

# Preaching Conference reaps growth, fellowship rewards

*By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor*

The 2023 Mississippi Baptist Preaching Conference provided in-depth Bible study with ministerial growth and fellowship, as participants studied and were equipped to preach and teach from the Gospel of John.

The annual event was held at three facilities affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention:

- Blue Mountain Christian University in Blue Mountain, April 17.
- Garaywa Camp & Conference Center in Clinton, April 18.
- William Carey University in Hattiesburg, April 19.

Topics and presenters at each location were:

- Background and Context of the Gospel of John: Joseph Bird, Chair, Department of Christian Ministries and Biblical Studies and Assistant Professor of Religion at William Carey University.
- Theological Themes and Discussion of the Gospel of John: Wayne Van Horn, Dean, School of Christian Studies and the Arts and Professor of Christian Studies and Philosophy at Mississippi College.
- Preaching and Teaching Ideas of the Gospel of John: Ronald Meeks, Chair and Professor of Biblical Studies and Director of Church Relations and Ministerial Recruiting at Blue Mountain Christian University.

“The professor and I decided which book is taught,” said John Pace, director of the



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“The Preaching Conference is a blessing to pastors,” he said. “There are three things it does. One, it’s just good for pastors to keep learning. A lot of guys get busy and they forget to invest themselves in growing and learning.”

A different book of the Bible is chosen every year. This year was the book of John. “Having the three professors come in and do a deep dive on it – they’re doing the background, the theological themes, and the sermons. It helps our guys continue to learn.”

Secondly, the fellowship element is important. “It’s a chance for pastors to get together and encourage one another,” Pace said.

Thirdly, as Pace noted, the practical aspects of the conference “are a great blessing, too,” such as ideas garnered for effective preaching. “We have a Facebook page for these

guys, and every year after the conference I can document two dozen guys who are doing a sermon series in that book.

“We’ve given them something to make their ministry a little more productive,” Pace said.

The conference is video recorded each year and posted on the Facebook page. Handouts are also distributed.



Ronald Meeks

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As a pastor, I was pouring into people all the time and studying. What a blessing to have someone pour into me. It was a place to learn, be challenged, and go deep into a book of the Bible.

“I encourage guys by telling them they’re going to get to spend a day with fellow pastors and ministers, and we have to do more than that. We need to be with each other more and share with each other more. It’s investing in the ministry and investing in yourself to be the best you can be.

If you’re in the pastorate or in the ministry, who isn’t looking for the next sermon idea or sermon series?”