

Berean Model: Why I Don't Put The Scripture Passage On The Overhead

¹⁰ As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea. On arrival, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ The people here were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, since they welcomed the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. ¹² Consequently, many of them believed, including a number of the prominent Greek women as well as men.

Acts 17:10-12 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

I believe that the above Berean model is the Biblical model for Christian services and this is why I do not put the Scripture passages on the overhead. It is important for each person who can have the Scriptures before them to follow along and examine the accuracy of the message in light of the Bible. While using the overhead is convenient it has drawbacks.

This model strengthens the church by doing the following:

1. It keeps the preacher accountable as the church is examining the passage and its context.
2. It keeps the congregants accountable to Scripture as they examine the truth for themselves and do not merely believe the message because of the pastor's speaking ability or charisma.
3. It fosters familiarity with the Bible; location of books in the Bible, context of passages, etc.
4. It encourages the congregation to take an active role in the sermon by not only reading the sermon's central passage but other references that may come to mind
5. It encourages each congregant to have a personal Bible

Using the overhead can have the unintended consequences of the following:

1. It can allow the preacher to tweak verses and take them out of context as he controls what is projected and what is not.
2. It can make it harder for the congregation to examine and verify the accuracy of the message
3. It can diminish familiarity with Scripture.
4. It can encourage a more passive role for the congregation during the sermon.
5. It can lead to congregants not bringing their Bibles and relying only on the overhead projection

My hope for Northville is that more congregants will bring their Bibles to service allowing them to interact with the Word during the sermon. This is my conviction when I am preaching but I do not expect other speakers at Northville to share and practice my convictions on this matter when they preach. One of my primary goals as pastor is to make the Bible as accessible and understandable as possible and I believe that the Berean model is a step in that direction.

If it is a matter of not having a Bible or not having a Bible with big enough words or a hard to read translation, we will provide everyone with a personal Bible with the right size text and in an understandable translation. If this is an issue, please let me know directly.