

## Street Preaching

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Street Preaching: Does the thought of street preaching send a cold sweat through you? I'll have to admit that I've struggled with it many a time- in fact I'm nervous every time I prepare to do it, but that's ok, Jeremiah and others had that same struggle- it's overcome by faith and by the Holy Spirit. I was involved in one on one witnessing on the streets for close to a year before I got up the courage to preach on an amplifier. I actually was mentoring my friend Ben- we were witnessing as a pair to people one on one in the malls or on the streets while Gary or Dan preached on the amp. about 4 years ago. I had this mental block- a faith issue, that I could never do street preaching- that I just wasn't wired that way that I was terrified of speaking before crowds. The class in school I dreaded most was speech class. One day to my shock, Ben, the very guy I was mentoring in evangelism, took the microphone from Gary and began to preach. That's all the motivation I needed- the Spirit reminded me that it didn't have to do with my ability. "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord." "I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (1 Cor 2:3-5) Since then I've preached over a hundred times on the amp and bought my own. The first time I got on, my knees were shaking and I only spoke for about 45 seconds and then handed the microphone back to Dan- I was soooo excited! That night I couldn't sleep- there was a running conversation between the Lord and I about how to prepare for the next weekend and sermons were beginning to form in my mind, scriptures came to mind, and His message through me was born- indeed, I couldn't hold it in any longer.

I felt led to give you some pointers on street preaching because 2 people have been talking to me about doing it...

Here are a couple of pointers for everyone who has been moved by the Spirit to preach on the streets but hasn't yet done it...

1. It helps to observe others doing it- I recommend Ray Comfort's DVDs on street preaching as a starter. Also, it helps to see someone else do it live who has experience, to feel the dynamics of it and be prepared for it.
2. When you're ready, bathe yourself in prayer- your own prayer and others.
3. Let someone else start, then you join in after- as you see the Spirit moving through them, it builds confidence.
4. Start small- a short message in an area that you feel comfortable is all that is needed. You don't have to start by preaching to thousands at a major event such as the Indy 500. Start on a corner somewhere and don't be concerned that there are only a few people walking by. Be geared toward a short message- maybe even share your testimony to start out with, or even read a gospel tract- anything to take that 1st step of faith.
5. Be prepared for spiritual battle. The minute you begin contemplating and deciding to preach, Satan and his minion will be flooding you with lies about how foolish it is, how ineffective it is, how unqualified you are, etc.
6. In your daily devotional time, keep a few extra sheets with you that relate to street preaching- maybe one labelled "Messages"- as you come across passages of scripture that the Lord says to your heart, "Hey, why not preach on this?", then you can write down the reference and the thoughts the Lord has given you. Another sheet might be for instructions the Lord gives you- as you read about Jesus, the Apostles and the Prophets preaching out on the streets, you will gain insight into things the Lord wants to teach you- be prepared to write these down, meditate on them and chew on them. Let me give you a few passages to chew on right now...

*Jeremiah 20:7ff*

"O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; everyone mocks me. For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, 'violence and plunder!' Because the word of the Lord was made to me a reproach and a derision daily. Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.' But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not. For I heard many mocking: 'Fear on every side!' 'Report,' they say, 'and we will report it!' All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying, 'Perhaps he can be induced; then we will prevail against him, and we will take our revenge on him.' But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper...Sing to the Lord! Praise the Lord!..."

OK- so I didn't exactly pick a passage that would be a good sales passage to recruit street preachers. I'd rather not. I'd rather you see the harsh realities of street preaching from the Word, and let God recruit you. After all, who can resist His will? If you're preaching a message that is worth it's salt, that convicts of sin and shows people the righteous standards of God and the judgment to come, that they may thirst for the righteousness that only comes from repentance and faith in Christ, by word, you will be sworn at, mocked and blasphemies will fly through the air. People may approach you and yell in your face. Ray Comfort says there's nothing better than a good heckler- he/she will draw a crowd. The worst thing for a street preacher is apathy. There's nothing worse than a night where people just walk by casually and aren't affected and ignore the message. I'm thankful that was a rare occurrence. We have the message of light. Darkness has to either embrace it or flee, and in fleeing, there will be some backlash- that's an indicator of conviction.

When we're sharing the gospel with people one on one, there is very little persecution in comparison to street preaching. But even in street preaching today in America, the persecution is so mild compared to what happened to the apostles and prophets. If God has called you, He will equip you to handle the shouts, screams, jeers, swearing- you'll be surprised at the power and anointing of the Spirit as He works so powerfully through you.

Here's another passage to chew on where Paul is preaching at Corinth...

"Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.' Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.' And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." (*Acts 18:5-18*)

Here's a couple thoughts from Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers, on Street Preaching...

"One of the earliest things a minister should do when he leaves college and settles in a country town or village is to begin open-air speaking...No sort of defense is needed for preaching out of doors, but it would need very potent arguments to prove that a man had done his duty who has never preached beyond the walls of his meeting place." (p. 28, Spurgeon Gold, Compiled by Ray Comfort).

I have a daydream- pastors and preachers across this land having the courage to once or twice a quarter get out of the church and preach on the streets! Just think how many street preachers we would have if that happened!

p. 37, this one is convicting to me: "You that preach Christ in the streets, go on preaching Him. I saw a man preaching the other day with no creature but one dog to listen to him, and I really thought that he might as well have gone home. But I met with a story yesterday, which I know to be true, and it showed me that I was making a mistake. There was a woman who for years had been in such dreadful despair that she would not even hear the gospel. She came to be very ill, and she said to one that called upon her, 'You sent a man to preach under my

window three months ago, and I got a blessing.' 'No,' the friend said, 'I never sent anybody to preach under your window.' 'Oh,' she said, "I think you did, for he came and preached, and my maid said that there was nobody listening to him. I did not want to hear him; and as he made so much noise, my maid shut the window, and I lay down in bed; but the man shouted so that I was obliged to hear him; and I thank God I did, for I heard the gospel, and I found Christ. Did you not send him?' 'No,' said the good man, 'I did not.' 'Well,' she said, 'then God did. There was nobody in the street listening to him; but I heard the gospel, and I got out of my despair, and I found the Savior, and I am prepared to die.' Fire away, brethren! You do not know where your shot will strike, but 'there's a billet for every bullet.'"