



# Practice Guide | *Preaching the Gospel*

## WEEK 4—Proclamation & Presence

### Meeting Prep

Choose one of the following for a group discussion:

1. *Long*: The “[Proclamation & Presence](#)” message in Soma’s *Preaching the Gospel* sermon series.
2. *Short*: “[From Gospel Proclamation to Kingdom Presence](#)” (3:45).

### Read this Overview

*Faithful presence requires the gospel, and to proclaim this gospel requires we be faithfully present.*<sup>4</sup>

David Fitch  
*Faithful Presence*

We’ve discussed the importance of hospitality to our proclamation of the gospel. This week’s topic is closely related: our *presence* with others as the foundation of our *proclaiming* the gospel.

### Begin with Prayer & Silence

After gathering and settling in, keep silence together for a few minutes, simply being present to God. Listen for his voice and experience his loving presence. Close the silence with a brief prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time together.

### Discuss the Teaching

1. To proclaim the gospel, we have to know what “gospel” we’re proclaiming. In your own words, what *is* the gospel?

At Soma, our operating definition of the gospel is this:

*The gospel is “the good news that God himself has come to rescue us from sin and to renew the world through the person and work of Jesus on our behalf, and to establish his kingdom through his people in the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

Is this different from how you’ve understood the “gospel” you’ve believed or shared with others? If yes, how so?

<sup>4</sup> David E. Fitch, *Faithful Presence: Seven Practices that Shape the Church for Mission*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016, p. 95.

2. David Fitch (the teacher in “From Gospel Proclamation to Kingdom Presence” above) writes elsewhere:

*We must remember that the gospel is so all-encompassing that there is not one aspect of life that it does not touch and transform. So the gospel for this time and place may not address the hearers’ sin condition or their trust in Christ and his sacrifice on the cross (the most common starting point for evangelicals). Instead, as we sit together, long enough in each other’s presence, faithful to his presence, we will be presented with an entry point. We must not translate our priorities into the lives of others.*<sup>5</sup>

What do you think of this? Is a person’s “sin condition or their trust in Christ and his sacrifice on the cross” your usual starting point for communicating the gospel? How does it make you *feel* to consider starting from a different angle on the gospel? What other starting points might there be in a person’s life?

3. Consider this distinction drawn between *preaching* (or proclaiming, or sharing) the gospel and *teaching*:

*Proclaiming the gospel... accomplishes something different from conveying information... Teaching is moral instruction to Christians for how to live. It is the exposition of key beliefs. It may even be apologetics... But preaching is the public proclamation of the gospel. It is the announcement of a new world. Proclamation is description. It is like painting a picture. The proclaimer describes the world as it is under Jesus as Lord and then always invites the person into it... Proclamation tells the story, describes the alternative account of reality it offers, and then asks, “Can you see it? Can you receive the news? Do you want to enter in?”*<sup>6</sup>

How does that line up with your understanding of “preaching the gospel?” How confident do you feel to do something like that yourself?

4. What are some practical examples of *presence* that you’ve seen or experienced? How did it lead to *proclamation* of the gospel?
5. Have a few people from your group read the stories in Mark 1:14-34 (vv. 14-15; vv. 16-20; vv. 21-28; and vv. 29-34). How do you see Jesus living out the dynamic of presence and proclamation?
6. What are some of the biggest barriers you face to being present with or to others? Which barriers seem mostly external to you? Which barriers are largely internal – emotional, intellectual, relational, or otherwise? What is one thing you can ask God to do for one of those barriers to fall?

<sup>5</sup> Fitch, *Faithful Presence*, p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> Fitch, *Faithful Presence*, p. 98.

## Individual & Group Practice: Discernment Walk

This week, on your own or with a group, take a walk around your neighborhood (or some area you think God is calling you to). Start the time asking Jesus to be with you and to help you notice and discern his presence where you're walking. You can pray as you go, but your priority is simply to *notice*.

During your walk, what does the Holy Spirit draw your attention to? Offer those things to God with a holy curiosity, trusting that he is at work in the drawing of your attention.

- What people do you see? What activities are they engaged in? How do they respond to your presence?
- What do you notice about the land, houses, and property?
- What sounds and smells do you notice?
- What is happening *inside* you? How does your body feel? Do you find yourself wanting anything?
- What emotions do you notice? If there's a lack of emotion, what do you think that is telling you?
- What kinds of needs do you become aware of, whether your own or those of others?

At the end of that time, gather with your group to process what you noticed. If you want, sketch a map of the area you walked and have people mark where they noticed something from God or encountered him in some way. (You could use sticky notes to record stories on the map, too.) What are you discerning together about God's presence in the neighborhood? How did he respond to you when you offered those "noticings" to him? Do you have a sense of calling growing through this – a way for *you* to be present here that might lead to proclaiming the gospel?

## Close with Prayer

Ask someone in your group to close in prayer.