

The notion of persuasion in postmodern culture has to be reconceived. It is not to be equated with the modernist notion where it is essentially about being intellectually convinced of the veracity of an argument. It should, rather, be understood in classical terms. Ancient Greek and Roman civilisation was devoted to the dynamics of public-speaking. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and others contributed to the development of the rhetorical art form. Aristotle's seminal work, *Rhetoric*, was the standard text for the times. Aristotle had a particular genius for systematising knowledge and in this work he categorises the rhetorical art of persuasion in three divisions. Firstly, he deals with *ethos*, which focuses on the integrity of the speaker. Secondly, he deals with *logos*, which is about the inherent logic of the message itself. Thirdly, he deals with *pathos*, which is about the emotions evoked by the oration.

Ian Pitt-Watson points to a contemporary failure to address the emotional nature of people:

Unless there is some measure of emotional involvement on the part of the preacher and on the part of his hearers the *kerygma* cannot be heard in its fullness for the *kerygma* speaks to the whole man, emotions and all, and simply does not make sense to the intellect and the will alone.²

There are certain parallels between this and the Aristotelian contribution to rhetorical analysis. The integrity of the preacher, the authority of the Word and the appeal to emotions are all relevant factors in preaching. In modernism the stress was on the authority of the Word (*logos*) above the others (*ethos* and *pathos*). But in postmodernism there is an emphasis on emotions, where truth is seen as a matter of individual belief and morality is governed

by the principle, 'if it feels good it is good.' Donald McCullough asserts:

The vehemence of the debate over controversial issues – such as language about God, the inerrancy of Scripture, abortion, creation and evolution, the role of women in leadership, ordination of homosexuals, and others – too often breeds arrogant certainty. Instead of an enriching exchange leading to greater discernment, we have shouting matches that shut off dialogue and fragment the Christian community. One must ask: Who is being served in all this...God or the God of my understanding?³

The importance of the preacher's integrity cannot be underestimated. His moral character may influence how the message itself is perceived. Augustine said: The life of the speaker has greater weight in determining whether he is obediently heard than any grandness of eloquence.⁴

Certainly a lack of integrity undermines credibility. There is a connection between preaching and practice insofar as the moral stature of the messenger contributes to enhancing the reception of the message. Effectiveness in preaching is not ultimately determined by the eloquence of the preacher, the soundness of his logic, the virtue of the man or indeed all of these factors combined. George Whitefield's biographer comments:

Whitfield's...effectiveness lay not in his eloquence or zeal. As we look back from our present standpoint we see that God's chosen time to 'arise and have mercy upon Zion...yea, the set time had come,' and that in raising up Whitfield, He had granted upon him and his ministry 'a mighty effusion of the Holy Ghost': and it was this, the Divine power, which was the first secret of his success.⁵

The Christian preacher would assert that there is a supernatural element in the event or process of conversion. Oswald Sanders speaks of the herald of the gospel in these terms, '...he prepares the way, clears the way and gets out of the way.'⁶

Nevertheless, the elements listed above, at worst, cannot hinder the communication process and at best enhance it. Robinson comments:

In an earlier generation, it was enough for a preacher to announce the truth, and the congregation would ratify it. Today such pronouncements are met with resistance. Today, I have to persuade people, even in the church, of the gospel and its implications. I must respect the right of an audience to make up its own mind. Today's listeners can feel at a gut level the difference between persuading and pronouncing. They react to preaching that doesn't respect their freedom to make up their own minds.⁷

An examination of Paul's thinking and methods of communication provide insight into preaching in a postmodern context by showing that his success is never attributed to convincing people of the veracity of propositional truth claims. It was not 'enough' for Paul 'to announce the truth', either evangelistically, as revealed in the book of Acts, or pastorally as revealed in his epistles. Paul's preaching 'met with resistance' too. Paul had to 'persuade people' then, 'even in the church, of the gospel and its implications' (for example, Galatians). The key to understanding the above Robinson comment is to realise that there is a difference between 'persuading' and 'pronouncing'. It is a difference in attitude and tone that is almost intuitively conveyed, but it is an important difference in a world where style takes precedence over substance. John MacArthur put it cogently:

True biblical preaching ought to be a life-changing endeavour. The conscientious preacher does not merely seek to impart abstract doctrine or plain facts to his people; he also pleads with them for heartfelt and earnest obedience.⁸

Paul's approach to presenting the gospel involved reasoning, explaining and proving in an effort to see

people persuaded. He used his intellectual faculties and theological training to demonstrate the truth of his message by drawing on evidence from Old Testament Scripture. The Bereans⁹ tested the accuracy of his claims by searching the Scriptures in order to establish the validity of his assertions. A number of them found that there was sufficient evidence to warrant a verdict of proven and yielded to its consequential demand for faith.¹⁰

Paul lived in that world where rhetoric was revered. He was deemed to be a failure as an orator by some. He alludes to this issue in his second letter to the Corinthian church.¹¹ However, Paul did not merely employ the oratorical skill of the sophist in seeking to convey the gospel. Conscious of his limitations he asserts that it was the power of God that penetrated the hearts¹³ of the Corinthians.¹⁴

Nevertheless Paul did seek to persuade people of the truth of the gospel. This is clear in Acts chapters 17-19 in particular. It is revealed that in Thessalonica: '...as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he *reasoned* with them from the Scriptures, *explaining* and *proving* that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead...' (vs. 2-3. Emphasis added by italicization). Clearly Paul is engaged in expository preaching of the Old Testament in a reasonable, rational and persuasive manner. Then Paul travels to Athens and there, 'he *reasoned* in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there' (v.17. emphasis added by italicization). When he stood up at the meeting in the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed

the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god'. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (vs. 22-23).

This is a masterstroke of rhetoric in the service of the gospel. When in Corinth Paul continued with the same approach, 'And he *reasoned* in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to *persuade* Jews and Greeks' (Acts 18:4. Emphasis added by italicization). This chapter also highlights the fact that Paul's enemies knew him to be a person who sought to persuade others to convert from Judaism to Christianity:

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, 'This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.' (Acts 18:12-13. Emphasis added by italicization).

In Ephesus Paul is found arguing persuasively, 'And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, *reasoning* and *persuading* them about the kingdom of God' (19:8. Emphasis added by italicization). He stayed in Ephesus for two years and had daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. When Festus accused Paul of insanity Paul replied that what he was saying was true and reasonable, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words" (Acts 26:25). Dabney exhorts preachers:

Let your aim be to persuade men in Christ's name, and not to be praised for skill in persuading... You must so hunger for the salvation of the souls before you, that you shall desire to make the effect of sacred truth fill them... He is not the true preacher who sends his hearers home exclaiming, 'How eloquent the minister today; how beautiful his imagery; how artful his arrangement; how

skilful his argument and persuasion!'¹⁵

This introduces the spiritual dimension to the activity of preaching. The great evangelistic apostle was very conscious that it was not enticing words or eloquence that prevailed upon people to be receptive and responsive to the message. He does not attribute their conversions to plausible argumentation. He attributes the 'success' of his preaching to the operation of the power of the Holy Spirit in stirring the minds and emotions of his hearers to persuade them to yield their wills to the will of God. Calvin said there is no benefit from preaching, 'except when God shines in us by the light of his Spirit...'¹⁶ Spurgeon referred to this work of the Spirit in preaching as, 'the sacred anointing'.¹⁷ Paul never set out to impress the Corinthians with semantics. He believed in the idea expressed by the writer to the Hebrews:

'For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.' (4:12).

Tony Sargent describes the sacred unction of the Spirit in these terms:

...the penetration and dominion of the personality by the Spirit... It is the preacher gliding on eagle's wings, soaring high, swooping low, carrying and being carried along by a dynamic other than his own. His consciousness of what is happening is not obliterated. He is not in a trance. He is being worked on but is aware that he is still working. He is being spoken through but he knows he is still speaking. The words are his but the facility with which they come compels him to realise that the source is beyond himself.¹⁸

Nevertheless Paul preached Christ with passion and

power and sought to be as persuasive as possible in the manner in which he presented his message. His discourse was rational and coherent and characterised by a fervent desire to see people coming to faith in Christ. It is obvious that others recognised this tone in his preaching. This is evident in the following words, 'And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you *persuade* me to be a Christian?"' (Acts 26:28. Emphasis added by italicisation). In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul explicitly states that he intentionally set about seeking to persuade people of the truth of the gospel, 'Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we *persuade* others' (5:11. Emphasis added by italicisation). Ajith Fernando points out that, 'The word *peitho* (persuade)¹⁹ is used at least eight times in Acts to refer to the evangelism of the early Christians'.²⁰ Fernando goes on to point out that 'when persuasion is used in connection with religious proclamation today it is often associated with arrogance and intolerance.'²¹ Fernando draws attention to how peculiar this is:

This is strange because persuasion is used daily in many spheres of life. Advertisers seek to persuade us to patronize certain products, and politicians seek to persuade us to accept their policies and vote for them. Yet when it comes to religion, this approach to communication is considered inappropriate.²²

He then identifies inappropriate kinds of persuasion such as 'imposition', 'manipulation'.²³

Paul was aware that the truth of the gospel is not discovered through deductive or inductive reasoning. He argued that fathoming the things of God is a matter of spiritual discernment. It is the Holy Spirit that enables the mind to apprehend truth and that intellectual comprehension stimulates impulses that

determine decisions. In the words of Calvin 'The effectual cause of faith is not the perspicacity of our mind, but the calling of God'. It is not, therefore, merely a mental matter. Paul was aware that coming to know divine truth was not the result of speculation but rather the result of revelation and illumination. He clearly communicated this to the Corinthians when he said:

'The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.' (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Nevertheless he did what he could to make the message clear and intelligible. Again the book of Acts confirms this. Whether it was the synagogue or the marketplace, Paul laboured day after day to present the gospel in as persuasive a manner as possible. This was also his typical approach in Thessalonica²⁴ and Ephesus.²⁵

There is evidence in Acts 17 of some degree of interaction with his listeners; his style had some discursive features. He was essentially handling an abstract idea in a pedagogical manner, but something of his passionate concern for his listeners must have been evident. Christ also taught pedagogically (Sermon on the Mount) but He was frequently questioned by either people who were looking for answers or looking to trip Him up. So Jesus had to deal not only with supportive questions but also with hostile ones.

In the postmodern climate the rules of engagement have changed. Argumentation in Paul's day was based on the refined outcome of centuries of Greek thought. There was an established framework for determining truth claims. Rules of logic may not be

perfect but to discard them altogether is absurd.

D. A. Carson speaks of this revolt against absolutes: For the first time in the history of the church...the only heresy that's left is the view that there is such a thing as heresy...that is the one heretical view. And within this kind of framework to preach an unflinching truth, and to claim that apart from this truth men and women are eternally lost makes you not only sound 'nineteenth century' and bigoted, but irrelevant and hopelessly lost in an epistemology now dead just crying out for a decent burial.²⁶

According to Scripture, God reasons with sinners.²⁷ But God is not negotiating terms and conditions or conferring with man in order to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. Nevertheless this text indicates that the revelation of the biblical God is of one who invites people to consider their condition in propositional terms that promises the prospect of forgiveness.

If Paul is taken to be a superior model of effective communication to which Christian preachers should aspire, then his style must be scrutinised to see what principles may be extrapolated from such a model. It is instructive to note, therefore, how frequently he uses the phrase 'I beseech you'. He is unashamed to implore, entreat and earnestly beg believers to become what God wants them to be. If this tone of urging and exhorting is absent from preaching it becomes less than what it ought to be. John MacArthur says:

After all, to be hearers of the Word without being doers is to be dangerously deceived (James 1:22). And one sure way for preachers to cultivate hearers-only is to deliver nothing more than dry, didactic lectures...dull performances for the intellectually curious. That is not biblical preaching, no matter how sound the teaching may be on an academic level.²⁸

Passion is an important element of preaching. If preaching is merely didactic and pedantic in seeking to convey information to the mind alone then people may understand the meaning of the message but fall short of undertaking its demands. Certainly, preaching is an exercise that has a pedagogical dimension but if a sermon is presented like a lecture or a dissertation on a theme, in a manner that is cold-blooded, detached and distant it may convince the intellect but not captivate the soul. Preaching to the soul not only engages the mind, emotions and will but also addresses the desires and moral inclinations of people. On the other hand a highly charged and histrionic harangue, however earnest it may be, might electrify the emotions without engaging the mind. Truth must be spoken to the mind with calculated intent to stir the emotions and engage the will. Preaching seeks to provoke a whole-soul response. A person may be convinced and yet not know a conviction of emotions and will that impel a response. When mind and emotions are engaged the will may be stimulated to action. Timothy Phillips and Denis Okholm state the idea like this:

Evangelical apologetics must attend to both reason and rhetoric, with as much emphasis on the latter as the former in order to make reason relevant and help people see the truth.²⁹

Proclamation that is unenthusiastic is not only uninteresting but pitiful and preaching that is uninterested in people is pathetic. If preaching is to be persuasive the preacher must be able to identify with the needs of the congregation. If a man is remote and aloof in pastoral ministry and if he is unaware or unconcerned about the welfare of the people then his preaching will have very little

impact. That kindred spirit where the man in the pulpit shares the concerns of the congregation in the pews is an important factor in determining how persuasive his preaching will be. If that note of empathy is absent then the majestic melody of preaching will become discordant and cacophonous. What is needed is well prepared sermons that exposit the text, delivered passionately by men of good moral character who identify with the people in the pews. The aim of preaching is not just to get people to comprehend the truth but to embrace it. Tozer makes this point forcefully:

Bible teaching without moral application could be worse than no teaching at all and could result in positive injury to the hearers. What is generally overlooked is that truth as set forth in the Christian Scriptures is a moral thing; it is not addressed to the intellect only, but to the will also. It addresses itself to the total man, and its obligations cannot be discharged by grasping it mentally. Truth engages the citadel of the human heart and is not satisfied until it has conquered everything there.³⁰

Truth and application are indivisible and Packer affirms this also, 'Preaching is essentially teaching plus application... where the plus is lacking something less than preaching takes place.'³¹

Broadus agrees, 'The application in a sermon is not merely an appendage to the discussion or a subordinate part of it, but is the main thing'.³²

Spurgeon was of the same opinion, 'Where the application begins, there the sermon begins'.³³

Christians cannot demonstrate with words alone that their faith is 'true', no matter how much apologetic emphasis is stressed. McGrath asserts:

When it comes to the big things of life, like believing in the Christian faith or believing in democracy, we live on the basis of probability, not certainty... Christian faith is a risk because it cannot be proven.³⁴

Nevertheless it is the preacher's task to present the Christian message as plausible. Postmodernism rejects the idea of absolute truth, dislikes authority and has cast off all meta-narratives, including Christianity, as exploitative. According to this way of thinking Christianity is perceived as a meta-narrative that is proclaimed authoritatively as the absolute truth. This leaves the preacher of Christ with the unenviable and daunting challenge of overcoming such obstacles.

In a postmodern world where the mission of Christianity is understood as cultural oppression and where uncertainty and doubt are characteristic traits of thinking, despair is preferable to the deception of worldviews that proselytise for their own self-serving purposes. Graham Johnston argues:

The issue surrounding the meta-narrative and preaching can come down to the speaker's ethos. Twenty-first-century listeners fear biblical communicator's motives and will question promotion of any particular worldview. Through humility, love and patience, though, preachers can take measures to dispel the concern of people who have witnessed atrocities and deception in the name of truth and the name of God.³⁵

This presents an ethical dimension to the issue of persuasion. The preacher of integrity will not seek to pressurise or manipulate people into making decisions that they do not fully understand. People are suspicious of preachers because they are perceived as silver-tongued orators who entice and entrap needy people to sign up before they develop a sense of scepticism. This wariness of the seductive charms of preachers is part of the cynicism of this generation and the problem is compounded by 'preachers' who delude and beguile, often with mesmerising methods, for the purpose of financial

gain. There is a moral obligation on those seeking to preach Christ to carefully explain the meaning and implications of faith. When this is done with passion, in the power of the Holy Spirit, by men of integrity who expect that Word to work efficaciously in the hearts of their hearers it can be very persuasive. The Christian communicator is not marketing a product or trying to soft-soap, sugar-coat or sell to potential consumers. Persuasive preaching is not about trying to clinch deals. Nevertheless it is as Christ's ambassadors that preachers implore others, on Christ's behalf, to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20). Packer addresses this matter of importance:

Far too many pulpit discourses have been put together on wrong principles...Some have expounded biblical doctrine without applying it, thus qualifying as lectures rather than preachments (for lecturing aims only to clear the head, while preaching seeks to change the life); some have been no more than addresses focusing the present self-awareness of the listeners, but not at any stage confronting them with the Word of God...such discourses are less than preaching...but because they were announced as sermons they are treated as preaching and people's idea of preaching gets formed in terms of them, so that the true conception of preaching is forgotten.³⁶

The Christian message is perceived by post-modernists as another manipulative meta-narrative like Marxism, Capitalism, Islam, Judaism etc. If Christianity is different in some critical way then the postmodern perception may be disproved. At a superficial level Christianity may appear to be a conventional, controlling meta-narrative but the gospel has conspicuous characteristics that would appear to contradict the postmodern view that all meta-narratives involve dominance by a preferred group. Marxism, for instance, might be said to be an

attractive ideology for the oppressed worker toiling endlessly for the benefit of those who control economic resources. Although it is an ideology that might appeal to the factory worker and the supermarket employee it will repel the factory owner and the supermarket owner. It is essentially about shifting the balance of power, wealth and privilege and as such it is understood by the dominant economic group to be a threat.

But Jesus does not merely present an alternative worldview to dispossess the controlling elite. Rather, his message offered a new paradigm to empower those on the fringes of society, the excluded and the rejected. He did confront the institutional authority of the religious elite with regard to their hypocrisy. Nevertheless He did not reject Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council, who came to Jesus at night.³⁷ It was not only members of the religious establishment that were received by Christ. Others such as the despised tax collectors were public officials working for the Roman oppressor and they too were received by Jesus. Christ did not stand for any particular class; rather, He included those at the core and those on the periphery. Middleton and Walsh say:

This radical embrace was vivid testimony to his trust in the Creator of both centre and margins, a Creator who is able to bring life out of even death. The person of Jesus and even his death on a cross, thus becomes in the New Testament a symbol of the counter-ideological intent of the metanarrative and the paradigm or model of ethical human action, even in the face of massive injustice.³⁸

But it is not possible to get away from the fact that preaching Christ involves conveying a message. The following list gives a broad outline of the scope of preaching themes: his deity, pre-existence,

Trinitarian nature, incarnation, sinless life, public ministry, teaching, death, atonement, resurrection, ascension, glorification, intercessory ministry on behalf of his followers. Then there are his attributes: humility, authority, holiness, power, immutability, transcendence, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and truth. Not only that, but there are a host of themes regarding Christian living and the moral implications and practical application of messages. From this brief glance it may be understood that preaching involves the communication of the central tenets of faith and cherished doctrines enshrined in constitutions and creeds. From this it is clear that, after all, preaching involves expositing Scripture. Kaiser quotes Bengel, who in 1742 observed:

Scripture is the foundation of the Church: the Church is the guardian of Scripture. When the Church is in strong health, the light of Scripture shines bright; when the Church is sick, Scripture is corroded by neglect; and thus it happens, that the outward form of Scripture and that of the Church, usually seem to exhibit simultaneously either health or else sickness; and as a rule the way in which Scripture is being treated is in exact correspondence with the condition of the Church.³⁹

Kaiser himself goes on to say:

After more than two centuries we can affirm the validity of Bengel's warning. The Church and the Scripture stand or fall together. Either the Church will be nourished and strengthened by the bold proclamation of her Biblical texts or her health will be severely impaired.⁴⁰

This is a point reinforced by one of today's greatest expository preachers, John Piper, who says:

'Where the Bible is esteemed as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, preaching can flourish. But where the Bible is treated merely as a record of valuable religious insight, preaching dies'.⁴¹

So the notion of persuasive preaching when reconceived in classical terms, as distinct from modernist terms, is germane in postmodern culture. Another crucial element in preaching Christ in a postmodern context is that of humility. In a culture where certitude is seen as arrogance, humility is attractive. But humility must be rightly understood.

Humility should be the hallmark of a preacher, as it was an essential element in the ministry of Christ.

Andrew Murray wrote:

If humility is the root of the tree, its nature must be seen in every branch, leaf and fruit. If humility is the first, the all-inclusive grace of the life of Jesus, the secret of his atonement— then the health and strength of our own spiritual life will entirely depend upon our putting this grace first, too. We must make humility the chief thing we admire in Him, the chief thing we ask of Him, the one thing for which we sacrifice all else.⁴²

Postmodernism is a profoundly complex 'philosophy' or 'mood' with significant implications for all religious thought processes including Christian theology. Still in emergent form it is not clear if the postmodern mentality will be more receptive (than the modern mentality) to the idea of preaching Christ. If there is greater optimism about receptivity to Christ in postmodern culture it is counterbalanced by less confidence in preaching as the primary method of reaching the un-churched.

When the apostle Paul spoke about the resurrection of the dead in Athens the text says that 'some of them sneered'.⁴³ This disdainful attitude was also a characteristic of the logical positivism that has dominated thought processes over the past three centuries. But this view has weakened significantly and postmodernity views the universe as a vast space where anything may be possible, including the

resurrection. There is a new humility in science. There is less arrogance and a greater hesitancy about making absolute scientific pronouncements. In the context of this new openness postmodern people no longer speak of the world as a self-regulating machine that is programmed to work in accordance with strict natural laws. There is a more humble acknowledgement that the universe is far more complex than previously understood by the scientific community and that it is more like a living organism than a machine. This recognition of the interconnectedness of all things is a feature of postmodernism and is a window of opportunity for the preacher.

For truth to be conveyed effectively there must be some connection between speaker and listener. In a postmodern culture it is better to move away from the term 'speaker and listener' because preaching in this context has to be a dialogue rather than a monologue and this 'dialogue' is likely to be more than the interchange of opinions at an intellectual or cognitive level. The biblical communicator needs humility (not the same as 'hesitancy') in communicating truth with authority. The Puritan, John Flavel said, 'a crucified style best suits the preacher of a crucified Christ'.⁴⁴ This sentiment is supported by John Piper:

...the cross is the power of God to crucify the pride of both the preacher and the congregation. In the New Testament the cross is not only a past place of objective substitution; it is also a present place of subjective execution...the execution of my self-reliance and love affair with the praise of men.⁴⁵

The Migliore phrase, 'Faith Seeking Understanding',⁴⁶ may be helpful in enabling the preacher to identify with non-believers who are also

engaged in the same activity. Graham Johnston notes:

The preacher who demonstrates humility with regard to his...own subjective foibles as human interpreter offers a reassuring message to those suspicious of demagoguery.⁴⁷

In preaching, frail, flawed and feeble people bear witness to the perfect deity. It is not an arrogant presumption on the part of the preacher to speak of a God who is almighty and perfectly holy, loving and just, because the preacher is called to the task by his people and commissioned by God to exercise the function of that office faithfully. As such, preaching is not an act of arrogance but of humility. This draws attention to the manner and practice of preaching which requires humility. But humility can be misplaced, as G. K. Chesterton observed: What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. Modesty has settled on the organ of conviction, where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. We are on the road to producing a race of men too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table.⁴⁸

The humility of the messenger is important but this does not necessitate humility regarding the message. The message of Scripture must be proclaimed with a confidence appropriate to its significance and magnitude. James Stewart says:

It is always thus in every age the ministers of the living Christ are made...the crushing, paralysing sense of abject worthlessness, the self-esteem broken and rolled in the dust, and then a man rising to his full stature as God's commissioned messenger. 'Chief of sinners', 'least of all saints'... such was Paul's self-estimate; yet with what royal, unqualified authority he proclaimed the word and the will of the Lord.⁴⁹

References

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8. MacArthur, John. 'Foreword', in: Fabarez, Michael. *Preaching That Changes Lives*, vii.
9. With regard to the absence of any mention of 'persuading' or 'explaining' in Berea it is known that he travelled to Berea and that on arrival entered the synagogue. The Bereans received the message more readily (this is clear from the text), although they did search the scriptures to see if what Paul said was true. This probably accounts for the fact that there is no mention of 'persuading' or 'explaining' in Berea.
10. See Acts 17:10-12.
11. 'For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account."' (2 Corinthians 10:10).
12. Paul was perceived by some to be an inadequate public speaker but in reality he was a powerful orator. Nevertheless he did not depend merely on his own skill to bring about conviction and conversion.
13. The word 'hearts' was understood to refer to the mind, emotions and will.
14. See 1 Corinthians 2:1-4.
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23. Fernando, Ajith. 'The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ', 127.
24. Acts 17:1-4
25. Acts 18:18-19
26. Carson, D. A. *The Primacy of Expository Preaching*, cassette.
27. "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." (Isaiah 1:18 emphasis added in italicisation).
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35. Johnston, Graham *Preaching To A Postmodern World*, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 108.
36. Lucas, Dick. (ed. et. al.) *Preaching the Living Word: Addresses from the Evangelical Ministry Assembly*, 31.
37. Although he did not reject Nicodemus Jesus rebuked him for his ignorance of spiritual matters and classified him as part of a group blinded by prejudice rather than receptive to the New Covenant.
38. Middleton, Richard and Brian J. Walsh, *Truth is Stranger than it Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*, 105.
39. Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981, (twelfth printing 1996). Kaiser is quoting John Albert Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, ed. Andrew R. Fausset, 5 Vols., Edinburgh: Clark, 1857-1858, 1:7. He notes that the English translation has been modernised at one or two points.
40. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching And Teaching*, 7.
41. Piper, John. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 40.
42. Murray, Andrew. *Humility*, New Kensington: Pa.: Whitaker House, 1982, 19.
43. Acts 17:32.
44. Flavel, John. *The Works of John Flavel*, Reprinted, Banner of Truth Trust, 1968, Vol. 6, 562.
45. Piper, John. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 33.
46. Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans, 1991.
47. Johnston, Graham. *Preaching to a Postmodern World*, 105.
48. In: Stewart, James S. *Heralds of God: A Practical Book on Preaching*, Regent College Publishing, 1946, 210.
49. Stewart, James. *Heralds of God: A Practical Book on Preaching*, 212.