

## **Boring Sermons and the Bible**

Robin Calamaio

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Probably one of the most grievous offenses perpetuated by the sons of men - is a boring sermon in the Name of Jesus Christ ... or a boring Bible study, gospel song, free Christian ebook - or Christian article. Why is that? Well, our living Creator is a fount of inexhaustible knowledge. But, there is a catch. When speaking of "*God's mystery*," Paul identified that mystery as "*Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Col 2:2,3). While we still have access to some knowledge in the natural realm, the vast expanse of accurate spiritual knowledge can only be found inside Jesus Christ. In Him, one can learn about the true nature of God - His character, agenda, priorities, promises and warnings. Christians have been granted access into this endless realm. But to exit His presence, and then present to others ... with a boring sermon?

After coming to God on His terms (through the blood of Jesus Christ), it is as though we just crossed a stormy sea, having been tossed "*to and fro like drunken men*" - where we had "*groped in darkness with no light*" (Ps 107:27 and Job 12:25). Now anchored at the edge of a vast unexplored continent, we abandon our battered ship (the old man and all his "*wisdom*"), and, for the first time in our life, find our feet on solid ground. Grateful, relieved and now at peace with God, we gaze upon the horizon-filling continent before us - and instinctively know this expanse flows with milk and honey. The food is substantive and its delights are composed of unsurpassed nutritional sweetness. Behind us we hear, "*Come eat of My food, and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake your folly and live, and proceed in the way of understanding*" (Pro 9:5,6). We know we have been invited to, and are welcome to, our Creator's feast. Nothing here looks boring, smells boring, or tastes boring. That is because ... nothing is.

All who enter into, and explore this unending expanse, are highly stimulated - and stimulating - individuals. They "*speak of the power of Thy awesome acts ... and tell of Thy greatness. They eagerly utter ... bubble over with ... the memory of Thine abundant goodness, and shout joyfully of Thy righteousness*" (Ps 145:6,7). So where does a boring sermon fit into this picture? It doesn't. And where do boring Bible studies, songs, books or articles fit? They don't. If you are in an environment claiming to represent God - and it is boring ... get out. God is not there. He has never been boring, and never will be boring ... and He is not boring now.

### **Emotionalism versus Emotions**

On the other hand, one can find churches that are hot beds of activity - far from boring - at least initially. But, after some time, one who is seeking to grow in objective knowledge ... finds little there. The interaction with "*God*" is almost fully subjective, in a presentation of emotionalism and Christian mysticism. Could this be the group Jesus spoke of when concluding the Sermon on the Mount? "*Many will say to Me on that Day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your Name, and in Your Name cast out demons, and in Your Name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me*

*you who practice lawlessness*'” (Mt 7:22,23). The pronoun, “*Your*” is an intensive in Koine Greek. These people are frantically pleading their case as eternity is stretching out before them. And they know exactly Who they are standing before. They are sure they had actively served Jesus Christ in this life - yet, He declares them lawless. They had falsely represented Him. In this age, their witness had been dramatic, energized, loud and full - full of emotionalism - but not the God of the Bible. Of course, no one in this age convinced them otherwise. They went to the grave absolutely confident they had served the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet, any environment graced with the presence of God is a truly vibrant place - but substantively electric. The best way I can describe this is by the reaction of my daughter when she first figured out how to play a piano piece she had been laboring over. She began jumping up and down - overwhelmed with emotion - she could play it! When we learn from God, we “*greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory*” (1Pet 1:8). Objective truth creates a response of fervent emotion - but not emotionalism.

### **But, For Those Outside of Christ ...**

... sermons are boring - or foolish - or scandalous ... or enraging. And so are Bible studies, any gospel song, or free Christian ebook ... or Christian article. These contrary reactions are not always due to a lack of intelligence. Some of the most keen intellects, past and present, are totally hostile to Biblical knowledge. What they do understand of it - they hate. Thomas Paine probably knew the contents of the Bible better than most who are in the pulpit, ***and considered the material atrocious***. Today, entire websites are devoted to attacking the Bible point by point. And one thing that enrages these Bible critics is the genuine stupidity of so many believers. Intellectual objections and arguments are met with shallow platitudes and intellectually bankrupt responses. And there is always that “*end of discussion*” Christian defense: “*God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.*” Well, ... that ***does not*** settle it for the Christian antagonist - ***and it shouldn't***. While ***my*** best efforts may not subdue and/or adequately address an antagonist's arguments, reasonings, objections, or complaints, I do know one thing. God ***Himself*** is willing to go one-on-one with anyone so willing. He is not intimidated by anyone's logic or challenges. “*Present your case,*” *the Lord says.* “*Bring forward your strong arguments,*” *the King of Jacob says*” ... “*Report to Me; Put Me in remembrance; let us argue our case together; state your cause, that you may be proved right*” (Isa 41:21, 43:26). But, that must occur on this side of death. And it must occur with one who is willing ***to honestly weigh His positions***. His goal, on this side, is not to destroy the antagonist - just the arguments. In fact, in His power and wisdom, He doesn't just dismantle contrary positions. He takes the whole confrontation one step further. He turns the contrarian ... into an advocate for Him ... morally, scientifically, philosophically, theologically - every which way. How can I be so certain of this? Well, that is an easy one to answer. I argued, and argued, and then argued some more - point by point, issue by issue. Now, ... I am writing this ... and have been His willing advocate for thirty years and counting.

It is my hope He will continue to allow me this honor. Quite often, I am a very poor advocate, and it is a great mystery that he would allow me to be a part of such an enterprise. But, amazingly, “*He is not ashamed to call them brethren*” (Heb 2:11) ... and I am part of the “*them*” - a converted contrarian. So, Christian, if anything boring comes out from me toward you, just know ... that isn't God.