What qualifies you to give feedback on a sermon?

How to Listen to a Sermon

If you've been asked to think about sermons as a member of the group of pew-sitters your preacher is putting together to provide feedback on their preaching, you might wonder if you're qualified to say anything at all about what you hear. After all, your preacher is the one who's had training and knows way better than you how to think about proclamation of the Gospel.

It's true: your preacher has had training, but the preacher is only *one* element in how God comes to us in a sermon. In Matthew 18, verse 20, Jesus promises that wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he is there with them. You might never have thought about why Jesus uses those numbers, but two or three people are essential for the Lord to be present. That's because the proclamation of the Gospel requires one set of lips to speak and at least one set of ears to hear God's Word. Your preacher's sermons aren't the Word of God without *you* as the recipient of Christ's promises. Jesus is there traveling in waves of sound into *your* ears, so that God's Word can be *for you*.

There's no one better than you to say whether a sermon has hit the mark, because your preacher writes with you in mind. Everyone who hears a sermon is qualified because they're the people who make up the "two or three" to whom Jesus wants to deliver his gifts. You may not know a ton about the Bible or understand heady theological terms or have a sense of the church's 2000-year timeline, but if you're in the room then you have something to say about what you experienced.

The cool thing that happens when you and the other Sermon Whisperers in your congregation connect with your preacher about this essential piece of Christian worship, is that you'll become one of your preacher's trusted allies. You'll learn more about what goes into crafting a sermon, and you'll come away with a deeper experience of the Gospel. The more your share the experience with one another, the more confident you'll become in knowing who Christ *is* and what he's *done* for you.

In the meantime, the other videos in this series will help you think about specific aspects of a sermon, like how well it's delivered, how connected it is to the Bible, whether it made sense, and what it means in your own life. Thanks for your willingness to be part of this process!