

DEEPER LIFE CAMPUS FELLOWSHIP

SHORT TERM MINISTERIAL COURSE

HOMILETICS SMC 202

COURSE CONTENT

1. **Introduction** to Christian preaching and its significance.

2. History of preaching

Theology and history of preaching

Biblical and theological foundations of homiletics

Definition and history of exegesis

Re-orienting the homiletical ethos of preaching

Fundamentals of homiletic of Christ

Examining homiletics of Paul and Stephen

3. Expository preaching

What is expository, textual, topical, character, chronological and doctrinal preaching?

Exposition (Proclaiming the meaning of the text to the audience)

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INTRODUCTION

Christian preaching and its significance

“And moreover, because the Preacher was wise he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find acceptable words, and what was written was upright – words of truth.” Ecclesiastes 12:9-10

“They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.” Nehemiah 8:8

ATTENTION:

1. This course is about learning the rules, letting them break you – and then you breaking the rules.
2. The main thing in preaching is keeping the main thing the main thing – which is delivering the Truth of God in a way that is CRYSTAL CLEAR, remaining ACCESSIBLE TO HEARERS, that HONOURS GOD and INSPIRES PEOPLE.
3. Art speaks of your personality – God does not want you to look like a clone of your favourite preaching guru – so let your (sanctified) personality shine through. Be you and not someone else.
4. Science speaks of *what works and what does not work*. Regardless of where you preach, if you violate the “science”, for example, of voice projection (people can’t hear you) you will not help the cause of the Kingdom.

What is Homiletics?

Homiletics (Gr. homiletikos, from homilos, to assemble together), In theology, is the application of the general principles of rhetoric to the specific department of public preaching. The one who practices or studies homiletics is called a homilist – Patrick McGrath. Homiletics comprises the study of the composition and delivery of a sermon or other religious discourse. It includes all forms of preaching, viz., the sermon, homily and catechetical instruction. It may be further defined as the study of the analysis, classification, preparation, composition and delivery of sermons.

According to middle second-century writer Justin Martyr, the practice of the early church was for someone to read from the "Memoirs of the Apostles or the Writings of the Prophets," meaning readings from what was to become

the Christian Bible. A discourse on the text followed the reading. This was the same practice as that of the synagogues, but now with the New Testament writings added, except that in Christian churches the same person who read the scripture also explained it and there was no set lectionary of readings. Origen, a third-century theologian, preached through most books of the Old Testament and many of the New, which we have today. Origen's sermons on the Scripture are expository and evangelistic. By the fourth century, a system had developed where a reading from the Law, Prophets, Epistles, and Gospels were read in that order, followed by a sermon. John Chrysostom is recognized as one of the greatest preachers of this age. His sermons begin with exegesis, followed by application to practical problems.

In effect, homiletics consists of five principal parts: The preacher, the text (from the scriptures), the congregation, the event, and the Holy Spirit.

Andrew Blackwood says, 'Homiletics is the science of which preaching is the art and the sermon is the finished product.' Homiletics is the application of general and specific principles of Bible interpretation that are necessary to understand the Bible text. There are two distinct aspects involved in preaching: Firstly, the divine; secondly, the human. Homiletics is the study of the human aspect!

CHAPTER TWO

History of preaching

Theology and history of preaching

The rich heritage of expository preaching in church history stems from a relatively small number of men who have committed themselves to this type of preaching.¹

Dargan notes that "preaching is an essential part and a distinguishing feature of Christianity, and accordingly the larger history of general religious movements includes that of preaching." He further observes that "a reciprocal influence must be reckoned with: the movement has sometimes produced the preaching, the preaching sometimes the movement, but most commonly they have each helped the other."³ The apostle Paul spoke of his preaching as "not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (**1 Corinthians 2:4**). In establishing the pattern for the church, he instructed Timothy to "preach the Word" (**2 Timothy 4:2**). God has used the faithful efforts of expository preachers of His Word to bring honor to His name and to increase the faith of His saints (**1 Corinthians 2:5**) throughout history. The *history* of expository preaching is a principal division of the overall science and art of homiletics.

Historical study of expository preaching must begin with a proper understanding of the record of preaching in Scripture. Preaching in the Bible is in two basic forms: revelatory preaching and explanatory preaching. All post-biblical preaching has the backdrop of the preaching recorded in Scripture and must trace its roots to this source.

Those originally charged with the task of proclaiming God's Word revealed God to man as they spoke. This Word from God came through different instruments,

including the prophet who spoke a divine word from the Lord, the priest who spoke the law, and the sage who offered wise counsel (Jeremiah 18:18). The Old Testament is replete with the utterances of these revelatory preachers who accurately conveyed God's message to men.

One of the earliest examples of revelatory preaching is the final charge of Moses to Israel (**Deuteronomy 31-33**). This address was delivered with tremendous ability and clarity by one who once described himself as "slow of speech and slow of tongue" (**Exodus 4:10**). In his two farewell addresses Joshua offered profound words of revelation and explanation to his people (**Joshua 23:2-16; 24:2-27**). Broadus points to the "*finely rhetorical use of historical narrative, animated dialogue, and imaginative and passionate appeal*"⁷ in these messages from the Lord.

David and Solomon gave profound examples of revelatory and explanatory preaching of the Word in poetic form. David devoted many psalms to revealing the nature and character of God (**Psalms 8, 9, 16, 22, 24, 34, 68, 75, 89, 93, 105, 110, 119, 136, 145**). An equal number explained God to the people (**Psalms 1, 23, 32, 37, 40, 46, 50, 66, 78, 92, 100, 104, 106, 118, 128, 150; see especially 32:8**). The Psalms provide an extraordinary wealth of instruction about the nature and content of preaching.⁸

Solomon used proverbs to provide instruction (**Proverbs 1:2-3**) and taught through an address at the dedication of the temple (**2 Chronicles 6:1-42**).

Prophetic messages were not only predictions of the future (**e.g., Isaiah 9, 53**), but often called the people to repentance and obedience (**Isaiah 1:2-31**) or offered the people an explanation of the Word of the Lord (**Isaiah 6**). "The prophets were preachers."¹⁰ A number of passages in which explanation was the focus and purpose of the messages include Josiah's command to repair and reform the house of the Lord (**2 Kings 22-23**); Ezra's study and teaching of the

law (**Ezra 7:10**); Nehemiah's comments about the law (Nehemiah 8:1-8); and Daniel's explanation of his vision of seventy weeks (**Daniel 9**). Prophets who spoke of their work as instruction are Samuel (**1 Samuel 12:23**), Isaiah (**Isaiah 30:9**), Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 32:33**), and Malachi (**Malachi 2:9**). John the Baptist has a special place because he blends fearless determination with deep humility (**John 1; 3:22-30**) as he "bore witness" to Christ and called men to repentance and faith (**Mark 1:4; John 1:15, 29**).

A history of Bible expositors must include Christ, who is both the model of preaching and the message preached. Jesus came preaching (Mark 1:14) and teaching (**Matthew 9:35**). He was quite young when He began to display his understanding of Scripture (**Luke 2:46-50**). As with earlier spokesmen, His preaching included both revelation and explanation. The sermons of Christ, such as in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5-7**) and the one at Nazareth (**Luke 4:16-30**), are models of explanation and exposition for all time. In **Matthew 5** Jesus said, "You have heard that it hath been said . . . but I say to you. . . ." In so doing He instructed and enlightened His listeners and amplified the text, much to the people's amazement. He stands head and shoulders above all who share the title "preacher" with him. Many qualities of Christ's teaching and preaching can be quickly identified. Among them are the following: (1) He spoke with authority (**Matthew 7:29**); (2) He made careful use of other Scriptures in His explanations; (3) He lived out what he taught; (4) He taught simply to adapt to the common man (**Mark 12:37**); and (5) His teaching was often controversial (**Matt 10:35-37**).

The preaching of the apostles and other early church leaders contributes significantly to the history of expository preaching. The messages of Peter (**Acts 2:14-36**), Stephen (**Acts 7:2-53**), Paul (**Acts 17:16-31**), and James (**Acts 15:14-21**) have elements of both revelatory and explanatory preaching. The epistles are,

for the most part, written expositions designed to teach various lessons. As Barclay points out,

Paul's letters are sermons far more than they are theological treatises. It is with immediate situations that they deal. They are sermons even in the sense that they were spoken rather than written. They were not carefully written out by someone sitting at a desk; they were poured out by someone striding up and down a room as he dictated, seeing all the time in his mind's eye the people to whom they were to be sent. Their torrential style, their cataract of thought, their involved sentences all bear the mark of the spoken rather than of the written word.¹⁴

Paul in particular gave his life to preaching Christ (**1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:5**) to reveal who He was (**Romans 1:18; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Ephesians 3:5**) and to explain Him to people (**Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11, 17; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 1 Timothy 1:5**). A careful study of this apostle as a teacher and expository preacher of Christ yields deep insights regarding that preaching. As Broadus said of Paul, "Thousands have unconsciously learned from him how to preach. And how much richer and more complete the lesson may be if we will apply ourselves to it consciously and thoughtfully."

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS OF PREACHING

EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Expository preaching is a form of preaching that details the meaning of a particular text or passage of Scripture. It explains what the Bible means by what it says. Exegesis is technical and grammatical exposition, a careful drawing out of the exact meaning of a passage in its original context. While the term exposition could be used in connection with any verbal informative teaching on any subject, the term is also used in relation to Bible preaching and teaching. The practice originated from the Jewish tradition of the rabbi giving a "Dvar Torah", explaining a passage from the Torah, during the prayer services.

At its best, expository preaching is the presentation of biblical truth, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, Spirit-guided study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit applies first to the life of the preacher and then through him to his congregation. No matter what the length of the portion explained may be, if it is handled in such a way that its real and essential meaning as it existed in the mind of the particular Biblical writer and as it exists in the light of the overall context of Scripture is made plain and applied to the present-day needs of the hearers, it may properly be said to be expository preaching. Expository preaching is emphatically not preaching about the Bible, but preaching the Bible. Expository preaching differs from topical preaching in that the former concentrates on a specific text and discusses topics covered therein; whereas, the latter concentrates on a specific topic and references texts covering the topic. Expository preaching is a term and technique that refers to the proclamation the content of the Bible as it appears in the text, as opposed to an emphasis on application to the hearers.

The expository method of preaching is favored among those who believe that the Bible is the very word of God and thus worthy of being presented in its purest essence, rather than modifying the message to match the characteristics of the audience.

We shall consider the following methods of preaching:

1. Expository Preaching:

True expository preaching is, therefore, doctrinal preaching, it is preaching which addresses specific truths from God to man. The expository preacher is not one who 'shares his studies' with others, he is an ambassador and a messenger, authoritatively delivering the Word of God to men. Such preaching presents a text, then, with that text in sight throughout, there is a deduction, argument and appeal, the whole making up a message which bears the authority of Scripture itself.

2. Textual:

Behind every text is its setting. Within every text is a form. The purpose of the text is insight or message. That message must be understood before it can be abstracted for use in a sermon. A text is "abstracted" when a truth or theme is drawn from it. The process of developing expository texts demands a personal reading of the text.

Study your given text or passage at firsthand until its setting, form, and insight are clear to you. There are passages that you can probe on your own and quite readily understand them, and there are other passages that will demand the help of professional exegetes and commentators to make your study fruitful. Think and pray your way into the passage, going as far as you can go without others helping you; then, as you see the barriers posed by questions you cannot answer, seek the help of the experts.

In a textual sermon, the preacher uses a particular text to make a point without examining the original intent of that text. For example, someone could

use **Isaiah 66:7-13** to preach on motherhood, although motherhood is only peripheral in that text, being merely an illustration of the true theme, which is the restoration of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom. The textual sermon centres around the text. It is a miniature expository sermon as it covers only few verses or a verse.

In both topical and textual sermons, the Bible passage is used as support material for the topic. In expository sermons, the Bible passage is the topic, and support materials are used to explain and clarify it.

3. Lectionary: A lectionary is a predetermined cycle of Scripture readings that are designed to take an individual or congregation through the majority of the Bible in a selected period of time. The selection of readings for each day or Sunday is guided by the Christian year (or liturgical year) which seeks through various seasons to bring the people of God into contact with all of Scripture's major themes and events.

4. Individual Choice Method: Preacher or the church has the freedom to work out which passage/s of the scriptural passages is studied at particular times. It gives a more flexible approach to studying the scriptures independently and allows for detailed look at texts.

5. Textual-topical: This is where the preacher weaves his sermon from a text around a topic. This method has been variously criticized as being unbiblical since the bible texts were written to deal with specific issues. Topic as "ideal husband" will require texts from various scriptural passages which were written for different purposes and specific situations. Notwithstanding, this method is being widely used today as being variously used by Apostles Peter and Paul.

QUALITIES OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Here are seven qualities of authentic expository preaching gleaned from definitions of various writers through the generations.

DISCOVERY OF INTENDED MEANING: The preacher's first aim is to discover the text writer's intended theological meaning in the selected text. It is only when this is done that he can properly preach an expository sermon.

THE TEXT FORMS THE BASIS: Expository preaching is that in which the preacher seeks to let the text speak again through the sermon with the same theological message. God intentionally had the original message declared; now he wants it to be preached again. The universal and timeless message clothed in the historical garb of the original writing is the message the preacher is to declare to the contemporary audience. He interprets that same truth from the text to his audience.

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS DETERMINES THE SERMON: The preacher of expository sermons discovers the meaning of the text through a careful exegetical analysis of the text in all its particulars. The expository preacher comes to the text like a detective to a crime scene. He studies it for every clue to the meaning. The clues in the text are the words of the text writer. We know what he intended to say by what he wrote, but the details can easily be overlooked to the casual observer. The expositor will look carefully at every detail for what it indicates about the writer's message.

CONTEXTUAL PRINCIPLE IS EMPLOYED: Expository preaching calls for careful consideration of the contexts in which the text was originally written. Interpreting a text calls for a serious look at the literary context, the chapters and verses before and after the text, as well as the other writing of the author and the entire canon. Beyond that is the historical context of the original writing, including the local culture, politics, economic conditions, and other such factors. The original setting of the text not only shapes the message but takes part in it.

STRUCTURAL POST: An expository sermon is organized with due consideration to the structure and genre of the selected passage. Basically the text writer's treatment of his subject sets the pattern for the preacher's sermon structure. The

type of literature the text represents should affect the preacher's sermon design as well. We should always tell the story when preaching a narrative text, though we will do more. The purpose of exhortative texts and teaching texts should be reflected in the purpose of the sermon.

PERSUASIVE RHETORICS: The expository preacher will seek to influence the audience through the use of the rhetorical elements common to persuasion. By definition a sermon is a persuasive speech. The preacher's aim is to persuade the audience with the truth of his message and what they should do about it. We normally persuade by explaining, illustrating, arguing, and applying. These elements provide a balance for supporting material for sermon ideas and allow the preacher to expose the text meaning for the contemporary audience.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Expository preaching aims for a response of faith and obedience to the biblical truth on the part of the audience. The overarching aim of preaching is to call for a faith response in the hearer. The text writers believed what they wrote and communicated it in order that others might believe and obey. The preacher keeps this faith aim in mind from the first look at the text to the final design of his sermon. The sermon should be God-centered to point the hearer to the trustworthy object of his faith.

Exposition (Proclaiming the meaning of the text to the audience)

The distinguishing mark of expository preaching, also called Bible Exposition, is the biblical interpretation communicated through the sermon. The expositor must teach his audience the meaning of the text intended by its author and understood by its original recipients. Because the original languages of the Old and New Testaments are inaccessible to almost all congregations, precise and detailed interpretations of Scripture will be also.

GUIDES IN PREPARING THE EXPOSITORY SERMONS:

Alfred Gibbs suggests the following:

1. Select the passage to be expounded
2. Discover its main theme or subject
3. Write out the theme in your own words using logical method of statement
4. Discover the contributing thoughts that throw light on the theme
5. Write (4) above in your own words
6. Arrange the contributing thoughts in the logical sequence as main divisions of the sermon
7. Prepare the sermon with these main divisions in view.

Development of expository sermon involves many stages, and the expertise increases as the preacher grows in the homiletical skills.

Stage 1: Consider the Purpose – Why am I preaching? Why should I preach expositionally?

The call to preach is not merely a human invention. Rather, it is God's idea—in fact, it is His command for those who are His messengers. Yet, the call to preach is not a call to expound our own ideas or opinions. The pulpit is not our soapbox. Thus the preacher must be committed to preach the Word—to accurately and adequately express the truths of God as given in Scripture.

Here are five reasons (adapted from Carey Hardy) to preach God's Word with faithfulness and precision:

1. Biblically – expository preaching is the model presented and prescribed in Scripture:

- **Matthew 28:19-20** – Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.
- **1 Timothy 4:13** – Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation; to doctrine.

- **2 Timothy 2:2** – And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful me, who shall be able to teach others also.
- **2 Timothy 4:2** – Preach the word; be instant, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.
- **Titus 2:1** – But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.

* An expository model of preaching is also implied in **Ezra 7:10; Nehemiah 8:8; Luke 4:16-22; Acts 6:4; 7:2-53; 8:27-35; and Romans 10:17.**

MacArthur summarizes the example we find in Scripture:

The Word of God is what Jesus preached (**Luke 5:1**). It was the message the apostles taught (**Acts 4:31 and 6:2**). It was the word the Samaritans received (**Acts 8:14**) as given by the apostles (**Acts 8:25**). It was the message the Gentiles received as preached by Peter (**Acts 11:1**). It was the word Paul preached on his first missionary journey (**Acts 13:5, 7, 44, 48, 49; 15:35-36**). It was the message preached on Paul's second missionary journey (**Acts 16:32; 17:13; 18:11**). It was the message Paul preached on his third missionary journey (**Acts 19:10**). It was the focus of Luke in the Book of Acts in that it spread rapidly and widely (**Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20**). Paul was careful to tell the Corinthians that he spoke the Word as it was given from God, that it had not been adulterated and that it was a manifestation of truth (**2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2**). Paul acknowledged that it was the source of his preaching (**Colosians 1:25; 1 Thessalonians. 2:13**).

2. Theologically – a correct understanding of Scripture will lead us to preach expositionally.

- God's Word is inspired (**2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21**). It is God-breathed; it is His very Word.
- God's Word is inerrant (**Psalms 19:7-9**). As originally revealed, the Bible is without error in any area, unable to fail in any of its parts, perfect in every aspect.

- God's Word is authoritative (**Psalm 119**). Because it is the perfect Word of God, it carries with it His authority.
- God's Word is sufficient (**2 Peter 1:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:17; Hebrews 4:12**). God revealed everything that people need to live life to the fullest. Even when certain issues are not specifically discussed in Scripture, God's Word provides the principles needed to rightly address the issue at hand.
- God's Word is relevant (Ps. 119:105; Is. 40:8; 2 Tim. 3:17). Because His Word is the final authority on everything people need, it is exceedingly relevant to all people of all time. Scripture
- addresses the real needs of every person of every time period—beginning with the reality of sin and the need for a Savior.

The only proper response to the belief in these truths about Scripture is to preach the Scripture expositively—and to preach nothing else! If the preacher truly believes these truths, he will want to preach in such a way that the meaning of the Bible passage is presented entirely and exactly as God intended it. This is expository preaching.

3. Ecclesiastically – as a leader in the church, the preacher has a responsibility to preach expositively.

- We find in Scripture that the church exists to worship and glorify God (**1 Corinthians 10:31; Hebrews 13:15**); to provide a context of loving fellowship with one another for the purpose of mutual edification (**Ephesians 3:16-19; 4:12-16**); to be a training center whereby people can grow through the application of teaching and the utilization of their spiritual gifts (**1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12; Ephesians 4**); and to be a light in this dark world, for the evangelization of God's elect (**Matthew 5:13-16; 28:19-20; Titus 2:11-15**).

- But another purpose of the church is this: the church exists to be a repository of divine truth (**1 Tim. 3:15**). If a preacher understands this purpose of the church, he is obligated to be an expositor.

4. Historically – expository preaching has been the primary model of preaching throughout church history, beginning with the OT prophets and the NT apostles.

- James Stitzinger, in chapter three of *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, provides an exhaustive account of the history of expository preaching. He gives examples of expository preaching in the biblical period; the era of the early Christian church (AD 100-476); the medieval period (476-1500); the Reformation period (1500-1648), including the examples of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli; and the modern period (1649-present), with a discussion of William Perkins, Richard Baxter, John Owen, Bunyan, Charnock, Whitefield, Matthew Henry, John Broadus, Alexander Maclaren, Spurgeon, Ironside, Barnhouse, Criswell, G. Campbell Morgan, Lloyd-Jones, Stott, Boice, MacArthur, and many others. Clearly, the biblical expositor is in good company.
- Stitzinger's conclusion, after examining the history of the church, is expected:

A study of the history of expository preaching makes it clear that such preaching is deeply rooted in the soil of Scripture. Thus, it is the only kind of preaching that perpetuates biblical preaching in the church. Throughout history, a few well-known men in each generation representative of a larger body of faithful expositors have committed themselves to this ministry of exposition. Their voices from the past should both encourage the contemporary expositor and challenge him to align his preaching with the biblical standard. Scripture demands nothing less than God-enabled exposition as demonstrated by those worthy saints who have dedicated their lives to this noble task.

5. Practically – expository preaching also has numerous practical benefits.

- We are responsible for teaching the who counsel of God. This demands an organized, strategic, expository approach. A “hit and miss” approach to preaching will yield a “hit and miss” understanding of Scripture.
- It promotes the highest level of biblical literacy among our people.
- It provides accountability for the preacher. It holds him accountable to preaching what God says, and not his own opinions. It also makes him work. It's hard work to dig deeply into the truths of Scripture.
- Systematic exposition protects the preacher. Many pastors have a tendency to get in a rut and develop a one-subject mentality. Also, exposition guards against using the Bible as a club (finding a Scripture to rebuke someone publicly).
- Prevents inaccurate proof-texting. There's nothing wrong with using a single verse of Scripture to make a valid spiritual point. The problem is misusing the verse. You must know what a verse means in its context before using it. Expository preaching ensures this.
- An expositor is rarely wasting time wondering what he is going to preach next...or where he'll get his ideas for what to say.
- Systematic exposition gives people an appetite for the Word.

Rediscovering Expository Preaching lists numerous benefits to expository preaching in the following way:

Expository preaching best emulates biblical preaching both in content and style. This is the chief benefit. Besides this, other advantages listed in random order include the following:

Re-orienting the homiletical ethos of preaching

The preacher must be guided by good ethical standard to have positive effect on his audience. There were instances where the audience was lost due primarily to the poor habit of the preachers, therefore the words of Apostle Paul would be apt “watch thou in all things”.

Alfred Gibbs recommended the preacher to:

1. Watch his manners. He should be humble but not servile (Proverbs 16:18). Those with oratorical gifts must crucify the flesh.
2. He should be earnest, yet self possessed. No audience will forgive a preacher that lack earnestness. If he believes the gospel, his earnestness will convince the hearers of his sincerity.
3. He should be courteous, yet faithful in presentation. Touch the audience without necessarily offends them.
4. Be honest. Develop powers of sanctified imagination and description, yet avoiding exaggeration.
5. Be good humoured, but never flippant.
6. Should be neat but not fashionplate.
7. He should be manly and not an imitation of anyone else. His standing and voice should promote his reach.
8. Watch his language. The language must be simple and clear.
9. Watch his words. They must be simple and edifying. Who will not prefer the simplicity of :

*“Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky”*

To the highly scientific absurdity:

*“scintillate, scintillate, globule vivific,
Fain would I fathom thy nature specific,
Loftily poised in the ether capacious,
Strongly resembling a gem carbonaceous!”*

CHAPTER FOUR

SERMON FORMATION

(Preaching, their contents, matters, weight and substance)

Lecture to my students will help here

Structure of sermon

A good sermon has structure. John R. W. Stott, we face two main dangers when developing a sermon structure. 1. The first is that the skeleton obtrudes, like the ribs of a skinny human being. They thrust themselves before us; we cannot take our eyes off them. It is the same with too prominent a sermon outline. It distracts from the content by drawing too much attention to the form. This may be because it is too clever (the double and even triple alliterations which some preachers manage to contrive for their headings are the main offenders) or because it is too complicated (like Richard Baxter who, according to Simeon, once reached sixty fifthly, as if any person could remember the sixty-four preceding heads). Outlines which advertise themselves in these ways are always distracting. Their perpetrators have forgotten that the purpose of the skeleton is to support the body, and in so doing keep itself largely out of view."

"The second danger to which we are exposed when structuring our sermons is that of artificiality. Some preachers impose an outline on their text which neither fits nor illumines it, but rather muddies the clear waters of truth and confuses the listeners. The golden rule for sermon outlines is that each text must be allowed to supply its own structure. The skillful expositor opens up his text, or rather permits it to open itself up before our eyes, like a rose unfolding to the morning sun and displaying its previously hidden beauty. One of the greatest experts at this was Dr. Alexander McLaren, the nineteenth century Baptist preacher at Manchester.

William Robertson Nicoll described him as having a swift and clear-cutting intellect and went on to write of his extraordinary gift of analyzing a text. He touched it with a silver hammer, and it immediately broke up into natural and memorable divisions. Spurgeon used the same metaphor. He once spoke to his students about the difficulty he had with some texts. 'You try to break them up', he said; 'you hammer at them with might and main, but your labours lost. Then at last you find one which crumbles at the first blow, and sparkles as it falls to pieces, and you perceive jewels of the rarest radiance flashing from within. However, there is need to begin the process of extensive preparation of expository sermon outline through creative proposition.

Creating the Proposition

An effective expository sermon begins with a concise and textually-driven proposition (or thesis statement). This proposition should reflect the central idea of the passage, and should become the central theme of the sermon. It is the guiding sentence or statement around which the sermon is outlined and developed.

A good proposition begins by identifying the central idea of the passage being preached. Sometimes this central idea comes from a single statement in the passage, or sometimes from the larger context. By focusing on this central idea, the expositor ensures that his message will not miss the main point intended by the author. Along these lines, our task is NOT to create a central theme; it is rather to: 1. find the author's central theme, 2. build a message around that theme, and, 3. make that theme the central part of all we have to say.

Once the central idea of the passage has been determined, the expositor is then ready to develop his homiletical (preaching) proposition. Having ascertained the thrust of the author's argument, the expositor now composes a

comprehensive sentence which reflects the theme or main idea of the text as the expositor purposes to deliver it. The homiletical proposition is slightly different than the central idea of the passage because it has the preacher's audience in mind (whereas the original text does not).

John MacArthur says this about the importance of a homiletical proposition: Expositors are unanimous in the necessity of each sermon containing a proposition or main idea. First of all, make sure that every expository message has a single theme that is crystal clear so that your people know exactly what you are saying, how you have supported it, and how it is applied to their lives. The thing that kills people in what is sometimes called expository preaching is randomly meandering through a passage.

Thus the homiletical proposition should reflect both the purpose of the text and the purpose of the sermon.

Carey Hardy gives the following practical tips for creating a proposition.

- The proposition is a single sentence that functions as the hinge between the introduction and the body of a message.
- The proposition is a statement of the objective of the sermon.
- It is not a restatement of the title.
- It transfers attention to the body.
- It is a simple sentence stating the theme to be amplified, explained, or proved.
- The theme is the overall subject (e.g. faith or sanctification) . . . the proposition limits the theme, gives aim to the theme (e.g. three aspects of faith or sanctification).
- When it comes to the actual organization of the sermon, the propositional statement is the most important feature.
- The proposition can be expressed in more than one way.

- statement — In this passage we will examine four characteristics of a man of integrity that will help us understand what it means to be a man after God's own heart.
- question — What are some reasons for trusting God when you're in the midst of a trial?
- exhortation — As we study this passage, commit yourself to following these four steps to resolving conflict in your marriage:
- exclamation — What a joy it is to contemplate the three proofs of God's sovereignty that we find in this passage!
- The proposition should be expressed as concisely and clearly as possible.
- The proposition contains a "key word"...a plural noun... for example, 4 reasons, 3 facts, 6 ingredients, 3 elements, etc.
- The key word is always a plural noun that characterizes the main points.

Formation of Sermon and Constructing an Outline

After determining an appropriate propositional statement, the expositor should build an outline that supports and expands upon that proposition. These points should reflect the structure and emphasis of the passage, and will thereby naturally support the main argument of the passage. Exegetical information will then be later added to this outline.

With the proposition in hand, the expositor must now construct an outline that reflects the structure of the passage being preached. Because the proposition centers upon the central idea of the text, the outline (if accurately reflecting the passage) will naturally support and expand upon the proposition. The homiletical outline should be easy to understand and easy to remember. After

all, its purpose is primarily to help the listener follow the logical flow of the passage.

A good clear outline will provide a number of distinct advantages to the expository preacher: 1) it will allow both the preacher and the audience to know exactly where the message is going, 2) it will help ensure that the preacher teaches the message of the text and not his own ideas, and 3) it will better enable the hearers to understand, remember, and apply the sermon. With such in mind, each point of an effective sermon outline should coordinate with the proposition, be parallel with the other points of the outline, flow directly out of the text, and be easy to understand and remember.

Carey Hardy gives the following helpful reminders in constructing an outline:

- There is more than one possible homiletical outline.
- The outline should reflect syntactical analysis.
- The expositor should never force an outline upon a text.
- Each main point should serve a specific purpose—to fulfill the proposition.
- There are three primary types of major points:
 - Markers of the text Examples:
 1. The Basic Essence of Depravity
 2. The Pervasive Extent of Depravity
 3. The Sobering End of Depravity
 - Statements/questions Examples:
 1. The Unique Necessity of Christian Love
 2. The Distinctive Character of Christian Love
 3. The Sobering Test of Christian Love
- Statements/questions Examples:
 1. Prayer is Comprehensive
 2. Prayer is Required

3. Prayer is Effective

1. What Does God Expect You to Do?
2. Where Does God Expect You to Go?
3. Why Does God Expect You to Obey?

- Directives - Examples:

1. Understand God's Process
2. Embrace God's Will
3. Depend on God's Strength
4. Imitate God's Love

1. Be Genuine
2. Be Sacrificial
3. Be Diligent

- The preacher must be careful that outline points are not too complicated and that major points are clear.
- He should attempt to keep the points parallel whenever possible.
- Any subordinate points should relate to the main point.
- Too many sub-points are cumbersome.

Inductive/Deductive Preaching

Paradigms are changing everywhere today, even in preaching. So drastic is the change in preaching style that teachers of preaching talking about a "new homiletic." Among other issues, the new homiletic is more inductive and the old homiletic is more deductive. Let's contrast these two styles of preaching. DEDUCTIVE PREACHING is what we have traditionally done. Deductive

preaching begins with a general conclusion and then deduces certain points or exhortations from that conclusion. INDUCTIVE PREACHING, in contrast, starts with the particulars of human experience and moves toward the conclusions of the gospel. As the sermon unfolds, the listeners become active participants, moving with the preacher toward the conclusion. Deductive preaching goes from general to particular. Inductive preaching goes from particular to general. Deductive preaching offers the congregation propositions to apply to their lives. Inductive preaching invites the congregation to participate in a journey to a certain destination where they can make their own conclusions.

Comparison of form: exegetical preaching and narrative preaching

"Exegesis" ". . . which means a narration or explanation. The noun form of the Greek word does not occur in the New Testament. The very form *exegeomai*, which means "to lead out of," does occur. The word is found in **Luke 24:35; John 1:18; Acts 10:8; 15:12, 14; and 21:19.** In **John 1:18** we are told that Christ 'exegeted' the Father to man. Exegesis is the procedure one follows for discovering the intended meaning of a Bible passage. The preacher wants to adequately represent what the text of Scripture says itself. He must avoid the danger of eisegesis, which is reading into the text what the interpreter would like it to say." Jerry Vines ("A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation")

Exegesis deals with the original languages of Scripture, Greek in the NT and Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament. It does not content itself with the uncertainties of working from a translation or translations. Exegesis itself incorporates a study of individual words, their backgrounds, their derivation, their usage, their synonyms, their antonyms, their figurative usages, and other lexical aspects.

Components in preaching

Context is a major component of formation of sermon in relation to expository preaching.

Context

With a passage chosen, the expositor must establish the context of the text. Doing so allows him to interpret the passage in such a way as to stay consistent with the flow of the immediate argument, the general propositions of the writer, and the overall teaching of Scripture. Said another way, a text without its context is a pretext.

There are two main types of context that the exegete must examine if he is to rightly understand the text.

1. Logical Context. This is the context of the passage within the text – its placement within the logical flow of a passage, a book, and even the entire Bible. There are several circles of logical/biblical context:

a. Immediate Context: An expositor must carefully examine the passages that immediately precede and follow the text under investigation. Doing so allows the preacher to understand how the text fits into the author's flow of thought. Thus, he will want to answer questions such as, "How does this passage connect with what immediately precedes/follows?" or "How does this text further explain or detail the argument or purpose of the writer as developed in the surrounding verses and chapters?"

b. Intermediate Context: The expositor must also determine how the given passage fits within the entire book. What is the primary message of the book? What are its main themes? How do the verses under investigation further develop the writer's purpose or themes? These questions help enable the expositor to discern the author's intended meaning in a given section.

c. Remote Context: Finally, the preacher must determine how this section (and even this book as a whole) relates to other books by the same author, the entire Testament wherein it occurs, and even whole of progressive revelation.

Certainly, the Bible cannot contradict itself. So, why did God reveal this section of Scripture when He did? How do other passages (from other books of the Bible) help us to understand the author's intended meaning in this passage?

2. Historical Context. It is also important for the exegete to understand the historical, geographical, and cultural setting in which a book was written. When did James write his epistle to the Jews dispersed abroad? What were his readers facing at that time? By answering questions like these, the preacher will be better able to determine the author's intended meaning. In this regard, **Walter Kaiser states**, "The historical sense is that sense which is demanded by a careful consideration of the time and circumstances in which the author wrote. It is the specific meaning which an author's words require when the historical context and background are taken into account."

Barrick gives the following example of questions to ask using **Philippians 3:7-11**:

- How does this passage relate to the immediately preceding and following contexts?
- How does this passage relate to its related major section within Philippians?
- How does this passage relate to the entire Epistle to the Philippians?
- How does this passage relate to the Pauline corpus?
- How does this passage relate to the entire New Testament?
- Does this passage have any citations from or allusions to the Old Testament?
- When did Paul write this epistle? At what period of time within his life and ministry?
- Does the geographical, historical, or cultural context of Philippi have any bearing upon this passage?
- Does the previous mention of Jewish elements in Paul's background flavor the vocabulary or concepts in this passage?

By setting the background, the expositor is now ready to investigate the specific elements of the passage. Skipping the context, however, can result in a dangerous misreading of the text. It is no wonder, then, that John MacArthur says, "Context is the most important hermeneutical principle. By reading and familiarizing ourselves with the entire book, the expositor can relate each passage to the overall context of the book."

Subject and complement- framing the big idea of the text

The bigger idea of the text must conclusively lead to having a good outline from the insights and lessons already covered on the formation of sermon in homiletics.

Below gives a brief summary of sermon formation:

Introduction to a Sermon

- You only have a brief time to capture attention
- You can introduce your sermon with a statement, a quotation or an illustration
- Don't rely repeatedly on shock value (although periodically it can be effective)
- Your introduction should give people some idea of what you are trying to communicate

The Body of a Sermon

- Some complain that an introduction, 3 points and a conclusion is too restrictive and unnatural...
- However a sermon with no clear structure is worse!

- After you have done your studying, group your material into a number of different points
- Remember: **you are communicating**. A sermon is a decisive thrust of the sword of the Spirit for the accomplishing of a specific purpose. You are not giving a lecture or showing the results of your Bible study.

The Body of a Sermon

- Again, You are not giving a lecture or showing the results of your Bible study.
- “Pulpiteers who are fluent enough to expound the technical data of exegesis and still hold the attention of an average congregation have been and are extremely rare. The information gleaned from exegesis must be put in a format that fits the understanding of the person in the pew...”

The outline provides a structure to your sermon

- A good outline can assist in preaching without notes
- An outline should be communication oriented
- Eg. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts - this is too academic. It doesn't grab people or speak to their needs
- Eg. Why Do We Need Spiritual Gifts in This Church - this is better!
- For an expository sermon, the outline will reflect the natural divisions in the text
- For a topical sermon, the outline will reflect the organization of the facts you learned while studying

The Conclusion of a Sermon

- This is not an optional extra
- Don't discard if running out of time - prune elsewhere
- Don't run through your conclusion at hyperspeed
- Learn to cut out material on the fly, or practice so you know precisely how long your sermon is
- Don't just rehash your main points
- Give your sermon a definite end
- This is your opportunity to tie it all together
- This is your opportunity to make a decisive thrust
- This is your opportunity to make the sermon memorable
- An appropriate illustration can be powerful at this point
- An inappropriate illustration can destroy your sermon

Sermon construction is not a trivial matter, therefore, be pungent.

Avoid the Ramble Through the Bible

- "if a man quotes a text at the beginning of the sermon and then wanders miles away from it he is not preaching, he is just talking". Campbell Morgan
- You must avoid a ramble through the Bible!

Don't spend all your time repeating the obvious (e.g. John 3:16 – how this is talking about God and not man, love is the opposite of hate...")

Boil it Down and Cut it Out!

- A classic mistake is to try to include all the content you found during your study of the passage
- Don't do this!
- **A sermon is a decisive thrust of the sword of the Spirit for the accomplishing of a specific purpose**
- If your content doesn't relate to your purpose, don't include it.
- You will weaken your sermon, not strengthen it.

CHAPTER FIVE

Communication and homiletics

God speaks through the Bible. It is the major tool of communication by which He addresses individuals today." The sad truth is that "true" biblical or "expository" preaching is rare in today's churches.

Communication issues in contemporary times

In postmodern times, the development of various media, especially the development of network by computer and internet, and change from analog to digital have driven out the printing medium to a peripheral area. And the times of communication through video media have come to the whole world. In this time, uniform thought centered on cause and effect had disappeared; different spaces, different humans, and different environment of communication have become needed.

Communication in Preaching

Finally, we come to the presentation of the message: * The clear and effective communication of the truth. * How to present your subject in a manner which will captivate the minds of your hearers. * How to develop your thoughts in such an orderly manner that your audience can easily follow the line of truth you are seeking to convey. * How to motivate your listeners to appropriate actions, for we are to be "doers of the word and not hearers only" (Jas 1:22). These concepts comprise the essential aspects of sermon preparation. We will be dealing with each of them more fully later in this study

Basics of communication

Communication is a basic feature of the spiritual, social and physical world in which we exist. Communication carries a great power of responsibility.

Communication is basic to God, and His creation. There was communication within the Godhead when the plans were made to design and make human kid. **Genesis 1:26; John 17: 1-5**. God spoke to His creation to bring about organizational design (**Genesis 1:3**). The heavens communicate to us the glory and wisdom of God (**Psalms 19: 1-6**). God communicated to humankind in many ways, such as through angels, Jesus, and the prophets (**Hebrews 1:1**). God planned, created, and distributed to humankind His Bible, which is a vehicle of communication (**II Timothy 3: 15-17**). Jesus is called the Word (**John 1:1**), which in Greek language is, logos. Logos means word, thought, reason, concept and the expression they mean to convey. John told us that one reason Jesus came to the earth was to communicate to humankind what God was like (**John 1:18**). Christians have been told to communicate the gospel truths to the world in an accurate effective and culturally relevant manner (**Matthew 28: 18-20**).

Nature of Communication

Communication is a process of creating understanding in which two or more people are involved. In this process, information and its meaning is transferred, shared and exchanged by a system of signals. It is a process of establishing 'commonness' between people or a group. The word comes from the Latin, 'Communis', which becomes in English; common, commune, community, communion and communication.

First, there are basic components of communication which includes

- Communication requires involvement and interaction
- Communication involves a process
- Communication deals with the meaning of messages
- Meaning takes place internally, in person's mind and is very personal
- Communication involves what is heard and understood, as well as what is actually said or preached.

Secondly, there are misconceptions about communication that people hold. Many times people who are having a stormy relationship will say 'we are having a communication problem'. If it were better, then our problems would go away. In fact the communication may be very effective and accurate in its meaning; the people just don't like each other, and it is very clear. Here are some misconceptions

- Communication is always not a good thing. For example, communication with Satan is a bad thing. A person who endlessly chatters on about nothing of importance in the middle of a critical task is a bad thing.
- Communication will not solve all problems. Some people are not solvable, and people must agree to disagree
- Meaning occurs and rests in people, not words. Word can mean different things to different people.

Thirdly, communication is accomplished by the senses; seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, and thinking. We have invented tools to enhance our communication: smoke signals, carrier pigeons, pictures, letters, numbers, machines, telephones, CDs, sign language, signals, newspapers, magazines, computers, internet etc

Principles of Effective Communication

Effective communication requires at least the following.

- A clear purpose
- A distinct message
- A communicator
- An audience
- Signal systems
- An appropriate media
- Understanding

- Change
- Feedback

When we communicate, words that are common to us may not cause the same image in the other person's mind as in our mind. Do not assume that everyone knows what you are preaching about. Ask to make sure. In other words, the message we preach is not necessarily the one received.

The preacher's communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, social status, cultural norms, and values influence sermon delivery. In sermon delivery, for the audience to reach a complete understanding, they must possess similar attributes as the preachers, especially in a campus setting. However, on the campus the preacher and the audience have similar attributes, sufficient degree of common knowledge, about campus cultures apart from significant differences in the academic and professional pursuit of each student.

There always a gap between what we want to communicate and the meaning the people attach to our message. The **intent** of a message does not always equal the **impact** the message has to the audience, who happen to be the receivers.

Audience analysis and diversity in the congregation

Consider the People – Who is my audience?

While the message should never be determined by the audience, but rather by the Scriptures, the preacher is wise to prayerfully consider his audience before preaching. In so doing, he will remind himself that the souls of real individuals are at stake, and that the sermon building process is important—because it eternally impacts the lives of people.

The good shepherd not only knows the truth of God's Word, but also the needs of the sheep. Therefore, as he diligently studies, the preacher must prayerfully remember the audience to whom he will be preaching. Sermon construction must not be a merely academic or esoteric exercise. Rather, it consists of exposing people to God's Word. With this in mind, Walter Liefeld writes, "It is the personal concern that distinguishes the good pastor from the mere minister." David Larson notes: "The preacher must be concerned to bridge the worlds of the truth of God's Word and the realities of people's lives."

And John Calvin agrees:

What advantage would there be if we were to stay here half a day and I were to expound half a book without considering you or your profit and edification? We must take into consideration those persons to whom the teaching is addressed. For this reason let us note well that they who have this charge to teach, when they speak to a people, are to decide which teaching will be good and profitable so that they will be able to disseminate it faithfully and with discretion to the usefulness of everyone individually.

CHAPTER SIX

ILLUSTRATIONS IN PREACHING

The art of illustration is one that all preachers need to develop. The word itself is a metaphor--it means to make lustrous, to throw light upon, a subject. In the preparation of every part of a sermon, a preacher should not be concerned only with the intellectual satisfaction he himself finds in its outworking. He should ask. Will this be interesting to my people? Can I make this live? One of the surest ways to do this is to discover or create good illustrations

The place and use of illustration in preaching

The place and purpose of illustration in preaching is to create a window to let in the light on the message. Therefore the use of parables, similes and metaphors are the building blocks of illustrations in preaching. Often when the didactic speech fail to enlighten our hearers we may make them see our meaning by opening a window and let in the pleasant light of analogy. A house must not have thick walls without openings; neither must a message or discourse be made up of solid slabs of doctrine without a window of comparison or a ladder of poetry.

Illustrations usually assist preachers to drive home truths that are sometimes difficult to present directly to listeners. A good illustration makes difference between average sermon and great ones. Your sermon, if it is to be *effective*, needs to exhibit:

- i) A memorable structure
- ii) Vivid illustrations and
- iii) The touch of God (the anointing)

According to Daniel L. Akin, good illustrations serve several purposes among which are:

- a. Illustrations inform and instruct
- b. It explains and clarify
- c. It helps to connect and identify with the audience
- d. It aids memorization and recall tremendously
- e. It helps to capture and regain attention
- f. It motivates, persuade and convince
- g. Allows for mental relaxation
- h. Helps to see immediate personal relevance of biblical text
- i. It aids believability of biblical truth
- j. Good illustrations explain biblical truths in understandable and compelling way.

Types and sources of illustration in preaching

Illustrations can be varied, brief quotes, described scenes, episodes involving action, pictures, stories, bits of dialogue and the like. Furthermore, illustrations may be drawn from many sources, from nature, campus, environment, science, technology, pilgrimage, culture, experiments and the larger world. Illustrations are imported, they are brought into a sermon by a preachers own analogical imagination and may serve different functions within the discourse. Though they may come to mind readily, they must be used with care.

How can we judge illustration? Criteria can be ticked off: (1) There must be a clear analogy between an idea in sermon content and some aspect of the illustration; (2) There ought to be a parallel between the structure of content and the shape of an illustration; (3) The illustration should be appropriate to the content of the sermon.

Gibbs suggested seven sources:

- a. The scriptures

- b. History (you have already lived out more illustrations that you could ever possibly use.)
- c. Nature - life, people, animals, the planet, customs, culture, idiosyncrasies, sport.
- d. Biblical and secular magazines (events/actions/attitudes/characters/other passages which reinforce/clarify/explain your point.)
- e. Good poetry
- f. Gospel tracts
- g. "Suppose" illustrations

Illustration and imagery, story and metaphor

A sermon itself will often work from a particular model, such as imagery and metaphors. For example, if we preach on the Sower and the seed parable in **Mark 4:3-9** our whole sermon may have to employ agricultural imagery. If we interpret **Hebrews 12: 1- 4**, we are working with footrace imagery. In such cases an illustration we choose may have to relate to the basic model of the text, lets we end up with inappropriate metaphors. The problem is not nearly as restrictive as it may seem. If we preach on the seed and the Sower parable, we can locate what is described as 'associated fields of imagery' such as agriculture, house plants, growth in general , few to many multiplications. Associated field of imagery will not disrupt a ruling metaphor, whereas, materials drawn from quite alien fields (e.g, product manufacturing, business practices and government systems) will break up the metaphorical unity of the sermon.

Imagery helps the listener to visualize more realistically the preacher's sermon. Metaphors, story lines, allusions, descriptive words and similes and others are formed to tickle and awaken the listeners' perceptions.

Examples are found in Prophet Nathan versus David, Jesus Christ's parables of the kingdom.

Visual illustration in preaching

The preacher, employ words to craft biblical messages. But most often, this is just a minute fraction of the communication process. Non verbal communication is an integral part of communicating the gospel.

Gesticulations and other body languages must match the words; otherwise, the congregation will not believe the message. The use of gesticulations, facial appearance, charts, and other visual illustration drive home the points. In modern times, video projections and other objects of illustration will enhance the delivery.

Daniel L. Akin: Engaging Exposition (B&H Publishing Group, 2011)

The Purpose of Illustrations

- a. to exemplify the truth of a message.
- b. to stamp that truth to the heart.
- c. to help the will to respond.
- d. to paint a picture in the mind.
- e. to stimulate interest and identification.

3. Cautions

- a. Make sure your illustration is appropriate and relevant.
- b. Make sure they are true. Check sources / facts.
- c. Be sensitive to the people e.g. suicide story.
- d. Never base your sermon on an illustration, no matter how good it is. Base it on the .
- e. Never relate as your own, an illustration from the life of another person. It is dishonest and could embarrass your credibility.
- f. Avoid books of illustrations – chances are people have already used the illustration on your audience.

CHAPTER 7

The Holy Spirit and preaching

Preacher's vital Christian experiences and sense of divine call

How to be Effective

Preaching is the art of communicating divine truth through human personality. A preacher is essentially a communicator. He receives truth from God and communicates it effectively to men. God gives the revelation; man provides the presentation. In order to do this effectively, he must learn to do several things well

1. Wait On God Firstly, he must learn how to wait on God. The preacher must learn how to be still in the presence of God, and discern the voice of the Lord speaking within his own spirit. Every worthwhile sermon begins in the heart and mind of God, Who is the source of all truth. He is the fountain of all knowledge. The effective preacher's first task is to learn to receive the thoughts of God. Rarely will he ever hear an audible voice of God. Divine truth will distill quietly in his spirit like the morning dew. The prospective preacher must wait patiently in the presence of God. There he will receive the precious thoughts and truths that God is always willing to share with those who seek Him diligently. It is good to make a habit of spending time in God's presence. Set aside some portion of every day to enter the presence of God and wait patiently on Him. You will soon learn how to perceive the voice of God speaking quietly in your spirit. We should not enter God's presence with the sole idea of "getting a sermon." We need to enter God's presence firstly to expose ourselves regularly to the scrutiny and counsel of God. Rushing into His presence with an urgency which "needs a sermon for tomorrow" is certainly not an attitude of heart that can receive the

wonderful truths of God. We should allow truth an opportunity to have its effect on us before we endeavor to share it with others.

2. Study The Bible Ideally, the preacher should come before God with his Bible in hand. Make time to sit quietly and patiently before God in this way. Ask for illumination and inspiration on His Word. Prayerfully seek out the counsel, wisdom and instructions of the Lord in His Word. Spread out the Bible before you and read it in His presence. Sometimes it is good to follow a regular pattern of reading, beginning where you left off the previous day. This helps you to go consistently through the Bible, instead of reading here and there and neglecting large portions of the Scriptures. At other times, you may seek some prompting of the Spirit as to where you should read. In this way, you do not get into a rut.

3. Keep A Notebook: A notebook in which to record the thoughts and ideas that come to your mind in these times of quiet waiting is essential. It is amazing how quickly one may forget the most wonderful truth, if the thought is not recorded while it is fresh in your mind. Practice writing down every significant thought which comes to mind as you prayerfully read the Scriptures. If a theme suggests itself to you, follow it through as far as you can, and jot down everything you can on the subject. In this way, you will soon develop a good source of sermon material. Read through the notebook every once in a while. The thoughts will begin to expand in your heart. You will find that some themes will occupy your mind for weeks, expanding continually as you meditate on them. Get into the habit of talking to the Lord about His Word. When there are things you do not understand, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning to you. Ask for the spirit of revelation (Eph 1:17). Then learn to wait quietly and patiently before God as He gently directs the answers into your spirit. Record them as they come to you. Get the truth down in your notebook. Don't trust them merely to memory. Even the best memory is strengthened by writing things down.

4. Be Cleansed By The Word Try to avoid the attitude that seeks a word from God so that you can preach about it on Sunday morning. Do not always be looking for spiritual bullets that you can fire at someone. Recognize the primary need of your own heart. Let God deal with your heart through His Word and by His Spirit. Let the Word wash and cleanse you first. Sharing what God has spoken to you about in the way of cleansing and correction is some of the best preaching there is. It is important for you to feed your own soul. One of the traps that preachers can fall into is this: they are so intent on finding food for their congregation that their own

Illumination of text by the Holy Spirit

Messages without the force of the Holy Spirit are mere talks. All scriptures are inspired of the Holy Ghost, so must He shed light upon its pages for it to bear fruits in the heart of the hearers. The minister must rely on the illumination of the Holy Ghost on passages of the Scriptures for interpretation and delivery (**John 16:13**)

Conversion as main goal of preaching

Bible homily targets conversion of sinners into the kingdom of God as its primary objective. All forms of preaching are directed towards carrying out the Divine programme. Any sermon without conversion of sinners as its primary goal is mere talk.

Preaching to effect change

The preparation of all sermons: the introduction, body and conclusion are all aimed at causing a change from the status quo. The delivery must accomplish

this. Calling men away from the status quo will involve all machinery of preaching – the voice and all non-personal tools employed.

The spiritual life of the preacher

None is qualified to proclaim the gospel that has not saved him. The watchman must necessarily be one who has identified with the Lord. The preacher must show clear evidence of life saved from sin and having been purified from all impurities of the flesh. Else how can he proclaim a Saviour whom he has not known? In addition to this all important fundamental, he must be:

1. A man of purity
2. A man having unquestionable love for the Lord Jesus Christ
3. He must love souls and be passionate about it.
4. He must be an adherent of the Bible.
5. He must be a man of prayer, giving to serious prayer devotions both for himself and for others.
6. He must be fit for the work, possessing both spiritual gifts and physical health. He must be mentally and educationally fit as well.

The preacher and his/her identity

The preacher must begin by looking to his own life, bathing the entire sermon building process in prayer, confessing all known sin, and reminding himself that he is but a servant to His Master.

It is crucial, from the outset, that the preacher examine his own heart before preaching to others. With this in mind, Steve Lawson states,

Before the preacher can prepare the sermon, God must, first, prepare the preacher. The one who would gain an accurate understanding of the biblical text must be one who is growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the expositor should never approach a passage clinically, simply to

carve out a sermon. Instead, he must study to engage his own heart to love and worship God. No expositor can take others spiritually where he has not already gone.

Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix simply say this: "Preparation is an important element in good expository preaching. The preacher must not only spend time preparing the message, but he also must prepare himself." With this in mind, the preacher's personal preparation consists of at least three crucial elements: prayer, purity, and perspective.

Prayer (Psalm 19:14; 119:10, 18, 33-40). From beginning to end, the preacher must bathe the entire sermon building process in prayer—prayer for himself (that he would rightly interpret and apply the truth) and prayer for his hearers (that they would rightly understand and respond to the truth). In its essence, prayer is dependence. The preacher who does not pray, indicates that he depends more on his own persuasive abilities than on the power of God's Spirit. James Rosscup says this:

Prayer is not an elective but the principal element in the kaleidoscope of spiritual characteristics that mark a preacher. These traits unite into a powerful spiritual force; they build a spokesman for God. Jesus, the finest model, and other effective spokesmen for God have been mighty in prayer coupled with the virtues of godliness and dependence on God. . . . Preachers who follow the biblical model take prayer very seriously. In sermon preparation, they steep themselves in prayer.

Purity (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 3:2-3; James 1:21). In addition to prayerfulness, the man of God must be a man characterized by a righteous life. Any lower standard undermines the very message the preacher proclaims. Certainly, no one is perfect. Yet, the life pattern of the preacher must be one that reflects and reinforces the truth he expounds. In light of this, Stephen Olford simply states: "The Scriptures and practical experience have taught us that God

is more concerned with what we are than with what we do." John MacArthur agrees, noting:

Righteousness and godliness are together the two indispensable qualities of a man of God, and yet they are his lifelong pursuit. They are central to his usefulness; they are at the core of his power. He possesses them and yet pursues them (cf. **Philippians 3:7-16**). An unsanctified preacher is useless to God, and a danger to himself and people.

Along these lines, Richard Baxter wrote:

Many a tailor goes in rags, that maketh costly clothes for others; and many a cook scarcely licks his fingers, when he hath dressed for others the most costly dishes. . . . It is a fearful thing to be an unsanctified professor, but much more to be an unsanctified preacher.

Perspective (Psalm 8:3-4; Isaiah 6:5; Romans 12:3). At the very beginning of the sermon process, the preacher must humbly remind himself that he is nothing apart from God's grace. He is merely an instrument in the hands of the Master, a messenger in service of the King. If the preacher has success (as God measures it), it is not because of his own eloquence or charisma—rather true success comes from unswerving faithfulness no matter the consequences. The godly man does not serve men, but God. The godly preacher, therefore, must seek not the approval of men, but rather the smile of his Lord.

Moreover, the Word he proclaims must never be taken for granted, the salvation he received must never be forgotten. It should first be a fuel to his own passion for God, and only second a necessary part of his vocation. The sermon building process should be not mere work, but also worship. Steven Lawson says this: The preacher must always approach God's Word with reverence, humility, and the fear of God. Each time he opens the Scripture, he must be acutely aware that he is opening the Word of the living God. He must never allow himself to come to the Bible callously or out of empty routine. Rather, his heart should always be gripped with the profound truth that God is speaking in the text. Thus,

he must always study a text in the manner that Moses approached God saying, "Show me Your glory." So, before there can be a clear understanding of God's Word, there must first be a consummate love for God and His glory.

By having a proper perspective, the preacher realizes that he is nothing, but that the God he serves is everything. The sermon building process, therefore, is not meticulous drudgery, but rather the ultimate privilege to which any sinful human being could be called.

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3.6 of 5 stars 3.60 · [rating details](#) · 10 ratings · 4 [reviews](#)

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R. W. Dale said, quoting an old English writer: "Work without prayer is atheism, and prayer without work is presumption." Put your thoughts in a note book! 3. Study the text and gather your notes. How? 1. Study the text in it's historical context. Get the big picture! Book: "New Testament Survey" by Robert G. Gromacki 2. Outline the text looking for themes and divisions. 3. Look up words. Vines Bible Dictionaries 4. Look at other translations. 5. Read commentaries. – There are different kinds of commentaries! Illustrations: The Bible Knowledge Commentary 2 Vols; Edited by Walvoord & Zuck. Believers Bible Commentary by William MacDonald 6. Read other books and sermons on your text. 15 4. Isolate the dominant thought outlining and looking for your subject. A good sermon has structure