Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Why doesn't John MacArthur add much application to his sermons?
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: GTY117

Through the years there is kind of a running discussion about how to preach and when you preach, what you should say and how you should say it. And I'm outside the box of kind of most contemporary discussions about preaching and I often have to sort of defend myself.

The criticism is this, MacArthur is biblical, he's just not relevant. MacArthur is biblical, he's just not practical. MacArthur is good on interpretation, he's weak on application. And I think that people have said this and by virtue of the way they view what I do, they think they're right, and I understand that. I don't have a quarrel with that.

But I want you to understand, if you don't already understand, what I think should happen in effective biblical preaching. You heard a testimony tonight in the waters of Baptism from Juan about how he kept coming to Grace Church. And in spite of the fact that he wanted to be a hypocrite, the power of the Scripture began to overwhelm him.

Now let me tell you what happens when you preach effectively. You do explanation. In other words, you explain the meaning of Scripture, okay? The explanation carries with it implication. In other words, there are implications built into this truth that impact us. You add to that exhortation. And I've said things tonight to exhort you to follow what is implied by the text. Now when you deal with the text and the armor of God, like tonight, all I can do is explain it. That's all it does. There aren't any applications in that text. It doesn't say, "And here's how to do this if you're 32 years old, and you live in North Hollywood." "Here's how to do this the next time you go to a Mall." "Here's how to do this when you go in your car and you're driving in a traffic jam." It doesn't tell you that. And if I made my message mostly a whole lot of those little illustrations, I would be missing 90 percent of you who don't live in that experience.

It's not for me to do that. Application belongs to the Spirit of God. All I'm interested in is explanation and its implications. And the power comes in the implication and the Spirit of God takes the implications of what I've said tonight, all these things I've said, I don't need to say all kinds of little scenarios to you and paint all kinds of little individual circumstances. All I need you to know is this is what the Word of God says and the implications are powerfully brought to bear with authority on your life and I exhort you to respond to those implications, it is the Spirit's work to drive those implications into direct and personal application. That's why you're not going to, like so many preachers, you're not going to hear me create all kinds of practical scenarios about how this all fleshes out in

everybody's world because you may hit somebody, you may hit a person here or there, that's kind of a rifle-shot approach, the shot-gun approach that sprays everybody is the implicational essence of Scripture. That's the power. And that's when everybody walks out and says, "Wow, that hit me!" because you already have a commitment to the authority and the power of Scripture.

You already have a commitment to the truthfulness of Scripture. All I want you to understand is what it means. And in the meaning expanded beyond the given text to other texts so that you build all the theological implications, I leave you with the implications and an exhortation to be obedient and I leave the application to the Spirit.

Now I'm not trying to defend myself, but I was at a Pastors' Conference in the Midwest a few weeks ago and they were asking me, "Why don't you ever give any application?" And I had to explain myself that that's not my job. I think what I'm saying is the most practical thing. You know, there's a lot of application without interpretation or implication...just application. That's not what we do when we do expository preaching. The power is in the truth from the text, blended with other texts so that the full implications of this text break in upon your mind and you understand and you feel the weight of that of those implications against your own life and the Spirit of God drives that into the particular zones where you need to make application, okay?

So now you know. You've been experiencing this. You had no idea what you were experiencing, right? (Applause) Okay.

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