



# SBAOC Weekly Update

## NEWS & PRAYER REQUESTS

*If you have any news, prayer requests, articles, or events that you would like to have included in this update, please email the information to Tony Mattia at [spurgeonassociation@gmail.com](mailto:spurgeonassociation@gmail.com).*

## MESSAGES LIKELY TO WIN SOULS

For the next two weeks we will print Spurgeon's sermon he preached to pastors and the Spurgeon College. This comes from Spurgeon's book, *The Soulwinner*. We have included the preface of the book followed by the sermon for your convenience.

Today we look at the first four points of the message and next week the final four.

### *Preface*

*This volume was planned by Mr. Spurgeon himself. His intention was to deliver to the students of the pastors' college a short course of lectures on what he termed "that most royal employment," soulwinning. Having completed the series, he purposed to collect his previous addresses to other audiences on the same theme and publish the whole for the guidance of all who desired to become soulwinners, with the added hope of inducing many more professing Christians to engage in this truly blessed service for the Savior.*

*This explanation will account for the form in which the topic is treated in the present book. The first six chapters contain the college lectures; then follow four addresses delivered to Sunday school teachers, open-air preachers, and friends gathered at Monday evening prayer meetings at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon's church. The rest of the volume consists of teachings in which the work of winning souls is earnestly commended to the attention of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Thousands will rejoice to read what Mr. Spurgeon spoke and wrote concerning what he called "the chief business of the Christian."*

### **Messages Likely to Win Souls, Part 1**

Friends, I am next going to speak to you about the kind of messages that are most likely to convert people. We will examine the sort of messages we should deliver if we really want our hearers to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to be saved. Of

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### PURPOSE STATEMENT:

We unite as an association of Southern Baptist churches in order to manifest the glory of God above all. We purpose to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. We covenant to strengthen and support one another, motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.

**"If there is no church... should you not commence one?" C. H. Spurgeon**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **National Founders Conference**

— **January 18-20, 2024.**

Theme: *Remember Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:8)* with Tom Ascol, Phil Johnson, Conrad Mbewe, Joel Beeke, & Travis Allen. Go to [founders.org/conference](http://founders.org/conference) for more information.

### **True Church Conference**

— **February 15-18, 2024.**

Theme: *9 Maxims of a True Church.* [Anchoredintruth/true-church-conference](http://Anchoredintruth/true-church-conference).

### **Founders Midwest Conference**

— **February 27-28, 2024.**

First Baptist Church, Fenton, Missouri. Theme: *Learning from the Puritans Today.* [Sbfcmw.com](http://Sbfcmw.com)

*If you have a conference or event that you would like listed here, please contact us by email: [spurgeonassociation@gmail.com](mailto:spurgeonassociation@gmail.com).*

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course, we are all perfectly agreed that the Holy Spirit alone can convert a soul; no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born again from above. All the work is done by the Holy Spirit. We must not take to ourselves any part of the credit for the result of the work, for it is the Spirit who creates and works in man according to the eternal purpose of God. Still, we may be instruments in His hands, for He chooses to use instruments, and He chooses them for wise reasons.

There must be an adaptation of the means to the end, as there was with David when he went forth with the sling and stone to slay Goliath of Gath. Goliath was a tall fellow, but a stone from a sling can rise. Besides, the giant was armed, protected, and scarcely vulnerable except on his forehead, so that was the very place to hit him. Though David took a sling, it was not so much because he had no other weapon but because he had practiced slinging, as most boys do in some form or other. Then he chose a smooth stone because he knew it would fit the sling. David picked the right kind of stone to pierce Goliath's head, so that, when he hurled the stone at the giant, it struck him in the forehead and penetrated his brain.

You will find that this principle of adaptation runs through the whole work of the Holy Spirit. When a man was needed to be the apostle to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit selected the large-minded, well-trained, highly-educated Paul. He was more adapted for such work than was the somewhat narrow, though strong-minded, Peter, who was better suited for preaching to the Jews and was of far more use to the circumcision than he ever could have been among the uncircumcision. Paul, in his place, was the right man, and Peter, in his place, was the right man.

You may see in this principle a lesson for yourselves and seek to adapt your

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## Founders Midwest Conference Schedule

February 27-28, 2024

First Baptist Church of Fenton, MO

"Learning From the Puritans Today"  
Dr. Joel Beeke

Session 1—"The Puritans and Prayer"

Session 2—"The Puritans and Meditation on God's Word"

Session 3—"The Puritans and Life's Afflictions"

Session 4—"The Puritans and Assurance of Faith"

Session 5—"The Puritans and Spiritual Adoption into God's Family"

Session 6—"The Puritans and Biblically Raising Children"

Breakout Sessions: Mary Beeke (for women), "Laying Our Anxieties Before Christ"; Joel Beeke (for men) "Modern Challenges to Pastoral Faithfulness"

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means to your end. The Holy Spirit can convert a soul by any text of Scripture, apart from your paraphrase, your comment, or your exposition. But you know there are certain Scriptures that are the best to bring to the minds of sinners. If this is true about your texts, it is much more so concerning your messages to your hearers.

As to which messages are most likely to be blessed to the conversion of those to whom they are preached, I would say that first are those sermons which are distinctly aimed at the conversion of the hearers. Some time ago, I heard a prayer from a minister who asked the Lord to save souls by the sermon he was about to deliver. I do not hesitate to say that God Himself could not bless the message to that end unless He made the people misunderstand all that the preacher said to them, because the whole message was apt to harden the sinner in his sin rather than to lead him to renounce it and to seek the Savior. There was nothing in it that could be blessed to any hearer unless he turned it inside out or upside down.

The message did me good through the principle that was applied by a dear old lady to the minister she was obliged to hear. When asked, "Why do you go to such a place?" she replied, "Well, there is no other place of worship to which I can go." "But it must be better to stay at home than to hear such stuff," said her friend. "Perhaps so," she answered, "but I like to go out to worship even if I get nothing by going. Sometimes you will see a hen scratching all over a heap of rubbish to try to find some corn; she does not get any, but it shows that she is looking for it, and using the means she has been given to get it. Then, too, the exercise warms her." The old woman was saying that scratching over the poor sermons she heard was a blessing to her because it exercised her spiritual faculties and warmed her spirit.

There are messages of such a kind that, unless God takes to ripening wheat by means of snow and ice and begins to illuminate the world by means of fogs and clouds, He cannot save souls under them. The preacher himself evidently does not think that anybody will be converted by them. If two hundred or only two were converted by them, nobody would be as astonished as the preacher himself.

In fact, I know a man who was converted, or at least con-

victed, under the preaching of a minister of that kind. In a certain parish church, as the result of the clergyman's preaching, there was a man who was under deep conviction of sin. He went down to see his minister, but the poor man did not know what to make of him and said to him, "I am very sorry if there was anything in my message that made you uncomfortable; I did not mean it to be so." "Well, sir," answered the troubled man, "you said that we must be born again." "Oh!" replied the clergyman, "that was all done in baptism." The man, who was not to be put off said, "But, sir, you did not say so in your sermon; you spoke of the necessity of regeneration." "Well, I am very sorry I said anything that made you uncomfortable, for really I think all is right with you. You are a good sort of a fellow; you were never a poacher, or anything else that is bad." "That may be, sir but I have a sense of sin, and you said we must be new creatures." "Well, my good man," said the perplexed parson, "I do not understand such things, for I never was born again." He sent him to a Baptist minister. The man is now a Baptist minister, partly as a result of what he learned from the preacher who did not himself understand the truth he had declared to others.

Of course, God can convert a soul by such a message, and by such a minister, but it is not likely. It is more probable that, in His infinite sovereignty, He will work in a place where a wholehearted man is preaching to people the truth that he himself has received, all the while earnestly desiring their salvation and ready to guide them further in the ways of the Lord as soon as they are saved. God does not usually lay His newborn children down among people where the new life will not be understood, or where it will be left without any proper nurture or care.

So, if you want your hearers to be converted, you must see that your preaching aims directly at conversion, and that it is such that God will be likely to bless to that end. When that is the case, then look for souls to be saved, and look for a great number of them, too. Do not be satisfied when a single soul is converted. Remember that the rule of the kingdom is, "*According to your faith be it unto you*" (Matthew 9:29).

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In a message at the Tabernacle, I said that I was glad that Scripture was not written, "According to your unbelief be it unto you." If there is in us a great faith, God will give us blessing according to our faith. Oh, that we were altogether rid of unbelief, that we believed great things of God, and with heart and soul preached in such a way that men were likely to be converted by our messages, proclaiming truths likely to convert them, and declaring them in a manner that would be likely to be blessed to the conversion of our hearers! Of course, all the while, we must trust the Holy Spirit to make the work effective, for we are but instruments in His hands.

But coming a little closer to our subject, if the people are to be saved, it must be by messages that correct them. You first have to get them to come where they can hear the Gospel, for there is, in London, anyway, a great aversion to places of worship. I am not much surprised that it is so concerning many churches and chapels.

I think, in many instances, the common people do not attend such services because they do not understand the theological "lingo" that is used in the pulpit. It is neither English nor Greek, but gibberish. When a working man goes once and listens to these fine words, he says to his wife, "I will not go there again, Sal; there is nothing there for me, or for you. There may be a good deal for a gentleman that's been to college, but there is nothing for the likes of us." No, friends, we must preach in what Whitefield used to call "market language" if we want all classes of the community listening to our message.

Then, when they do come in, we must preach interestingly. The people will not be converted while they are asleep. If they go to sleep, they should be at home in bed, where they would sleep much more comfortably. We must have the minds of our hearers awake and active if we are to do them real good. You will not shoot your birds unless you get them to fly. You must cause them to start up from the long grass in which they are hiding. I would sooner use a little of what some very proper preachers regard as a dreadful thing, that wicked thing called humor—I would sooner wake the congregation up that way than have it said that I droned at them until we all went to sleep together. Sometimes, it may be quite right to have it said of us, as it was said of Rowland Hill, "What does that man

mean? He actually made the people laugh while he was preaching." "Yes," was the wise answer, "but did you not see that he made them cry directly after?" That was good work, and it was well done.

I sometimes tickle my oyster until he opens his shell, and then I slip the knife in. He would not have opened for my knife, but he did for something else. That is the way to do it with people. They must be made to open their eyes, ears, and souls somehow. When you get them open, you must feel, "Now is my opportunity; in with the knife." There is one vulnerable spot in the hides of those rhinoceros sinners that come to hear you. Take care that, if you do get a shot through that weak spot, it is a thorough gospel bullet, for nothing else will accomplish the work that needs to be done.

Moreover, the people must be interested to make them remember what is said. They will not recollect what they hear unless the subject interests them. They forget our fine lectures and cannot recall our pretty pieces of poetry. I do not know that these things would do them any good if they did remember them. However, we must tell our hearers something they will not be likely to forget.

I believe in what Father Taylor calls "the surprise power of a sermon"—that is, something that is not expected by those who are listening to it. Just when they think that you are sure to say something precise and straightforward, say something awkward and crooked. They will remember that. You will have tied a gospel knot where it is likely to remain.

I remember reading of a tailor who, having made his fortune, promised to tell his brother tailors how he had done it. They gathered around his bed when he was dying. As they all listened very attentively, he said, "Now I am to tell you how you tailors are to make your fortunes. This is the way: always put a knot in your thread." I give that same advice to you: always put a knot in your thread. If there is a knot in the thread, it does not come out of the material. Some preachers put in the needle, but there is no knot in their thread, so it slips through, accomplishing nothing. Put a good many knots in your messages so that there may be all the greater probability that they will remain in

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people's memories. You do not want your preaching to be like the sewing done by some machines, in which, if one stitch breaks, the whole then comes undone.

There ought to be plenty of burrs in a message. Mr. Ferguson will tell you what burrs are. I'll warrant you that he has often found them clinging to his coat in his bonnie Scotland. Put these burrs all over the people: say something that will strike them, something that will stick to them for many days and that will be likely to bless them. I believe that a message, under God's smile, is likely to be the means of conversion if it has this quality about it: it must be interesting to the hearers as well as directly aimed at their salvation.

The third thing in a message that is likely to win souls to Christ is that it must be instructive. If people are to be saved by a message, it must contain at least some measure of knowledge. There must be light as well as fire. Some preachers are all light and no fire, and others are all fire and no light. What we need is both fire and light. I do not judge those men who are all fire and fury, but I wish they had a little more knowledge of what they talk about, and I think it would be well if they did not begin to preach quite so soon what they hardly understand themselves. It is a fine thing to stand up in the street and cry out, "Believe! Believe! Believe!" Yes, my dear soul, but what are we to believe? What is all this noise about?

Preachers of this sort are like the little boy who had been crying, and something happened that stopped him in the middle of his cry. Presently he said, "Ma, please tell me, what was I crying about?" Emotion is doubtless a very proper thing in the pulpit. The feeling, the pathos, and the power of heart are good and grand things in the right place, but do also use your brains a little and tell us something when you stand up to preach the everlasting Gospel.

The messages that are most likely to convert people seem to me to be those that are full of truth—truth about the Fall, truth about the law, truth about human nature and its alienation from God, truth about Jesus Christ, truth about the Holy Spirit, truth about the everlasting Father, truth about the new birth, truth about obedience to God and how we learn it, and all such great truths. Tell your

hearers something whenever you preach!

Of course, some good may come even if your hearers do not understand you. I suppose it might be so, for there was a very esteemed lady speaking to the Quaker Friends gathered at the Devonshire House meeting. She was a most gracious woman and was addressing the English Friends in Dutch. She asked one of the men to translate for her, but the hearers said there was so much power and spirit about her speaking, even though it was in Dutch, that they did not want it translated, for they were getting as much good out of it as was possible. Now, these hearers were Friends, and they are of a different mold that I am, for I do not care how good a woman the esteemed lady was, I would have liked to have known what she was talking about. I am sure I would not have been in the least degree profited unless it had been translated.

I like ministers always to know what they are talking about, and to be sure that there is something in it worth saying. Do try, therefore, dear friends, to give your hearers something besides a string of moving anecdotes that will set them crying. Tell them something. You are to teach your hearers, to preach the Gospel to them, to make them understand, as far as you can, things that should make for their peace. We cannot expect people to be saved by our messages unless we really try to instruct them by what we say to them.

Fourth, people must be impressed upon by our messages if they are to be converted. They must not only be interested and instructed, but they must be impressed upon. I believe, dear friends, that there is a great deal more in impressive sermons than some people think. In order to impress the Word upon those to whom you preach, remember that it must be impressed upon yourself first. You must feel it yourself and speak as a person who feels it—not *as if* you feel it, but *because* you feel it. Otherwise, you will not make it be felt by others.

I wonder what it must be to go up into the pulpit and read somebody else's message to the congregation. We read in the Bible of one thing that was borrowed, and the head of that came off. I am afraid that the same thing often hap-

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pens with borrowed messages—the heads come off. (See 2 Kings 6:1-7.) Men who read borrowed sermons positively do not know anything about our troubles of mind in preparing for the pulpit, or our joy in preaching with the aid of only brief notes.

A dear friend of mine, who reads his own sermons, was talking to me about preaching. I was telling him how my very soul is moved and my very heart is stirred within me when I think of what I will say to my people, and afterward when I am delivering my message. He said that he never felt anything of the kind when he was preaching. He reminded me of the story of the little girl who was crying because her teeth ached, and her grandmother said to her, "Lilly, I wonder that you are not ashamed to cry about such a small matter." "Well, Grandmother," answered the little girl, "it is all very well for you to say that, for, when your teeth ache, you can take them out, but mine are fixed."

Some men, when the message they have selected will not develop smoothly, can go to their box and take out another. However, when I have a message full of joy, but I myself feel heavy and sad, I am utterly miserable. When I want to beg and persuade men to believe, yet my spirit is dull and cold, I feel wretched to the utmost degree. My teeth ache, and I cannot take them out, for they are my own. As my sermons are my own, I therefore may expect to find a good deal of trouble, both in the getting of them and in the using of them.

I remember the answer I received one time when I said to my venerable grandfather, "Whenever I have to preach, I always feel terribly sick, literally sick. I mean, I might as well be crossing the Channel." I asked the dear old man whether he thought I would ever get over that feeling. His answer was, "Your power will be gone if you do." So, my friends, when it is not so much that you have taken hold of your subject, but that it has taken hold of you, and you feel its grip with a terrible reality yourself, then that is the kind of message that is most likely to make others feel. If it is not impressed upon you, you cannot expect to impress it upon others. So take care that your sermons always have something in them that will really be impressed upon both yourself and the hearers whom you are addressing.

I also think that the delivery of our messages should make an impression upon our hearers. The delivery of some preachers is very bad. If yours is so, try to improve it in all possible ways. One young man wanted to learn singing, but he was told by the teacher, "You have only one tone to your voice, and that is outside the scale." Similarly, there are some ministers' voices that have only one tone, and there is no music in that one. Do try, as far as you can, to make the very way in which you speak minister to the great end you have in view. Preach, for instance, as you would plead if you were standing before a judge, begging for the life of a friend, or if you were appealing to the Queen herself on behalf of someone very dear to you. Use the kind of tone in pleading with sinners that you would use if a gallows were erected, and you were to be hanged on it unless you could persuade the person in authority to release you. That is the sort of earnestness you need in pleading with men as ambassadors for God.

Try to make every message such that the most flippant person will see, without any doubt, that, if it is an amusement for them to hear you, it is no amusement for you to speak to them, but that you are pleading with them in downright solemn earnest about eternal matters. I have often felt just like this when I have been preaching. I have known what it is to use up all my ammunition; and then I have, as it were, rammed myself into the great gospel gun and fired myself at my hearers—all my experience of God's goodness, all my consciousness of sin, and all my sense of the power of the Gospel. There are some people upon whom that kind of preaching has a marked effect when nothing else would have worked, for they see that then you are communicating to them not only the Gospel, but also yourself.

The kind of message that is likely to break the hearer's heart is that which has first broken the preacher's heart; and the sermon that is likely to reach the heart of the hearer is the one that has come straight from the heart of the preacher. Therefore, dear ones, always seek to preach so that the people will be impressed upon as well as interested and instructed.

*To be continued next week.*

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## PRAYER MEETINGS FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AND REVIVAL

- Fellowship Baptist Church in Onaga, Kansas—5:00 pm on Sundays
- Trinity Baptist Church in Wamego, Kansas—8:00 pm on Saturdays

*The Spurgeon Baptist Association of Churches is an association of Southern Baptist Churches that are united to manifest the glory of God above all. We set out to do this by seeking spiritual awakening and revival by intense prayer and earnest obedience to Scripture. As an association of churches we are bound in mutual covenant to strengthen and support one another - motivated and guided by the authority and sufficiency of Scripture - by facilitating faithful preaching of the Word of God, proclaiming the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ to all, making and gathering disciples, planting churches and coordinating unified missions efforts.*

*We are a non-geographic association seeking to include any like-minded body of believers so that together we might better fulfill the great commission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our intent is to lean on His instruction and not our imaginations so that He is honored in all that we do. We welcome churches who adhere to the confessions of faith accepted by Southern Baptists throughout their history, including, but not limited to, the Second London Confession (1689) and the Baptist Faith and Message.*

