

Engage360 Episode 156 | The Power of Preaching in Discipleship, Culture, and Community

Rev. David Ward

[00:00:00] **Don Payne:** Hello again, friends. Welcome back to Engage 360 Denver Seminaries podcast. My name is Don Payne. I'm one of your hosts and we're really glad you could join us for today's conversation. Denver Seminary has a long history of commitment to compelling biblical preaching. That commitment goes back as far as the late 1970s and the influence of our third president, Dr. Hadden Robinson, who authored one of the all time classic textbooks on the subject of preaching, aptly titled Biblical Preaching. And that text is still in use today. So that commitment continues through with a fully endowed faculty chair in preaching, which bears Hadden Robinson's name, and whether or not you are a preacher, if you are involved in church, you probably care a lot about preaching, even if you're primarily on the receiving end of it. I've told many of my students over the years that if they intend to be preachers, they're very wise to get input about preaching from those who have to endure preaching, even if they've never preached, because they have a lot of valuable insights into the task. So we wanna explore, that topic a bit further today, and we're grateful and to honored last year to have received from the Eli Lilly Endowment a very generous grant as part of their compelling preaching initiative. Reverend David Ward is the director of that Compelling Preaching Initiative grant for us here at Denver Seminary, and we're glad to welcome him back for another conversation on preaching. Dave, good to see you as always.

[00:01:50] **Dave Ward:** Dr. Payne pleasure to be here.

[00:01:52] **Don Payne:** So the Ministry of Proclamation. That's always been at the heart of gospel ministry because the New Testament Greek word for preaching means to proclaim, kerygma. So it's tied to the announcement of the gospel, how. Do you think our understanding of preaching has shifted or evolved over time for good or ill? How has it shifted?

[00:02:20] **Dave Ward:** Well, early on, I think the use of that Greek word alluded to the, proclamation of Christ and the gospel. Right. And it to be distinguished from esco. The teaching, with preaching has an element of proclamation to it, and. I think as the church aged and grew it, it came to encompass that. But also more than that is the teaching, preaching proclamation of all God's word and how Christ has fulfilled all of it. the old covenant, how that's fulfilled in Christ and therefore we, it's still God's inspired word. Still, useful, practical, helpful. Still God's word. What do we do with it? Well, we understand that now is to be fulfilled in Christ. So we preach all of God's word, old Testament, new Testament with the understanding that we're, proclaiming the hope of the gospel, we're proclaiming our Lord and Savior, and we're calling for a response, which is maybe how preaching is, sometimes distinguished from simply teaching, which is, often to inform, to educate and preaching is that, but also to. Proclaim and to, exhort.

[00:03:29] **Don Payne:** Yeah. Well, theologically, that makes a lot of sense to me because when we think about the proclamation of the word, we're talking both about the proclamation of the written word and the proclamation of the eternal incarnate word, which. Of course is, one of the primary ways that the concept of word of God is actually used in scripture is to refer to Jesus. So, to proclaim the word is both. We can't really proclaim, the word of God Jesus, without proclaiming that through the written word in scripture. it is all proclamation now in over the last few decades. There seems to have been a lot of chatter or a lot of debate about whether preaching is really essential, whether it's really all that effective. Why? Why do you think it is still so important? I.

[00:04:16] **Dave Ward:** great question. Two reasons. One, I think preaching the Bible is the single best way for the pastor or the leader to communicate the reality of God's kingdom for his or her hearers. we're, constantly bombarded by the voices of the world, the agendas of the world. not just on our, radios and TVs anymore, but in our phones, on our internet, every, the values of the world are constantly clamoring to keep us away from the kingdom of God and, keep us thinking wrongly about Jesus and our lives and our identity in Him. And so preaching is the single best way for the, pastor, the teacher, to hold out the kingdom of God, the realities of the kingdom, the hope of Christ before people, and. In a way that they'll receive that. they stop what they're doing. They stop attending to other distractions and busyness and commitments so they can sit and listen to God's word preached. And then the second thing I would say about that is that it's still the primary mechanism preaching is by which a pastor or leader can shape the mission, vision, and values of a church or ministry or an organization. You can, get up and, say, look, this is who we are, this is what we're about. Other churches may do it this way, but this is what God's called us to do, what God's called, who God has called us to be. And the, that's a great privilege and a great responsibility to be able to do that, for that organization.

[00:05:45] **Don Payne:** Well, you know what your comments make me think of Dave is that, flying in the face of a very common cultural sentiment that the truth is all already kind of within us and somebody just needs to bring that truth out of us. The ministry of preaching, at least the way I'm hearing you describe it, implies that the truth is not already in us and needs to be brought out. The truth has to come to us, ex from the outside, and preaching is a way of benchmarking our lives. Kind of giving us a reset point. that is that if I'm left to just what is already inside me, I'm gonna get lost in the vortex of my own fallenness is the preaching benchmarks our lives, I mean, is that a fair way to put it

[00:06:26] **Dave Ward:** Yes. and to your point, the, truth is not even in the preacher. The truth is in the word of God. That, that the, preacher is, tasked with, communicating through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the power of the Spirit. and for the people of God and, others who are not yet part of the people of God who need to hear the truth just as well.

[00:06:45] **Don Payne:** a lot of conversation and teaching about preaching focuses on. Methodologies, ways of preaching. And recently I listened to a podcast from a pastor who, who had pastored in two very different communities within the same large metro area . And he reflected on how his preaching style had to shift somewhat dramatically from a more ex style in one setting to a more dialogical style in the other setting because the audiences and the contexts were so different. Which makes me wonder what really is at the core of preaching that makes preaching, preaching and not something else. What are, the non-negotiables?

[00:07:32] **Dave Ward:** Well, first of all, lemme say I love the, that, that preacher's willingness to adapt to his audience,

[00:07:37] **Don Payne:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:07:38] **Dave Ward:** that if he's willing to change the way he preaches so that his audience will hear. But that, shows love for those people. And, and that's wonderful and, glorify God. We can go back and forth on what's the overlap between. Teaching and preaching. and I, don't know that we need to be overly dogmatic about it. I don't know that's that useful. when I was in college, I attended a church with a really gifted Bible teacher and I was, very edified by his teaching for four years of college. I didn't, wanna miss. but he, seems like his, his, Teaching was Bible teaching and the Lord

used it, but it wasn't very exclamatory. It wasn't very, dogmatic, the pound, the pulpit point, the finger kind of thing. But God used it, and shaped that church's, values and, understanding of their mission. JI Packer said that preaching is the event of God himself bringing to an audience a bible-based, Christ related life, impacting message of instruction and direction through the words of the preacher, his spokesperson. And I think Packer nails it and, gives some of the non-negotiables in his definition what preaching is. He said it's, it's Bible-based. It's Christ related, , it's life impacting of instruction and direction. And so whether you're, whatever your style is, if you're preaching topically, you're preaching, expositively, you're doing more of a dialogical approach, kind of preaching, what I've heard it called. I think all those things can, those elements can be in play and, God can use all of it. Methodology is not unimportant. I'm teaching a methodology right now in expository preaching, but, but it's more than just methodology. It, really is. What is the Lord doing in the preacher? What is the Lord saying through his word? What does the Lord want to do in the hearers of this message on this day?

[00:09:32] **Don Payne:** Yeah. So what is it do you think that makes preaching compelling? I'm curious about that word to kind of dig into that word. what, ought to make preaching compelling or the nature of the compelling part about

[00:09:46] **Dave Ward:** I, i. think the first thing we have to say is, preachers who are themselves I submitted to God's word and filled with God's spirit. Just, Hey, this is what it means to walk closely with Christ. This is what it means to shepherd God's people in a loving, compassionate, but directive way. This is what it means to think deeply about the human condition and speak to that from God's word, speak. Tell people about themselves through God's word. I. In a way that they can listen, understand, and apply it. one of my e experiences about compelling preaching is something I've kinda learned over the years that a congregation that feels pastored by their pastor or feels shepherded, well by their pastor, will rate that pastor's preaching higher than an outsider would. That. and I think that's been true of every state I've ever been in. and, every time I see someone who really loves his people or loves her people, who shepherds them, well, who cares about 'em, prays for them, goes to their ball games, visits them in the hospital, baptizes their, kids or their, relatives conducts the funerals for their, relatives, their parents, someone like that. The congregation thinks they're terrific preachers,

[00:11:02] **Don Payne:** That, that's very interesting so then preaching, cannot really be isolated from the broader tasks of pastoral ministry.

[00:11:09] **Dave Ward:** is, it's not just about the skills or the charisma or the learning of the preacher. It's, about the person of the. preacher. That said, I think that when we talk about compelling preaching. we're talking about preaching that is, intentional to be relevant to the he where the hearers are at. a lot of preaching. I've sat on a lot of preaching and probably you've experienced this too, or the preacher is spending a lot of time answering questions that his hearers are just not asking. And so it doesn't mean we, we become faddish or trendy. it just means that when we bring God's word to the pulpit, we have to thoughtfully, prayerfully apply it well, to where our people are living, which assumes we know where they're living and we know what questions they're asking, and we know what their struggles are, and we know what their hopes are. And so to be able to speak to them well, is to have to know them well, to get to know them and listen to what they're telling you. Listen to what they're talking about. and to discern. oftentimes, I'm, I do, interim pastoral work and, have, I'm doing that now. And one of the things that I'll do early on is I'll try to get the elders or the deacons, whoever the lay leaders of the church are in the absence of a lead pastor. And I'll say, how do you think this body needs to grow in this interim period. You know how, and I'm not just talking about numerically, but how, what's a, is there a challenge that we need to

overcome? Is there just, they just need to be encouraged. I. During this interim season, is there a besetting sin that we need to call out and address and, have people repent of? is there a hill we need to try to take even before the next lead pastor comes in? Is, is there something broken we need to fix? So I'll just ask them questions and ask them to pray about it and then get back to me and, thoughtfully say, yeah, well here's what I, here's what I see, here's what I think. 'cause they know the people, they are a part of the people. And I'm, I'm an outsider and I wanna serve the church well. So, right now we're in the setting I'm in. I hadn't planned to do this ahead of time, but I came in and listened to the, asked the elders those kinds of questions and listened to what they said. And one of the things that kind of came up a couple of times was ecclesiology and I. how, the people understand what a church is and why we're doing church, and to talk about that in the interim. Talk about our identity, not only individuals in Christ, but our identity as God's people here in the churches in Lakewood. And so I decided to do the, seven churches of Revelation and we're talking about, each one of those churches talking about their strengths, their weaknesses, listening to the words of the risen Christ as he encourages them and critiques them and sometimes warns them. And then at the end of that series, we're going to do a kind of a recap of all those seven churches, but we're gonna talk about this church. What would Jesus say to you guys, in this season going forward before you call your next pastor, and hopefully that'll serve the church well and, set the next pastor up well and be glorifying to God.

[00:14:11] **Don Payne:** Well, is it fair to say or is it maybe too melodramatic to say that the effectiveness of preaching to some extent depends upon the effectiveness of the other more holistic forms of ministry that surround it? Is, that fair? Is that an overstatement or that need any nuance?

[00:14:30] **Dave Ward:** Well, here's what I've learned the hard way and I, say the hard way 'cause I, wish it were easier, but, preaching I think is necessary, but not sufficient to make mature disciples.

[00:14:45] **Don Payne:** Okay.

[00:14:45] **Dave Ward:** I think it, like, for reasons we've just talked about, I think it is important. I think it's an a key piece of what a church ought to do, a ministry needs to be doing. And I think we've seen this in the last eight or nine years, that, even churches that have had really solid preaching or Bible teaching, there's, been some lack of maturity or, lack of christlikeness that's sort of emerged, in the culture. But, I've kind of realized, yeah, preaching's important. I believe in preaching. God's called me to that. But we need more than that. We need community. we need to be serving in ministry. we, we, we need children's ministry. We need youth ministry. We need worship ministry. Where we, divest ourselves of our preoccupation with self and attend to the, the praise of our Lord. I suspect, a hundred, 125 years ago. If you came to, a church and you were regular in your attendance and your pastor, taught God's word and you sang some hymns together and you rubbed shoulders with your brothers and sisters in Christ, I, that might've been enough of a discipleship bump to kind of get you through the week, that might've been enough to sort of remind you to pray, to remind you to, love your neighbor that might have, things like that. But nowadays, one 30 minute message, one hour long worship service on a Sunday, that's just not gonna cut it. 'cause the world is just inundating us with its values, its language, its messages all the time. Even, on your smartphone, in your pocket, on your tv, wherever, you are at your workplace. And so we can't compete with that just as preachers no matter how good we are, no matter how gifted we are, we, we, we need more than just the sermon I. To keep people, in the, mind of Christ being transformed by the renewing of their minds.

[00:16:25] **Don Payne:** well, I love the way you put that, that it's a necessary, even if it's not a sufficient condition for all that needs to happen in the lives of. Ourselves as God's people. and it

does then begin to explore that connection between preaching and spiritual formation or the, broader life of discipleship. because sometimes those get played as you and I both know, sometimes those get played off against each other. but, if preaching is formational, it's gotta be formational in a context with a, much more holistic approach.

[00:16:58] **Dave Ward:** does and, I would say that preaching catalyzes everything else. We need to have a sense of mission for Christ on the other six days of the week. so how do you get your people to, to think missionally and to act missionally in their, context, in their world. It's like, well, have you preached on it? Have you taught on that? and that, that may not get them there, but it can Sure. Start the ball rolling. could sort of lead to some conversations and some, suggested, applications. Is, there a problem in your church with gossip? is your church being divided? Are people being run down because there's a gossip? Have you, I would ask, have you taught on that? Have you preached on that? Say this, God has an opinion about this and he doesn't like it, so we need to not be getting sucked into this, or letting the enemy get a foothold here. That kind of thing.

[00:17:43] **Don Payne:** I'd, love to ask you a question, Dave. From the vantage point of those who are on the receiving end of preaching, I. There, there are many who would probably listen to this and think to themselves. I wish I had less to endure. From, the one who preaches to me. what do I do if my preacher just is just really mediocre? But, that's my church, that's my fellowship. in my heart, I'm sitting there every weekend thinking, you mean, well pastor, but you're killing me, man.

[00:18:21] **Dave Ward:** Well,

[00:18:22] **Don Payne:** What?

What do you say?

[00:18:24] **Dave Ward:** well, we've all sat under sermons that were. 45 minutes long and felt like 20 and sermons that were 20 minutes long and felt like a week. Right. Um, so we've all been there. and not even, even, very gifted communicators can't hit a home run every at bat, That's okay. so I feel, that pain, from pun intended, I feel the, the, could we be better? Couldn't this be better? I would say let's have grace for that pastor, let's understand. I don't always get it right in, the ministry God's called me to, if you're volunteering in children's ministry or youth ministry, sometimes you'll, know you didn't hit a home run that Sunday either. but I'd say if there's, if there's kind of this ongoing, sense of a rut or, an accepted mediocrity. In the pulpit or, this, person is just not gifted in, this way, and yet they preach, they're preaching all the time. Then I think, the loving thing to do is to have an honest conversation. and, first of all, say, pastor, I know you love us and I know you love this church. can, we maybe. I think would benefit if we had some additional voices in the pulpit, could we get a team approach? And might that might, how do you think about that? Is that something you would value? Or, pastor, Denver Seminary is right up the road and that's one of the things that, churches always wanna invest in their pastors preaching. Maybe it's not taking a seminary class, but maybe it's watching an online course or watching, doing some, there's lots of resources online. But really that's, a delicate conversation because preaching is very personal.

[00:20:08] **Don Payne:** yeah. It is

[00:20:09] **Dave Ward:** And one of the things that we're learning, peer learning works. these, these, pastors, and, students are preaching are getting together and they're, workshop in their, sermons together. And there's, some of 'em are even bringing ahead of time. They say, I'm preaching on this

in two weeks. can you guys suggest some applications for me? Can you get, do you have an illustration I can use? And there's just a real energy because here, here's the thing, once you get out of seminary, there's really not an obvious way to keep working on your preaching. Even if you wanna be intentional with that. I mean, you think about the, NFL quarterback, on mon, even the best ones on Monday morning, they're watching game film with coaches. writers, even great writers have editors who. help them tweak, may improve their manuscripts, actors, perform, get notes from directors or stage screen, and preachers don't get that by and large. And we're, what we're doing is more important than on any of those other things. So, I, believe in continuing education, but, the people in the pastors pews usually aren't willing or able to give actionable feedback on a sermon. It's like they can say, yeah, that was great, or that wasn't great, or I, God used that, or, I was really bored by that. But they don't know how to help the preacher get better, but other preachers do. And so I think to put, these guys and gals in community with each other and say, there I was, zooming in on one of our peer learning groups that meets in North Carolina. I was surprised by, a lot of the, I don't, I knew the leader, but I don't know any of the other participants until I met them on the Zoom and half of 'em preached through the lectionary and I thought, oh, well that's okay. That's a dimension we haven't really addressed yet. but, they're Anglican church down there and half of 'em are lectionary preachers and half of 'em aren't. And they had a, marvelous discussion about, say, length of sermon series. And, how do you know what, do you do with. these people are, half of 'em are having to craft their own sermon series and, kind of make it up as they go. And the other half is like, no, we're getting it assigned to us, but that doesn't mean that helps us know how to preach it. So, and the, back and forth on it was really energizing and

[00:22:24] **Don Payne:** Oh, that

[00:22:25] **Dave Ward:** yeah. And they were iron sharpening iron and kind of rooting for each other. So, so that's one thing I think we're learning back to, my point is peer learning group works. and so if, you can, say you're a, preacher in a rural area and there's not a lot of churches around, is there a pastor even in the next town up the road that you could say, would you, will you do me a favor? Will you listen to one of my sermons and gimme some, feedback on that? I'd really love it if you would do that. And then you know what they're gonna do. They're gonna say, well, sure I can do that. Would you like to listen to one of my sermons and gimme some feedback on that? And lo and behold, who knows what the Holy Spirit might do with that?

[00:23:03] **Don Payne:** Who knows. Yeah. So we can set up our own peer learning in, in many respects.

[00:23:07] **Dave Ward:** Many respects.

[00:23:08] **Don Payne:** Well, lemme shift just a little bit toward some of the content of preaching. what do you think is the role that preaching should play in addressing cultural, societal issues, hot topics like that? How, does a preacher stay faithful to scripture while still being able to connect with the, all the stuff out there That's. populating the minds and the affections of their audience. How do they

[00:23:37] **Dave Ward:** out there,

isn't there? that is a great question. we, we could do a whole podcast on that, but I think a couple of things. One, that there, there are some who would say, well, we don't preach social issues in the pulpit. We just proclaim the gospel and preach the word. But if you listen to those sermons yeah,

they're preaching social issues that they're comfortable preaching. they'll, they're, they'll touch the ones, they'll preach pro-life, but maybe they won't touch racism. things like that. And so I would say if Okay, make sure if you're, you say you're not preaching social issues, but really you kind of are. let's be honest about that and let's be truthful about that at the same

[00:24:18] **Don Payne:** in what, respect? I'd say every application is a social issue because we're, we live it, we're social beings. We live it out in society.

[00:24:28] **Dave Ward:** And, one of the, we just had a video that we sent out to our peer learning groups about sermon application. there's a school of thought out there that we shouldn't apply. we should just, preach the sermon and let, we'll let the Holy Spirit apply this as he ECS fit. But the, if Norton Herp. said, you know what, if you really believed that, we wouldn't preach the sermon at all. We would just read the scripture and pray and then sit down.

It's like, yeah, your, job is to apply the scriptures for your people. So one thing is, if you're gonna speak to social issues, speak to all of 'em. Speak to the ones that need speaking to, and not just the ones you're comfortable with. But a counter to that might be, but don't preach your own opinions. You're not here to preach your opinion. You're here to preach what God's word says with authority and compassion and conviction. And so I, I've heard, I've heard pastors get up and kind of get on their own hobby horse and, kind of, say speak to some things that, eh, I didn't think was in the text. They were preaching and most of the people around me didn't know the difference. 'cause there, there's a lot we can get away with. which is why we have to be, prayerful and humble and accountable to others, in, this task of preaching. James. James meant when he said, when he says, not, all of you should try to be pastors and teachers, brothers.

[00:25:48] **Don Payne:** what, unique value do you think preaching in the church has right now in an, era when we are inundated with so many other lines of input, an era of podcasts and social media and YouTube, and everything coming at us digitally. What's the value of preaching in the middle of all that Or what's the, role of preaching in all of that?

[00:26:14] **Dave Ward:** that the pastor knows his people, the preacher knows her people, and the YouTube influencer doesn't. And, the pastor of the megachurch, may be a great communicator and you may learn a lot from that person. And God be praised for that, but that person doesn't know you. and your, pastor should or wants to. And so, if I'm, preaching at Grace Fellowship of Lakewood, I know what's going on in that church. if I'm preaching at, Crow Hill Bible Church, where I was, interim for a couple years ago. I was like, Hey, I, I know what had been going on in this church. I know these people say, Hey, catch me up on what's been going, on. how can I pray for you how, are you encouraged? Are you excited? are you struggling? what are you fearful? speak. And so the, it's a directed, event. A sermon is an event for the people in front of you on a given occasion. It's, not, that's great if you have a sermon from five years ago or one from a couple of decades ago that hadn't Robinson Gate, we can use, God can still use that. We should still learn from that. That's wonderful. But preaching is an event for a particular people at a particular day from God's word and empowered by God's spirit. And I, I don't think there's any substitute for that.

[00:27:29] **Don Payne:** I'm gonna ask you to project a little bit, Dave. as best you can tell, how do you think preaching is going to, what's, it gonna look like? How's it gonna evolve in the future? Got any sense for that,

[00:27:42] **Dave Ward:** that's a, great question and I, have a, profound answer for you. I don't know, and I don't think there's anyone who does know I.

[00:27:52] **Don Payne:** Okay.

[00:27:53] **Dave Ward:** Think back, 25 years ago, when the emerging church, the emergent church movement was kind of all the rage. You remember

[00:28:01] **Don Payne:** yeah. Yep. I do.

[00:28:02] **Dave Ward:** I was in my early thirties at the time and I was actually well acquainted with a couple of thought leaders in that movement. I frankly, bought a lot of what they were selling. Not all of it, but I bought into a lot of what they were saying. They were saying the church has to change. we're post Christendom, we're in a postmodern era. We need to do church very differently now. And, the, church of today that's gonna go away. We're gonna, they're gonna be dinosaurs here in 20, 25 years. And preaching was a part of that. they would say things like, well, we need to be less dogmatic and more dialogical. In our pulpit, or we don't need a, sage on the stage, we need a guide at the side, and, things like that. You've heard that? Well, and I thought, okay, well, maybe, they're right. let's, and, there's, some, churches were planted or some, alternate services were started and then I blinked and all these emerging churches submerged and I don't know where they went. But, People are still preaching monologue. and some people are doing dialogical, and that's great. And some people are, taking some alt alternative expressions of how to communicate God's word and more power to him. That's wonderful. God can use so many different things, that we bring, for his, tools for his glory and, the advance of his kingdom. But, my, my takeaway from that was, they were pretty, pretty emphatic, 20, 25 years ago on what was gonna be. the, church of the future and, it didn't really pan out. So I, try to be, very humble and, make hopefully not too cynical about futurists and, what they project, especially when it comes to ministry, we'll, see. That's, let's, just leave it at that and let's try to be faithful to, if the, spirit starts blowing in a new way, in a new direction, then let's follow him. but I don't know.

[00:29:54] **Don Payne:** Well, to loop back to some things you said a little bit earlier. if we're able to keep the core essentials, the, non-negotiables at the heart of whatever our preaching is, stylistically methodologically preaching will still be, preaching and we'll be okay.

[00:30:13] **Dave Ward:** And still be

[00:30:14] **Don Payne:** and maybe it, yeah, we may not know, and maybe it doesn't matter what, what forms it takes in the future.

[00:30:21] **Dave Ward:** I think if we're listening to the Holy Spirit, preaching the word of God, pointing people to Christ and trying to be very sensitive to what their needs are, where, the people are living. I don't worry about it. I, think if we've got those boxes checked, then I think God will use it. God will use us. God will be blessed and his name will be glorified.

[00:30:42] **Don Payne:** Well, I think you've given us a lot of wise words and some encouragement, some liberation from, perhaps some of the undue pressure. People may feel when they're preaching, they can still grow and grow in faithfulness, grow in effectiveness, without feeling like they've gotta hit it out of the park every Sunday or be something that they're not. And, I

[00:31:04] **Dave Ward:** to find their own voice.

[00:31:06] **Don Payne:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:31:07] **Dave Ward:** we, I told, I, I'm teaching some introductory preaching students and I told them. I'm not here to get you to preach more like me. I'm not here to get you a formula. We, have one David Ward. We don't need to, we have one Dr. Don Payne. We don't need another one. it's like God has given you a voice and we'll, call you into a ministry to pastor a people or with, or a youth group or a Sunday school class or whatever he's calling you to do, or a mi somewhere in the mission field. get, speak in your voice, the words he gives you to speak and, don't apologize for that.

[00:31:37] **Don Payne:** Yeah, that's a, great word. That's a liberating word. Thanks, Dave Ward, proud to, have you as a colleague and director of our Compelling Preaching initiative and just love the influence you get to have. Thank you.

[00:31:51] **Dave Ward:** Thanks, Don. Happy to be here.

[00:31:53] **Don Payne:** Friends, as always, thank you for your interest, for listening, for your support, for your prayers, and until you're able to join us again. Hope the Lord blesses you and. Take care.