LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Brian Tome on the Future of Preaching - Episode 243

Preaching Best Practices for 2022

Being the primary preacher and teacher is one of the four main roles that a senior pastor can't delegate. If you're a pastor who wants your preaching to be more innovative, applicable, and effective—then this series is for you.

In Part 1, Tony sat down with Brian Tome, the Founding and Senior Pastor of Crossroads Church (a multisite ministry based out of Cincinnati, OH) to discuss his perspective on the future of preaching, digital ministry, reaching the next generation, and more.

The Future of Preaching: Interview with Brian Tome

Tony: Most church services follow a typical pattern: welcome, 3 worship songs, offering moment, a 45-minute message and then a response song. Do you think that still works?

Brian: I think it works based on who you are trying to reach. If you're trying to reach people who are church fans, then I think that formula is fine. If you're trying to reach people who *don't* have much of a church background—or do have a lot of church background, but are just sort of tired of it—you have to change things up.

Tony: Let's talk specifically about the younger generations of adults—Gen Z and the Millennials. As churches struggle to engage these younger generations, does anything about how we teach/preach need to change?

Brian: Yes and no. While some of the subject matter we address today has changed, I still always want to be an authentic version of myself on stage. That means to just let my personality shine and be who God has created me to be. And the younger generation really cares about this—they're looking to cut through the clutter, more so than the older generations. They have to look at you and believe in you. They ask themselves, "Is this a guy who I would like as a friend? Would I want this guy to be my dad?" That's a different filter and leads you to do and say things differently.

Tony: What trends are you seeing *outside* the church context that we may need to pay attention to when it comes to how we teach/preach?

Brian: In the early days, I was too influenced by the preaching style of others, and I was just preaching like them instead of being me. But I can't reach the people that God wants me to reach if I'm not being myself.

I do think when you look outside, I'm always pushed when listening to comedians—they own the stage and have a strong physical presence. We have to give people the quality that they're used to hearing when they go to something that mesmerizes them, and that generally means somebody owns the stage. So I don't think it's theology or our thoughts that are keeping back our preaching—I think it's our presence.

Tony: Will you describe some of the ways you and your team are approaching online and physical experiences with similar yet distinctive approaches?

Brian: These are three data-driven tips we've learned for creating an outsider-friendly online experience:

1. Don't show online viewers an experience inside a building.
2. Don't lead with worship—it turns people away immediately.
3. When people are streaming, it has to be shorter. We keep our online content very teaching heavy.

Tony: I think many pastors are concerned if the online experience is too good, it might discourage people from coming to the church for worship on Sunday mornings. Should they be concerned about this?

Brian: If you have a pastor who is okay with empty buildings, you have a problem. So it's good to be a little concerned about it, but you can't fight reality. And the reality is that a growing number of people want to engage online—and if you don't give them a really good streaming option, they're going to go elsewhere. So if you want to have a growing vibrant church that meets the needs of your members older **and** younger, you're going to have to embrace this. My best advice is to find what's in tune with who you are and then try to do just one thing really well in the digital space.

Next Steps

It's important for Brian to be Brian, for Tony to be Tony, and for you to be you. We can't copy and paste someone else's preaching style, delivery, and personality and hope to reach people for Jesus—at least not in today's culture.

If you want to improve your teaching and have a bigger Kingdom impact in people's lives, you have to figure out who God designed you to be—and you need to bring more of that to your messages.

Free Webinar: Preaching Best Practices on May 19 @ 1PM

Looking for more innovative approaches to preaching and teaching? Join Tony Morgan, Clay Scroggins, Dan Lian, and Jason Anderson on May 19 for a free 1-hour webinar on "Preaching Best Practices." Learn more and **register here.**

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