

The Reading and Relevancy of the Bible

Colossians 4:16

NKJ Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

BGT καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῆ παρ' ὑμῖν ἡ ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῆ, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνώτε.

I. The Reading of the Word of God

"Now when this epistle is read among you"

A. Observations

1. The epistle is expected to be read in the presence of the assembly
2. The epistle is expected to be read in its entirety
3. The epistle is expected to be read and understood (at some level) by those hearing it
4. The epistle is expected to be read with an attitude of responsiveness (see Neh 9:1-3)

B. Applications

1. Longer readings of the Word should be part of an assembly's practices.
Reading a larger portion of the Word:
 - Gives the Word in context
 - Gives a broader exposure to the Word of truth
 - Gives understanding of the nature of God and His workings
 - Gives dedicated time and focus for reading of the Word in the assembly
 - Gives corporate reading experience, all on the same text
2. We need to teach everyone of all ages to listen attentively to the extended reading of the Word
 - OT practice seems to indicate that even "little ones" should be participating (start them early) – implications... (Deut 31:9-13; Josh 8:30-35)
 - We need to train ourselves and our children to listen
 - We need to remove or restrict practices that prevent the development of attentive listening

3. The Word is central and foundational to the church and to its worship, fellowship, and discipleship (not our ideas, feelings, theories, fads, programs, entertainment, or even music)

Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. (1 Tim 4:13)

C. Questions

1. Is this practice still applicable since we are more literate?
2. Is this practice still applicable since we have personal access to the Word through print, audio, and digital media?
 - Education and technology have given us amazing personal access to the Word
 - We can read, but it does not mean that we are reading the Word.
 - We can own a personal copy of the Word, but that does not mean that we are reading the Word personally.
 - It seems that reading the Word is part of corporate worship.
 - Corporate reading seems to expect a corporate response.

II. The Relevancy of the Word of God

"see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

A. Observations

1. The epistle is expected to be read by other assemblies
I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren. (1 Thes 5:27)
2. The epistle is expected to be read with benefit to the readers who are not the direct recipients
3. The Word of God is transcendent – It is above culture and intended to be relevant beyond the immediate setting. Even the personal greetings have truth and application!

B. Applications

1. We are to approach the Word as applicable to us, and with an attitude to believe and obey.
2. We need to be extremely careful before discounting the truth of the Word as limited to a specific people, time, or culture.