

How Should I Use Online Sermons?

Tim Conway | illbehonest.com

Question: Question six, from Florian. "How should I use online sermons for my Christian life?"

Discussion:

Tim: My primary answer: Not as a replacement for the church. He is wondering "How do I use online sermons?" Not as an excuse for not coming among the brethren. You do not want to do that. He goes on to say. "I know that sermons can be very eye opening, encouraging, and correcting, at the same time the offer is so overwhelming," and I think what he means is there are just so many offered on the Internet, "It's just so overwhelming that you could spend all of your time just listening to sermons." And then he refers to me. He said "You said that even a sermon can become a weight." "What are some helpful questions to decide whatever message God wants me to listen to? How much time should I set aside for listening to sermons?"

Now there is obviously not one answer for that. But there are good principles. Don't neglect the assembly of the church, listening to Internet sermons. That is not an adequate substitute. Something happens when God's people meet together, that does not happen in your bedroom or living room with your face behind a computer screen. That would be one thing. We are told not to neglect assembling ourselves together.(Hebrews 10:25) We are told to submit ourselves to those who have authority over us.(Hebrews 13:17) You're not doing that when you're sitting at home in your living room. There's so much that's integral to the stirring up of one another, loving and bearing one another's burdens, praying for one another, using our spiritual gifts for sake of one another, comforting one another, teaching one another, singing... singing is prescribed in Scripture. That doesn't happen at home. So you don't wanna make that a substitute.

But beyond that, how much should you listen, there is not really a bad answer. But listen, I would say this: you only have so much time. One thing, don't listen to people that you don't profit from. Look, if there's guys out there, that you really like, listen to them. Don't listen and waste your time listening to people that don't help you. Don't listen to people that just don't do much for you. Don't do that.

And don't let listening to sermons ever interfere with other things that you know Christ wants you to do. Look, you guys have a responsibility to work. It says there in 2 Thessalonians. You wanna talk about this disassociation? 2 Thessalonians talks about disassociating with those who won't work. Men and women both need to work. Maybe in different spheres, primarily. But we need to work. I mean, if you've got children at home, having your face in the computer when you are to be tending to your family, is wrong. It's not like everything that is good is always good. If you're supposed to be working, and you're actually at your workplace, working for your employer, and you've got a John MacArthur sermon on your screen, you're in sin. You're stealing your employer's time. Unless of course, it's a break or lunch. There are times when it is not appropriate. There are many other obligations that a Christian has in his life. If you simply read

your Bible all the time, you would be wrong. If you simply prayed all the time, you would be wrong. We need to live a balanced life. There's all manner of things that, as a citizen of this country, we have a responsibility. As a member of this church, we have a responsibility. If you have a family, you have a responsibility. If you work for a certain employer, you have a responsibility. If you go to a certain college, you have certain responsibilities. Every one of us have diverse responsibilities that the Bible addresses. If you have a wife, you have responsibilities to her. You have a husband, you have responsibilities to him. You have children, you have responsibilities to them.

You cannot park yourself in front of your computer all the time, when you have responsibilities. It doesn't matter if you're do the best things you could possibly be doing on a computer, like watching the best preachers in the world preach the best sermons, if you ought to be doing something else. And you're neglecting that something else you ought to be doing because you're doing this. But look, at the same time, there's probably a lot of things that we do with our lives that are rather useless and a waste of time. And we might rather be watching a Paul Washer sermon or a John MacArthur sermon. And so, we need to be discerning about how we use our time overall. We don't want to take away time from good things for the sake of sermons. But there may be a lot of dead time, or useless things that we do with our life, that we could better use our time if we did that. These are just some things to think about.