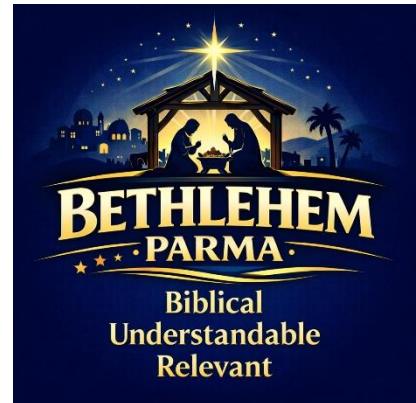


## **Study: Improving Our Teaching / Preaching / Listening**

### **Biblical – Understandable – Relevant**

**What am I hoping to accomplish in this class? I want us to:**

1. Understand the words – Biblical, Understandable, and Relevant!
2. See how they are true of teaching / preaching in the Bible!
3. Listen, as a student / hearer, for those realities!
4. Incorporate those realities when we are the teacher / preacher!



**What percentage of people who attend an LCMS church also attend a class?**

- Based on a Google search: Somewhere between **8%** and **40%**.
- Based on the first three weeks of November at Bethlehem: **72%**

**What do these key words mean?**

- **Biblical** – Our content <sup>♦</sup>is contained in the Bible or <sup>♦</sup>relates to the Bible.
- **Understandable** – The students / hearers get, grasp, comprehend what is being taught.
- **Relevant** – To the students / hearers, it is pertinent, appropriate, useful.
  - **Pertinent** – directly related to and important for the matter being considered
  - **Appropriate** – suitable, fitting, or right for a particular situation, purpose, or context.
  - **Useful** – able to help, serve a purpose, or produce a practical benefit.

**How did Jesus teach?**

- Jesus said what not to do (*listen to Me or you will lose your reward*): **Matthew 6:1** “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.<sup>2</sup> So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.”
- Jesus said what they should do to gain God's reward: <sup>3</sup> “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing [that is, don't draw attention to yourself when giving],<sup>4</sup> so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”
- Jesus' teaching was **Biblical**, **easy to understand**, and **useful** – since it had direct and immediate application in their lives!

**What are other examples of teaching / preaching being useful for the students / hearers?**

1. Teaching that leads to repentance and changed behavior:
  - a. **Jonah 3:4–10 – Jonah in Nineveh**
    - i. Jonah's preaching led the whole city to repent.
    - ii. Result: people fasted, turned from violence, and God relented from judgment.
    - iii. Usefulness: moral and spiritual transformation.

**b. Nehemiah 8:1–12 – Ezra read and explained the Law**

- i. The Levites “gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading” (v. 8).
- ii. The people wept, then rejoiced and obeyed.
- iii. Usefulness: understanding + obedience.

**2. Teaching that brought faith and salvation:**

**a. Acts 2:14–41 – Peter on Pentecost**

- i. Peter explained Scripture and proclaimed Christ.
- ii. The hearers were “cut to the heart” and asked what to do.
- iii. About 3,000 were baptized.
- iv. Usefulness: led directly to repentance, baptism, and new life.

**b. Acts 8:30–35 – Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch**

- i. Philip explained Isaiah and preached Jesus.
- ii. The eunuch believed and was baptized.
- iii. Usefulness: clarified Scripture and led to faith.

**3. Teaching that builds understanding and maturity:**

**a. Matthew 13:51–52 – Jesus explains his parables**

- i. Jesus asked, “Have you understood all these things?”
- ii. Understanding is the goal, not mystery for its own sake.
- iii. Usefulness: spiritual insight.

**b. Acts 18:24–28 – Apollos was instructed by Priscilla and Aquila**

- i. Apollos was already eloquent, but his teaching was incomplete.
- ii. After instruction, he powerfully refuted opponents and helped believers.
- iii. Usefulness: correction and strengthening of ministry.

**4. Teaching that encourages and strengthens believers:**

**a. Acts 15:30–32 – Judas and Silas**

- i. They exhorted and strengthened the believers “with many words.”
- ii. Plainly described as encouragement.
- iii. Usefulness: consolation and stability.

**b. 1 Thessalonians 2:13**

- i. Paul thanked God that the word was received “not as a human word, but as God’s word,” and that it was “at work in you believers.”
- ii. Usefulness: ongoing spiritual effect.

**5. Scripture reflects on its own usefulness:**

**a. Deuteronomy 32:46–47**

- i. “These are not empty words for you, but your very life.”
- ii. Usefulness: life-giving instruction.

**b. 2 Timothy 3:16–17**

- i. Scripture is useful for teaching, correction, training, and equipping.
- ii. Usefulness: prepares people for faithful living.

**Big picture takeaway:** In the Bible, preaching and teaching are considered useful when they:

- Help people understand God's will.
- Lead to repentance or faith.
- Strengthen and equip believers.
- Produce obedience and transformed lives.

In other words, biblical teaching / preaching is measured by whether it does something good in the hearers.

**These are my general thoughts and prayers when preparing for my teaching and preaching:**

- I try to choose a text or topic that is **relevant** (pertinent, appropriate, useful) to my students / hearers.
- I try to follow this passage: [NAS Ezra 7:10](#) “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.”
- Then, as I'm preparing, I'm asking myself the following questions:
  1. What is the **meaning** of the text or topic?
  2. How does the text or topic **apply to my life?**
  3. How can I best explain the text or topic, so everyone is able to rightly **understand it?**
  4. How can I best help my students / hearers to **see the usefulness** of what I am teaching or preaching, and encourage them to apply the text or topic in their lives?

Keep in mind that relevance makes application possible and ***application is critical***:

- Which ones are wise? [Matthew 7:24-25](#) “...everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.”
- Who are the mature? [Hebrews 5:14](#) “...solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” // Practice is application!
- Who are not deceived? [James 1:22](#) “...prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” // The doers are not deceived! So, ***application is critical!***

Why have I shared the contents above? So that we as teachers / preachers and students / hearers may, by the Holy Spirit, continue to grow in our understanding and application of God's word in our lives!