

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Rick Warren on Making Preaching Applicable - Episode 245

Preaching Best Practices for 2022 (Part 3)

Rick Warren was just 16 years old when he began preaching. By the age of 18, Billy Graham became his personal mentor, and by age 20, he had preached at more than 120 crusades. Since then, he's pastored four unique congregations, from a rural church, to an urban church, to a suburban church, and a church overseas in Japan. Rick joined us in Part 3 of our preaching series to discuss his ministry journey, approach to life-changing preaching, and more.

Making Preaching Applicable: Interview with Rick Warren

Tony: What's the advice you wish someone would have given you as a young pastor that you'd like to offer this next generation, especially as it relates to preaching and teaching?

Rick: Before you start talking about preaching, clarify the goal of your ministry. Of course the goal is to glorify God, but try to define exactly *how* you are going to try to glorify God. For example, I had four distinct goals when I started Saddleback 43 years ago:

1. I want to change the way unbelievers think about Jesus.
2. I want to change the way believers think about the Christian life.
3. I want to change the way members think about the Church.
4. I want to change the way pastors think about preaching.

I don't have the final word on it, but I'm pleased with the results so far.

Tony: Why is making your teaching relatable a priority for you as a pastor, and how do you approach your messages with that in mind?

Rick: First, you have to go back and ask: What is God's purpose for us? And then ask: What is God's purpose for scripture? "The purpose of scripture is not to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives." So any preaching that's not for life change is missing the purpose of the Bible. Our messages have to be life-oriented, not information-oriented, and if you buy into that, it's going to influence everything else—the way you prepare your messages, the way you deliver your messages, and the way you evaluate your messages.

Tony: You've been teaching for more than 50 years. Society has changed quite a bit in that time. How, if at all, has your teaching evolved over those decades?

Rick: We've basically invited the divisiveness of the world into the church, and there's a great sorting out going on right now. And I attribute that as a failure of our preaching—that believers are acting no different than nonbelievers. People are being disciplined by whatever news channel they choose for 15 hours a week, and then hearing their pastor for just one hour a week. Who's going to win in that battle? We don't have people's attention as much as the world does, and their world system and their value system is being shaped by people on TV rather than by the word of God. That's why I think solid Biblical preaching has become even more important today.

Tony: Is there any final encouragement you'd like to give pastors as it relates to their teaching responsibilities?

Rick: Remember that people are going to have the exact same problems in 20 years as they have now: They'll be lonely. They'll be angry. They'll be guilty. They'll have shame. There will be jealousy. There will be conflict. And especially coming out of Covid, I believe there is going to be a tsunami of grief over loss and lost experiences—so pastors who understand how to help people deal with grief will have an audience.

Most importantly, don't give up, because this too shall pass. This is not the first crisis the church has been through for 2000 years. We have outlasted every dictator, every war, every famine, and every critic so far, and the church is the only thing that's going to last a thousand years from today. Everything manmade passes, “but my word will not pass away.” The word of God abides forever. So focus on the things that aren't going to change.

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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