TEN MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

MARK 1: EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING

Expositional preaching is *preaching that takes for the main point of the sermon whatever is the main point of the **text** of Scripture and applies that point to life today*. Expositional preaching **exposes** the meaning of Scripture and brings it to bear on our lives. This is the single most important evidence of a church's health. All the other marks of health must be continually reshaped, refreshed and refocused by the **preaching** of the Word of God.

1. WHY IS EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING SO VITAL?

God's Word is Formative
This is an **authority** question. We believe God has spoken and that His Word was written down for us to understand… and obey. This Bible we hold is correct and it corrects us. The Bible was not shaped by the church, rather it serves to shape the Church.

> *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness… (2Tim 3:16)*

God's Word Brings Life
From crushing the serpent's head, to giving Abraham descendants, to sending the 10 commandments, to granting a "word from the Lord" to the prophets, right up to Jesus Himself, God has been bringing **life** to His people through His Word. Today, God saves people through His Word: "**Faith** comes through hearing."

> *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:14-17)*

God's Word Sanctifies
Jesus prayed that His Father would sanctify us: "Sanctify them in the truth. Your Word is truth!" (Jn 17:17). True spirituality consists in hearing, believing and obeying God's Word. That is why God's Word is the source of the church's life and health. (Psalm 19:7-11)

> *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.*
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> *With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!*
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> *I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:9-11)*

2. WHAT IS THE PRIMARY JOB OF A PREACHER?

Simply put, the job of the pastors of the church is to ensure the integrity of the pulpit by maintaining a commitment to expository preaching. This means the preachers in the church must be allowed to **study** the Bible in order to preach it with freshness and authority every **week**.

> *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (2 Timothy 3:16-4:2)*

3. HOW ELSE SHOULD GOD'S WORD BE USED THROUGHOUT CHURCH SERVICES?

Every element of the church's gathering should be **filled** with God's Word.

> *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Col 3:16-17)*

Practically, there are five main ways that we incorporate God's Word into our **services**. We are to:

Read the Bible	*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. (1 Tim 4:13)*
Preach the Bible	*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (2 Tim 4:2)*
Pray the Bible	*I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling. (1 Tim 2:8)*
Sing the Bible	*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Col 3:16)*
'**See'** the Bible in the 'visible words' of baptism and the Lord's Supper	*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt 28:19)* *The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Cor 11:23b-26)*

4. WHAT SHOULD YOUR RESPONSE BE TO EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING?

Every church member is responsible for ensuring that the teaching in his or her church is **faithful** to God's Word.

> *The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. (Acts 17:10-11)*

Every church member should come to church **ready** and eager to hear from God

> *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. (Psalm 119:18)*

Every church member should learn to **speak** the Word to others in order to help them grow to maturity in Christ.

> *I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. (Romans 15:14)*