

# THE PERFECT SERMON

A photograph of a church sanctuary with rows of wooden pews. In the foreground, a wooden pulpit is centered. On the pulpit, there is a white rectangular card with a large, dark question mark. A microphone stand is positioned behind the card. The background shows the church interior with a red carpeted aisle and a wooden door at the far end.



## WHAT IS THE PERFECT SERMON?

- It most certainly depends on who you ask! The Pharisees in the time of Jesus had their own notions of a perfect sermon. The Greek philosophers in Athens would have preferred an entirely different sermon – both in content and rhetorical style.
- Today, you might ask the same question and get a completely different answer from a hypocrite, or an impatient toddler, or someone who wants his "ears tickled," or a legalist, a traditionalist, a contrarian, or an innovator. Young vs. old, mainstream vs. fringe, ecumenical vs. sectarian.





**IT REALLY JUST COMES  
DOWN TO WHO I AM  
TRYING TO PLEASE**

Galatians 1:6-10

A photograph of a church sanctuary with wooden pews and a central aisle. A large, dark question mark is painted on the floor in the center of the aisle. The text is overlaid on the image.

# **SPEAKING OF TRYING TO PLEASE EVERYBODY...**

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12



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- "Not only the gospel of God but also our own lives" (1 Thess. 2:7ff) – The perfect sermon is backed up by a good example.
- "Preach the word, in season and out" (2 Tim. 4:2) – Preach it when it's needed, not when it's convenient. Also see Eph. 4:29.
- "Pay close attention to yourself and your teaching" (1 Tim. 4:16) – It will come as a result of good study and preparation. (Remember: salvation is on the line!)
- Avoid "resting on the wisdom of men" and "superiority of speech" (1 Cor. 2:1-5) – The perfect sermon rests on Jesus Christ, Who is enough!
- Even deception and delusion can sometimes sound like "persuasive arguments" (Col. 2:1-8) – It is a massive responsibility to be gifted with a talent for rhetoric.
- "Simplicity and purity" matter more than skillful speech (2 Cor. 11:1-15).



In the end, I don't want to pretend like presentation style, illustrations, mannerisms, etc., don't matter at all. In fact, they matter a great deal because they are all a reflection of the language and customs of our own age. But all of those are secondary, even a means to an end, because every sermon, in any age, in front of any audience, **EVER**, still has to have one thing that ties it back to the truth of the gospel – **JESUS CHRIST**, and **HIM** crucified.





**HAVE YOU PREACHED A  
PERFECT SERMON  
LATELY?**

# THE PERFECT SERMON... EVERY DAY

- BACK UP TRUTH WITH A CONSISTENT EXAMPLE (1 Thess. 2:7ff)
- SPEAK TRUTH WHEN IT'S NEEDED, NOT JUST CONVENIENT (2 Tim. 4:2, Eph. 4:29)
- CAREFUL STUDY AND APPLICATION (1 Tim. 4:16)
- JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SACRIFICE ARE ENOUGH (1 Cor. 2:1-5)
- DON'T BE PERSUADED BY PERSUASIVE LIES (Col. 2:1-8)
- SIMPLICITY AND PURITY OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST MATTERS ABOVE ALL ELSE (2 Cor. 11:1-15)