

Churches where the sermons produce results

By Bob Young

Note: Since God's Word is our guide, the content of the sermon is important. In other writings, I have addressed the importance of focusing sermons on specific goals and applications. I have shared suggestions for developing and preaching powerful sermons. This article is a reminder that the dynamic of the local church is a factor in Bible application. Without application, the sermon becomes irrelevant—regardless of its content.

Some preachers always preach doctrine. Their continual focus is on a limited set of basic Bible truths, repeated in various ways. Other preachers seldom mention basic doctrinal truths. Both options have their critics. Both approaches struggle with the same challenge—the people hearing the message are not responding with changed lives.

All of us need a reminder from time to time! Listeners must be taught how to go beyond the preached message and apply the Word of God in daily living. How can the local church help listeners apply the teaching of the sermons?

Effective churches know how to go beyond the sermons. They know how to help people apply God's Word throughout the week. They have supportive structures in place that give listeners multiplied opportunities to interact with others and to remember and apply biblical truths and lessons. Some of the most effective churches coordinate Bible classes, small groups, or devotional times with the sermons. The goal is to structure multiple opportunities to explore applications of the sermon. When church leaders are diligent in insisting on the application of the proclaimed word, such leaders are doing their job as described in Eph. 4:11-12, preparing God's people for the work of ministry.

Church leaders, how do you help church members walk the path from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity? How do you help members live daily as disciples, growing into disciples that make other disciples? Two principles are essential – help members define specific applications, show that the applications are possible and expected with carefully defined accountability structures.