and not of God, and "the weary workers will toil in vain" (see [Psalm 127:1](#)).

The bottom line is that the Gospel is not preached through human effort or human will. It is preached through *submission to God's leadership*. If there is not submission to God, the works that He desires will not be produced. If men go outside the will of God, however well-intentioned they may be, their words—to borrow from Shakespeare—may as well be the proverbial "tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Aiden W. Tozer remarks in his book *Of God and Man*: "The popular notion that the first obligation of the church is to spread the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth is *false*. Her first obligation is to be *spiritually worthy* to spread it" (emphasis ours). We are assured in [Matthew 24:14](#) that the gospel of the Kingdom will be preached. God will see it done through whatever means and agency and in whatever time He has already ordained. The question for us, then, is whether we will be in *alignment* with Him and *usable* by Him, so that we can be *directed* by Him as He completes His work. Yet, this is only possible if we let Him lead, rather than assuming we already know what He is doing.

Since it is God who does all these things, God is also the one who determines the results of His various works. For 1900 years, it was not His priority that the gospel be preached in a major way. We know that because it was not done. During the last century, a major witness *was* made because God had ordained that it be so. God controls the results and the effects of His preaching. His word will accomplish what He pleases ([Isaiah 55:11](#)). Thus, when we look out today at the various efforts to preach the gospel, and we do not see the same results, it is because something else is God's priority.

Is it possible that the church of God is not yet "spiritually worthy" to be involved in making a witness to the world? Could it be that, in its present spiritual condition, the church would end up making a witness *against* God, rather than for Him? And if a witness is made against *God*, does it even matter if the true gospel is spoken?

In his autobiography, Herbert Armstrong writes about God having to humble him before He could use him. Humility is a function of not only being able to see God's hand, but also then submitting and giving deference to the Creator who is so far superior to His creation. Yet today, we do not see humility but *competition* between those who claim to be Herbert Armstrong's "successor." Why? Their focus is on something other than God. Is God divided? Does He war against Himself? Can the church make a faithful and true witness if it is focused on things other than God?

When God sanctifies one servant, it will not interfere with the sanctification that He gives to another servant. Conflict arises from people taking on responsibilities that God has not given them—and from pride. John the Baptist recognized that his sanctification did not supercede Jesus Christ's authority, so he told his followers, "He must increase, but I must decrease" ([John 3:30](#)). There was no conflict. On the other hand, the twelve disciples argued among themselves about who would be greatest. There was conflict. Not until the disciples had matured did they finally get it. When they had learned to fear God, then they were each humble and self-controlled enough to recognize the limits of what God had given each of them to do, and not to encroach into the territory of another ([II Corinthians 10:13-16](#)).

We cannot insinuate ourselves into God's plans. God already knows the what, how, when, and who of doing His work. The task for us is to be close enough to God that we recognize His guidance of our lives and to be practiced in submitting to it. When the time comes for [Matthew 24:14](#) to be fulfilled, it will be, according to what God has ordained. It is up to God.

Whether or not we play a part in the fulfillment of that prophecy, our focus is to be on the sanctification that God has already given us. Through the process of becoming holy and going on to perfection, we become "spiritually worthy," able to be used by God in whatever capacity *He* ordains—large or small. Our goal is not to fulfill [Matthew 24:14](#), but to get to the place where we, like Jesus, "*always* do the will of [our] Father."

God is doing far more than just making announcements—He is creating us in His image, which requires a lifetime of submission and a level of focus and energy far beyond simply preaching to the unconverted world. *We*, individually, are the work of God.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[What Is the Work of God Now? \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The preaching the gospel to the world, held by some to be the only identifying mark of the church, is at best the beginning of a long, complex process of creating disciples and godly offspring through steady feeding and encouragement to overcome (feeding the flock). God, as a responsible parent, is not one-dimensional in assigning responsibilities to His children, but frequently shifts gears, changing circumstances, giving His begotten children a well-rounded education. God - not Satan or an incompetent ministry - engineered the massive scattering of the church of God to move it away from pernicious and fatal Laodiceanism. We need to adjust to the new situation, realizing that God has engineered these events with the real work of God in mind: making man in His image and reproducing Himself.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Who Is Doing the Work of God?](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

What is more important: preaching the gospel to the world or feeding the flock? John Ritenbaugh gives reasons why we should at this time be concentrating on reversing the church's serious spiritual decline before we presume to go to the world.

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