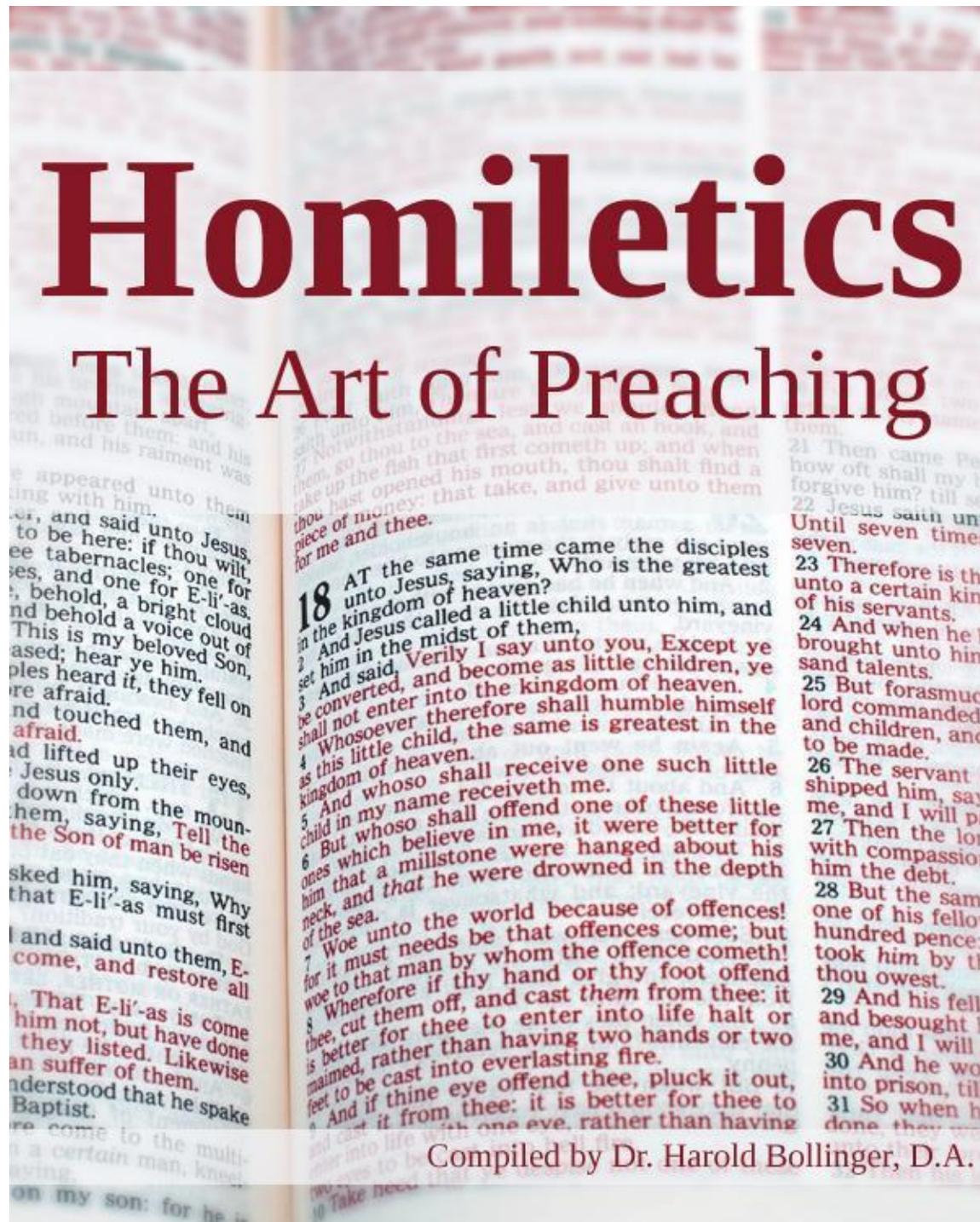


## HOMI403 Textbook

# Homiletics

## The Art of Preaching



Compiled by Dr. Harold Bollinger, D.A.

# ***THE ART OF PREACHING***

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>The Study of Homiletics</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Preparation and Delivery</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>How Sermons are Classified</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Topical Sermons</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Expository Sermons</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Textual Sermons</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Topical Sermons</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Improve Preaching Style</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>God's Call to Preach</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Chapter 10</b>	<b>Persuasion in Preaching</b>	<b>49</b>

# Chapter 1

## THE STUDY OF HOMILETICS

**Homiletics Defined:** Homiletics is the art of preaching teaching.

### **2 Timothy 4:2**

Season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

### **Matthew 24:14**

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

### **Mark 16:2**

Word with signs following. Amen.

All walking Christians will find the need to communicate God's truths to Christians and non-Christians alike. May God use these lessons to bring his Word into the hearts of the listeners.

When a minister is called to preach. He or she is called into a lifetime of study, prayer, and preparation.

Preaching is presenting the Word of God to believers and nonbelievers in such a way that they will listen and respond. If your message is forgotten in 15 minutes after it was preached, you have failed.

When a sermon is preached, listeners should have an opportunity to respond immediately.

Convenience and honor are not a product allowed a preacher. All honor is given to God.

Preaching is an opportunity to honor God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Self-righteous is as filthy rags:

**There are three designated type of sermons that are often presented:**

**These are sometimes designated as:**

1. Expository sermons
2. Textual Sermon
3. Topical sermons

**Expository Sermon:**

1. An Expository sermon unfolds a unit of thought from the Scripture.
2. The theme or main point of the passage formulates your presentation.
3. Your points are derived from this passage of Scripture, but you may illustrate or explain by using other Scripture passages. In expository preaching, the expositor digs into a paragraph from God's Word and identifies significant, timeless truths.
4. This method is sometimes used when preaching through a book of the Bible.

**Textual Sermon:**

1. This type of sermon usually develops a single verse of Scripture.
- 2 The theme and main points come from the verse, but the minor points may be developed from other Scripture passages.
3. This type of sermon is sometimes used for that don't care to learn the depths of the Word of God. This is often used when preaching at occasions other than church.

**Topical Sermon:**

1. This type of sermon develops a topic or subject that the preacher chooses. Such examples could be love, peace, prayer, holiness, etc.

When a preacher considers the context of each text and is faithful to preach God's principles as he develops each point, then he is preaching the Bible.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Sermon Preparation and Delivery**

#### **How to select a proper subject:**

Why do some preachers have more subjects than they can preach on in a lifetime, while others search for hours, find nothing? Good sermon subjects are seldom found while looking for them. The preacher may be reading Scripture; he may be reading some book; he may be listening to conversations on a bus; he may be fishing, hunting, or golfing, but, with a mind which is attuned to the needs of his hearers, a subject leaps off of the page, or out of the conversation. He says, "That is what people need to hear."

The preacher plans his sermons in advance. The pressure of the last minute strangles creation. Last minute preparation is no more likely to produce well-balanced nutritional sermons, than a housewife can produce well-balanced nutritional meals by going into the pantry at 5:30 p.m. and staring blankly at its contents trying to find something that she can have on the table by 6:00 p.m. Last-minute preparation is most apt to wind up feeding those who are hungering after righteousness with spiritual junk food! Advance planning eliminates the arduous time spent searching for a subject. It reduces the likelihood of preaching on the same subject. Late preparation gives birth to repetition because it is easier for the preacher to deal with his pet peeve or favorite subject than with what the congregation needs to hear

#### **How to choose and interpret a text:**

The key figure in salvation history is Jesus Christ, who is the example and pattern for every Christian. In the person of Jesus, the theology of the Bible is summed up and finds its clearest expression. The Old Testament looks forward to him, and the New Testament looks back to his first coming and forward to his expected return.

Although none of the documents were written in his lifetime. But both Testaments witness to the Christ, who lived on earth during the time between their writing. The Christian statement of faith that "Jesus is the Christ" is based on both Testaments, for the Old Testament promises and gives a provisional definition of

Christ, while the New Testament supplies his name, Jesus, and shows how he fulfilled and surpassed all expectation. Jesus is the central focus of the entire Bible. 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

What are you going to feel like when you stand before God and give an account of your preaching ministry to Jesus Christ? That should cause every preacher to shudder. There is an old proverb that says, “Think before you speak.”

In reality, that is the simplistic point of Paul’s message in this text. The text demonstrates the need for preachers to think before they preach. In context, it could be said this way, “Diligent Pastors who handle the Word of Truth correctly will be approved by God.”

Paul’s Charge to Timothy is important for the Preacher to hear, for it is a charge to them as well. Timothy is charged to exert, give diligence, or “study” the Word of God. Pastors were and are soldiers in Christ’s army? Their character is on the line as good soldiers of the army of the King.

Following is a simple basic outline that may help you to organize your Sermon, *You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*” 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

**1. TITLE: Name of the message.**

**Start here---** usually with a few friendly comments like thanking them for the opportunity to speak, etc. – Or tell a good joke or story. Even “If You’re Glad to Be Here Say Amen,” is sufficient.

**2. TEXT: This is the main scripture that will be used to build the sermon around, and to be read to the congregation while they stand. (Always ask them to stand for the reading of God’s Word. This shows your reverence to God and that you expect the same from them.)**

**3. INTRODUCTION: This is used to explain what you’re going to preach about. It should be done in a way to create their curiosity and command their attention. Using Psalm 107:23-27 as your text:**

EXAMPLE: This is one of my favorite stories. This story taught me several years ago how important it is to trust God. In this story, we can picture a merchant ship.

4. **PROPOSITION:** This explains what the scripture is going to tell us and/or how we can apply or compare it to our daily life. Psalm 107:23- 27 tells of a storm which brought several men to their “Wits End”. You can easily compare the storms in today’s life that often brings us to our “Wits End”.

EXAMPLE: Like these sailors – sometimes in our Christian life everything’s going along fine — we’re praising God. Then out of nowhere, the storms come. And they keep coming.

5. **Ask a Question:** Ask a question to draw attention so listeners may have something in common with the scriptures which make up the message.

EXAMPLE: Have you ever been to a place in your life where you couldn’t see any way out? It seemed you couldn’t take it any longer (God when is this going to stop?) – you were at your wit's end. I know you have. I’ve heard your testimonies. Some of you are there right now.

**TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE:** This is used to transfer to the sermon. Often times, this is done by announcing the title of the sermon.

**PRAY:** Remember to pray for God’s guidance and it’s very important to remember that everything you do and say in your message is for His honor and His glory.

**PRESENT SERMON:** Follow your outline. This will keep you in focus. It’s okay to tell stories that support the message. However, don’t overdo it.

**THE MESSAGE TODAY SHOWS US FIVE PHASES WE GO THROUGH IN THE “STORMS OF OUR LIFE”**

“A Place Called Wit’s End”

- I. “Wits End” Is A Place Which God Sometimes Initiates.

II. “Wits End” Is a Place Where God Tests Us.

III. “Wits End Is a Place Where We Sometimes Fail the Lord.

IV. “Wits End” Is a Place Where God Takes Over for Us. (The Good News)

V. “Wits End” Is a Place Where Our Trials Become Gifts. (After Victory)

VI. “Wits End” Is a Place Non-Believers Find Too! (This one will lead to the invitation).

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. We have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

**INVITATION:** This is done at the end of the message. And the message should be worked into an altar call. This is the hardest part to master. But the purpose of your message is to get to this point. Very often you can go back to your Interrogative and re-ask your question.

## **Chapter 3**

### **How Sermons are classified:**

#### **Classification by pattern:**

*excerpts from*

On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (John A. Broadus)

**SERMONS have been classified by structure and subject matter. Sermons may also be classified by pattern or format. Sermon plans have been many and varied. Surely new formats are yet to be discovered or invented.**

- 1. The diamond outline. One sermon pattern is the diamond outline.**  
This has been called the jewel sermon, and the one-idea sermon. The development of the diamond outline consists of turning an idea around so the different sides of it may be seen. A single idea may be illustrated in different ways. One pastor preached a sermon entitled "You Can't Bribe God." He examined each facet of the idea as each facet of a diamond might be examined. This pattern is usually interesting. It is especially effective for the brief sermon and for the devotional sermon.
- 2. The ladder outline. Another sermon pattern is the ladder outline.** To move up a ladder, the climber should take one step at a time, and each step depends on the step below. In the ladder sermon, each idea builds on the previous point, augmenting it and moving to a climax.
  - I. All men have sinned.
  - II. Christ suffered and paid the price for man's sin.
  - III. Through Christ, a man may be forgiven for his sin.The ladder sermon is ideally adapted to persuasion and appeal. If the first idea is accepted, it is likely that each succeeding idea will be more readily received.
- 3. The label outline. Yet another sermon pattern is the label outline.**  
**This is also called the classification sermon. Various persons and**

**things are labeled or classified. The parable of the soils or bearers may be so developed. Each type of soil or bearer is labeled.**

One pastor preached a sermon entitled, "What Kind of Spring Are You?" In this sermon, springs and Christians were classified as big, small, seasonal, and former (with an explanation of terms).

This type of sermon is usually interesting. It is also easy to understand and easy to follow.

- 4. The contrast outline. Yet another sermon pattern is the contrast outline. This is always a two-point sermon in which contrasting ideas are stated. Common contrasts are wrong-right, negative-positive, bad- good.**

This sermon type is excellent for reproof and correction. It is often used for the Christian life sermon and for the church program sermon.

- 5. The question and answer outline.** One of the oldest sermon patterns is the question and answer outline. This plan involves raising questions and then giving answers to the questions. This pattern has been called the "adverbial plan." In practice, the preacher may raise one question and give several answers, or he may raise several questions and answer each question.

For example, in response to the question, "Who is Jesus?" there could be many answers. Also, questions such as what, where, when, and who may be raised about many subjects.

While some writers doubt the value of the question and answer method, it is still a viable plan. However, the preacher should keep in mind that it is only a plan. The question is really a method of transition; the answer to the question is the division or subdivision. Moreover, when the pastor raises a question, he should give an immediate answer. Occasionally, a pause gives someone in the congregation opportunity to answer the question. If the answer given differs from the preacher's answer, the result may be disastrous. On the other hand, in a dialogue sermon, the preacher may want one or more people to answer the question.

- 6. The diagnosis-remedy outline.** This method consists of making a diagnosis of a problem or need and then giving the remedy to this problem or need. This pattern has also been called the problem-answer

outline or the problem-solution outline. Naturally, the sermon consists of two major parts, giving a diagnosis and then suggesting a remedy.

This sermon plan is quite useful in dealing with problems in Christian living or in church programs. This is the place for the "how" sermon. The people can be shown how to solve the problem.

Because of the directness of this method, it may be offensive to some people, but it need not be. The preacher should give an honest diagnosis, and then he must offer a helpful remedy. Some preachers are much more effective in diagnosis than in prognosis. It is especially important that an answer or a solution be presented.

7. **The analogy outline.** The analogy plan is a method of presenting truth by analogy or by comparison. For example, many sermons have been preached on "Jesus, the Good Shepherd." An analogy is created by first revealing the characteristics of a good shepherd and then showing that Jesus has all of these characteristics in a spiritual sense. One pastor preached a sermon on "The Church as a Lighthouse." He had an unusual knowledge of lighthouses, and he was able to make a careful analogy between the lighthouse and the church.

This sermon plan has a high-interest content. Since it is often based on a picture or story, it is easy both for the preacher to present and for the congregation to retain.

8. **The proof outline.** Yet another sermon type is the proof outline. This method offers proof of the preacher's subject or affirmation. It often follows the format "This is true because. ..." This method will often have more than the usual three ideas. A pastor may give several reasons to support his assertions. One pastor preached an evangelistic sermon entitled "Tomorrow May Be Dangerous." The outline consisted of a listing of five reasons why tomorrow was dangerous for the unbeliever.

The value of this method is that it offers a reasoned basis for the preacher's proposition. It also gives the preacher the opportunity to prove his assertions.

9. **The refrain outline.** **The refrain outline is an outline that has a theme or a refrain running through it. This technique has been called the symphonic sermon. It has also** been classified as a thematic sermon. The refrain is usually presented in the introduction of the sermon, and

then it is repeated after each idea of the sermon. For example, a pastor preached a sermon entitled "Just as He Said". This was based on Luke 19:28-35, the incident of Jesus's sending the disciples out to get the colt. The disciples were given unusual directions, but they found things to be "just as he said." After each division in the sermon, the refrain came again and again, "It was just as he said".

While this is not a common method of outlining, it can be highly interesting. Since the theme is presented again and again, this sermon outline is easy for the congregation to remember.

10. **The "series of statements" outline. Another commonly used sermon plan is the series of statements outline. The body of the sermon consists of a "succession of statements or observations related to the truth under consideration."**

An example of this type of outline is a sermon by the title, "Worship Can Make a Difference". The preacher presented different ways in which worship can make a difference. While the series of statements made do not exhaust a subject, they give it a fair and adequate treatment. Generally, this method of preaching will offer an orderly and reasonable treatment of the subject under discussion.

11. **The interpretation-application outline. The interpretation-application outline is another two-part sermon. It consists in giving an interpretation of Scripture and then applying the truth of that Scripture to life.**

This is one of the ways of doing expository preaching. The introduction leads to the passage; the passage is carefully interpreted; then its applications are made to the congregation. One pastor has used this technique with a series of sermons on the miracles of Jesus and on the parables of Jesus. In the series on the parables, each parable is interpreted and then applied. In the series on the miracles, the story is amplified, and lessons are drawn from the incident which relates to the needs of the congregation. The interpretation-application method is one of the easier methods of preaching. It has the distinct advantage of presenting real biblical content.

## **Chapter 4**

### **How to construct a Topical Sermon:**

There are many internet sites where you can find topical sermons. One of the best is: Mark Copeland and is called “**Executable Outlines**” It is called #1 resource for sermon outlines by Google and Yahoo.

I will include a Topical Sermon outline from this site, so you can see the pattern laid out in dealing with a topic.

#### **"THE ANATOMY OF A BACKSLIDER"**

Learning from One Who Knows by Experience

**INTRODUCTION** In 2 Peter 2:20-22, we read of the real possibility and serious consequences of backsliding

1. It is interesting that we find this passage coming from the inspired pen of Peter...
  - a. For if anyone knew "firsthand" the reality and dangers of backsliding, it was Peter!
  - b. As he discovered the night he denied Jesus!
2. The process of backsliding is a gradual one, often overtaking a person by surprise; and lest we fall from our own steadfastness...
  - a. We shall carefully examine the process that led to Peter's denial of Christ.
  - b. Followed by noticing how Peter's own words in his epistles are designed to prevent the same from happening to us!
3. The process of backsliding is a gradual one, often overtaking a person by surprise; and lest we fall from our own steadfastness...
  - a. We shall carefully examine the process that led to Peter's denial of Christ.
  - b. Followed by noticing how Peter's own words in his epistles are designed to prevent the same from happening to us!

## I. THE ANATOMY OF A BACKSLIDER

### A. **PRIDE - Mark 14:27-31**

1. In a boastful manner, Peter claims he will not fall away or deny Christ!
2. In doing so, Peter takes the first step in backsliding: "pride"! - cf. **Proverbs 16:18**
3. Why is this the "first" step?
  - a. Because the first step in entering the kingdom is humility - **Matthew 18:3-4**
  - b. So, if we lose "humility", we take that first step backward.
  - c. Paul's advice to the Corinthians is very apropos in this regard - cf. **1 Corinthians 10:11**

### B. **LAZINESS - Mark 14:32-42**

1. Told to keep watch, Peter kept falling asleep
2. It was, therefore, lack of diligent preparation which caused him to be caught off guard for what was to follow.
3. The same thing can happen to us!
  - a. Without diligence, we too can be unprepared - cf. **Luke 21:34-36**.
  - b. More often than not, it is a "gradual drifting" that catches us off guard - cf. **Hebrews 2:1-3**.
  - c. But when we are proud of ourselves, we become lazy, and laziness easily leads to the next step.

### C. **COWARDICE - Mark 14:54**

1. Note that it says "**...Peter followed Him at a distance**".
2. Now that Jesus had become unpopular.
  - a. Peter stays far enough away so as not to be identified with Him.
  - b. Peter was unprepared for the challenge of facing ridicule and persecution
3. Without diligent preparation, we too can become guilty of cowardice!
  - a. Ashamed to be seen carrying a Bible.
  - b. Ashamed to be seen giving thanks.
  - c. Ashamed to be seen with other Christians.

- d. Perhaps even ashamed to let others know that we are Christians!
- 4. And yet, Jesus has made it clear what He thinks of "cowardice".
- 5. When we are ashamed of Christ, it is natural for to fall into the next step of backsliding.

#### **D. WORLDLINESS - Mark 14:54**

- 1. We now find Peter sitting with the servants of the High Priest and warming himself by the fire.
- 2. Ashamed to be seen with Christ, it becomes easy to mingle with those of the world and enjoy their comforts
- 3. But one cannot be "comforted by the fire" of the world, and not be "burned"!
  - a. Close contact with that which can harm has its effects! - cf. **Proverbs 6:27-29**
  - b. So, it is we cannot "flirt with the world" and walk away untouched! - **1 Corinthians 15:33**
- 4. By the time we become "friends with the world", it is only a short time before we take the next and final step of backsliding.

#### **E. DENIAL - Mark 14:66-71**

- 1. Away from Christ, at comfort with those in the world, Peter finds himself denying His Lord and Savior!
- 2. In so doing, he has put himself in grave danger - cf. **Matthew 10:32-33**
- 3. Though we may never actually deny Jesus in "words", we can easily backslide to the point of denying Him in "action".
  - a. We are called to worship Him...but make excuses why we cannot worship Him.
  - b. We are called to serve Him...but render little or no service.
  - c. We are called to stand by His side and suffer for His name...but stand afar off in the safety of the world's comfort.

When we deny the Lord, our backsliding is complete; unless we repent, the only thing left is to one day face the Lord, where we will fully realize the error of our ways!

For Peter, he fully realized his sin when the Lord turned and looked at him there in the courtyard (cf. **Luke 22:60-62**). Imagine the feeling in Peter's heart as those eyes of His Savior pierced his soul! Like Judas, Peter wept bitterly over his sin.

Unlike Judas, Peter had "godly sorrow" that results in true repentance (cf. **2 Corinthians 7:10-11**). And years later, we find Peter writing the sort of things that would prevent us from making the same mistake he did...]

## II. **ADVICE FROM ONE WHO LEARNED THE HARD WAY**

### A. **TO GUARD AGAINST "PRIDE"...**

1. Peter enjoins "**humility**" - **1 Peter 5:5-6**
2. Indeed, "**God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble**"

### B. **TO WARD AGAINST "LAZINESS"...**

1. Peter commands "**diligence**" - **1 Peter 5:8-9**
2. Note especially his words in his second epistle - **2 Peter 1:5,10; 3:14**

### C. **INSTEAD OF "COWARDICE"...**

1. Peter charges us to "**glorify God**" - **1 Peter 4:16**
2. Think not of what it means to you, but what it means to God!

### D. **INSTEAD OF "WORLDLINESS"...**

1. Peter tells us to "**abstain**" - **1 Peter 2:11-12**
2. Remember that we are "sojourners and pilgrims", destined for a better place than the things of this world have to offer!

### E. **INSTEAD OF "DENIAL"...**

1. Peter exhorts us to ever be ready to "**give a defense**" - **1 Peter 3:15**
2. By careful preparation, we will "defend" Christ, and not "deny" Christ!

## **CONCLUSION**

1. From one who learned by the hard road of experience, let's heed his advice lest we one day backslide ourselves, and in so doing deny the Lord! - cf. **2 Peter 3:17-18**
2. Remember too that when Peter saw the eyes of his Lord, he realized the error of his way.

- a. Fortunately for him, there was still time to repent.
  - b. But for us, when we see Jesus "face to face", the time to repent will be gone...it will be the time for judgment!
3. If we realize that we are guilty of backsliding...
- a. Repent now, do not wait until you stand before Jesus
  - b. Do it now, so that your "face to face" encounter with Jesus will be terrific, not terrifying!

Topical sermons begin with a contemporary issue and work toward the Bible.

Here are some advantages and disadvantages of the use of a topical sermon:  
Topical Sermons.

They can easily be made lively, interesting, and current.

They can build a congregational consensus about contemporary issues.

They can cause the congregation to lose its religious consensus because they tend to relegate religious issues to the back seat.

They can easily become only tangentially related to the Bible, or they can use the Bible loosely or inappropriately.

We are witnessing growing Biblical illiteracy among people today. We can see how a topical sermon addresses this worrying issue.

The Holy Bible has several wonderful verses related to this issue. We can see how verses from different Biblical chapters address one single issue in the above-mentioned example. A topical sermon on this issue may contain material from any number of chapters and verses, depending on the amount of time a preacher and the audience spend together in the church. The point is that all the contents of the sermon address a single issue or problem.

## **Lesson 5**

### **How to Construct an Expository Sermon:**

The expository sermon is one in which one part of the Bible is explored in depth. This kind of sermon is just as rich, but more academically oriented.

Some strengths and weaknesses of the expository sermon could be: Expository Sermons:

**They can help the congregation to achieve a unity of faith.**

**They can help the members of the congregation develop their own ways of applying biblical principles to everyday life.**

**They can give the congregation insufficient guidance.**

**They can become dry and irrelevant if they turn into lectures on Bible trivia.**

**You can preach the WHOLE counsel of God systematically. Principles taught now prepare for applications later. It best fulfills Nehemiah 8:7, 8.**

#### **Neh. 8:7**

Also, Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place.

Ezra, not Nehemiah was the official religious leader. It is significant that Nehemiah was a layman, not a member of the religious establishment or a prophet. He was motivated by his relationship with God. He devoted his life to doing God's will in a secular world. Such people are crucial to God's work in all aspects of life. No matter what your work or role in life, view it as God's special calling to serve him.

Other strengths and weaknesses of the expository sermon could be:

**It best follows Christ's and the First Century Church practice. Christ spoke on many topics and quoted texts from the Old Testament. He did so in**

**an expository manner! Christ spoke in dark sayings to unbelievers and those who opposed Him. In Mark, 4:34 He tells us He "expounded all things to His disciples". That word means to solve or explain. This is the goal of the expositor. He seeks to explain and solve the sometimes seemingly mysterious things of God's Word to his congregation!**

**Luke 24:27** tells us that He "expounded unto them all the scriptures the things concerning Himself". The word expound here is where we get our word Hermeneutics. It means to interpret fully or to intensively interpret. That is expository preaching! His audience later said that He "opened" the Scripture to them. They had no doubts as to what He or the Scriptures meant.

Christ had to berate the religious leaders of His day for failing to do this very thing. How often did He say that the Word says this, but you say, or you have heard it said, "but I say unto you?". Why? Rather than expositing the Scriptures, they quoted each other and explained away Scripture in order to color it to meet their own desires. This kept the people ignorant and under their control.

**It creates balance.**

**It is easier to balance zeal and knowledge, which produces stronger disciples with expository preaching. A saint who is all charged up and halfcocked, due to a lack of knowledge is as bad, and maybe even more dangerous than a soaked in the facts person who does not have the zeal to share the knowledge. Both situations are unbalanced and undesirable.**

**It provides Liberty in variety.**

**Since expository means to actually teach what is really contained in the passage based upon language, context, and comparison with other Scriptures the principle provides for a variety of preaching.**

**The following is an example outline of an Expository Sermon.**

### **THOMAS - The Apostle**

1. Thomas' name occurs 12 times in the New Testament.
  - 1) Matthew 10:3;
  - 2) Mark 3:18;
  - 3) Luke 6:15;
  - 4) John 11:16;
  - 5) John 14:5
  - 6) John 20:24;
  - 7) John 20:26;
  - 8) John 20 27;
  - 9) John 20:28;
  - 10) John 20:29
  - 11) John 21:2
  - 12) Acts 1:13
2. Aramaic for "the twin". Three of the four passages John mentions him as "Didymus" which is Greek for "the twin". Most believe that was his nickname because he was a twin, some think it may have been his actual name.
3. In Matt 10:3, Thomas is paired with Matthew. In Acts 1:13, he is paired with Philip.
4. In **John 21:2-6**, we see him listed second to Peter; perhaps in prestige and influence.
  - a) Thomas may have also been a fisherman.
  - b) Perhaps seven of the twelve apostles were fishermen.
5. Thomas was never mentioned apart from the twelve in the other gospels, but John gives him a very prominent role.
  - a) He may have been a much more important apostle than we usually consider him.
  - b) He definitely shows us some traits that we need to consider and shows to us something about his character.
  - c) When we mention Job, we immediately think of the "patience of Job"
  - d) When we mention Thomas, we immediately think of "doubting Thomas."
    - 1) I'm not certain this is a correct or proper way we should think of him.

- 2) Let's look briefly at the passages that reveal some things about Thomas.

### **1. A "Courageous Thomas" - John 11:16**

1. Jesus wants to go to Bethany, near Jerusalem. Jesus' life has been threatened, and all the apostles know of the danger to Jesus if he returns to that area.
  - a) cf. John 10:22 at the feast of Dedication in Jerusalem.
  - b) cf. John 10:31 the Jews took up stones to stone Jesus.
  - c) cf. John 10:39-40 Jesus eluded them and escaped to the east side of the Jordan River with his apostles.
  - d) The time in John 9 after Jesus healed the blind man in the temple, the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin sought to kill him- (John 9 - 10).
2. Now Jesus hears the news about Lazarus - John 11:1-8; esp. note verse 8.
3. Courageous Thomas recognizes the threat to Jesus if he goes back to that area, but he becomes a TOWER OF STRENGTH, and leads the way, saying, "Well, if they are going to kill him, let us go and die with him!".
  - a) Courage and leadership.

### **2. A "Searching, Seeking, and Learning Thomas" - John 14:5**

1. Note the context of the famous, comforting remarks made by Jesus, John 14:1-4.
2. But Thomas says to him, "Lord we don't know where you are going, [so] how can we know the way?"
  - a) Thomas is not the only one puzzled.
  - b) None of the apostles grasped what Jesus was talking about.
3. Some people, when they don't get it, remain silent and look puzzled, but Thomas again leads the way in wanting to learn just what Jesus was talking about, and just where Jesus was going.
  - a) So, we see Thomas as a diligent student, inquiring and searching for the truth, wanting to be sure he understands his teacher.
  - b) Isn't this a remarkable and commendable trait?

### **3. A "Slow-to-be-Convinced Thomas" - John 20:19-24**

1. Instead of calling him "Doubting Thomas" I want us to look at him from a different perspective.
2. Thomas was not present at the first appearance - we don't know why!

- a) Many good lessons can be given on what Thomas missed when he missed meeting with the disciples on that first Sunday.
  - b) I'm not going to try to accuse or excuse Thomas. We just don't know why he was not there.
    - 1) Many good people have to miss some services today, sick, or some family member desperately sick, etc.
    - 2) We shouldn't try to find fault with him, but it is true that because he was NOT there. He missed a good many things that could have blessed his life.
3. But instead of calling him "Doubting Thomas," let's think of him as being one who was not going to be deceived, or who didn't want to be misled; he is not gullible.
- a) He was not any more "doubting" than the other apostles had been before Jesus appeared to them.
  - b) He is one wanting proof!
  - c) He wants to see the evidence with his own eyes!
  - d) And while we admire his position of wanting proof, and wanting evidence, and not being deceived - **he is mistaken in one very important way!**
4. The mistake of Thomas was not that he wanted proof, but that he failed to realize the evidential value of eye-witnesses.
- a) If Thomas did not want to trust the eyes of others, how could he be sure he could trust his own eyes?
  - b) It becomes a matter of what kind of evidence one is going to accept.
5. Jesus, however, provided the exact proof Thomas asked for. Question: Who told Jesus what Thomas had said?
- a) Well, Jesus had been there all the time. Jesus knew.
  - b) Jesus did not scold him but did remind him of the evidence he had rejected should have been enough.
  - c) Jesus gave his blessing and commendation to those who should believe because of the testimony of these apostles who were eyewitnesses! (20:29-31)
  - d) And Jesus was talking about us who read their inspired testimony!
6. John makes Thomas a very real person - and the passage in 20:25 reveals another great characteristic.

#### 4. "A Loving & Committed Thomas" - John 20:25

1. We know Thomas spoke of putting his fingers in the wounds of Jesus, and Jesus showed him the wounds, but we are not told if Thomas put forth his hands and touched him.
  - a) We believe the apostles did touch Jesus - he was real - 1 John 1:1-3.
2. This passage is one of the great climactic passages in John.
  - a) John has been systematically leading his reader through a series of seven witnesses who bear their testimony to Jesus (you can outline the gospel of John just that way!)
  - b) And this passage is the great climax!
3. John knew the importance of this confession of faith - and this commitment to Jesus.
  - a) I think this is why John has been giving Thomas the recognition before this of the important role he played in the apostleship of Jesus.
  - b) Where he reveals to us the **courage** of this Thomas in 11:16.
  - c) And the honest searching, **seeking** Thomas in 14:5.
  - d) His important position among the apostles is given in 21:2-6 when he is linked with Peter himself as one of the leaders.
4. The key passage here, however, is Jesus, reply to Thomas in vs. 29.
  - a) Jesus says the testimony of a trustworthy eye-witness should be sufficient to make believers, and those who believed would be blessed.
    - 1) If we can't trust this great number of reliable eye-witnesses- it is not likely that we would even trust our own eyes.
    - 2) This is almost parallel to Jesus' statement in Luke 16:31 . . .
5. John tells us his own purpose in writing this gospel in the next verses -
  - a) ... to make believers, **20:31 READ**
  - b) And from the Lord's own statement, those who believe the written testimony of the credible, trustworthy testimony of these eye-witness apostles can have eternal life. (20:30-31)

#### Conclusion:

1. The tradition of Thomas' ministry in India and death as a martyr there for Jesus.

## **Chapter 6**

### **How to Construct a Textual Sermon**

#### **Definition of a Textual Sermon.**

A textual sermon is one in which the main divisions are derived from a text consisting of a brief portion of Scripture. Each of these divisions is then used as a line of suggestion, and the text provides the theme of the sermon.

1. **The main line of development is drawn from the text itself. (In this way the main outline is kept strictly within the limits of the text. It may consist of one line of a verse.**
2. The main division is derived from the text. The main divisions suggest the features to be shared in the message. Sometimes the text is so rich and full that we may obtain many truths or features from it, which will serve as a development of the thoughts contained in the outline. At other times it may be necessary to draw from other portions of Scripture to develop the main division.
3. The definition further states that text provides the theme of the sermon. (In contrast to the topical sermon in which we begin with a topic or theme, we now begin with a text, which will indicate the dominant idea of the message.)

#### **Example of Textual Sermon Outlines:**

##### **I. God's Power to the Faint. Isaiah 40:28-31**

1. He is Never Discouraged!
2. He Never Faints nor is Weary!
3. He is Never Short of Wisdom!

##### **II. What Our God Offers! Luke 40:29-30**

1. He Gives Power to the Faint!
2. He Increases our Strength!

### **III. What Our God Wants to Do for Us! Luke 40:31**

1. He gives us Power to Rise Above the Problems (as eagles).
2. He Enables Us to Run and Not Be Weary!
3. He Strengthens Us to Walk, and not Faint!

### **Basic Principles for the Preparation of Textual Outline!**

1. The textual outline should be centered around the main thought in the text and the main divisions may be derived from the text so as to amplify or develop that one theme.

### **The Body—a Sacrifice! (Romans 12:2)**

- I. The reason for sacrifice, I beseech you..., by the mercies of God.
- II. The thing to be sacrificed, present your body.
- III. The conditions of sacrifice, a living sacrifice...unto God.
- IV. The obligation of sacrifice, which is your reasonable service.
  1. The main division may consist of the truths or principles suggested by the text. (See Psalms 32 or Psalms 51)
2. It may be possible to find more than one theme or thought in a text. Depending upon the point of view from which we regard the text, but only one central idea should be developed in anyone outline. (such as John 3:16)

### **God's Great Gift! God Gives Us Eternal Life!**

- I. It is a love gift, God so loved.
  - a. 'The one who gave it – God.
- II. It is a sacrificial gift...that he gave... -- The reason He gave it –so loved.
- III. It is an eternal gift... --The price he paid for it.
- IV. It is a universal gift...whosoever. --The part we have in it – believe.
- V. It is a conditional gift. - believeth –the certainty of our possessing it.
3. The main envision should be in logical or chronological sequence.
4. The very words of the text may form the main divisions of the outline, provided these divisions are gathered around one main thought.
5. The context from which the text is taken must be carefully observed and related to the text.
6. Some texts contain comparisons or contrasts which can be treated best by pointing out their purposeful similarities or differences.

Psalms one: Notice the contrast between the Godly person and the wording.

7. Two or three verses, each taken from different parts of Scripture, may be put together and treated as though they are one test.

### **Suggestions of Series of Textual Sermons!**

1. Dealing with the parables of Christ.
2. Dealing with the Seven statements of Christ from the Cross
3. Several places where the Lord address individuals by their names twice in succession.
4. Repetition in Scripture is a mean of emphasis. Genesis 22:11,12, Exodus 3:45, Luke 10:41,42, Acts 9:4, etc.
5. The I Am's of Jesus as found in the gospel, especially the gospel of John.

## **"THE ART OF CONFESSING OUR SINS"**

**Psalms 51:1-19**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Do you remember the joy and the relief you experienced when you were baptized?
  - a. Knowing that your sins had been washed away by the blood of Christ?
  - b. Knowing that you then stood before God holy and without blame? - Wouldn't it be great to experience that same joy and relief, time and again?
2. There is no reason why you cannot!
  - a. Even though you may have sinned terribly after your baptism.
  - b. God has made provision whereby we can enjoy the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ!
3. Not by being baptized again and again...
  - a. But by confessing our sins to God - cf. **1 John 1:9**
  - b. For God who is faithful and just has promised to forgive our sins -- Just as we were raised from the grave of baptism cleansed by the blood of Jesus, so we can rise from our prayers knowing that we have been cleansed from all unrighteousness!

4. The key is to confess our sins...
  - a. But how does one do that effectively?
  - b. Are there some things to keep in mind as we confess our sins?
5. In **Psalms 51**, we have what David wrote after he was guilty of adultery with Bathsheba...
  - a. He provides an example of how one should confess their sins to God.
  - b. He provides what I like to call "**The Art of Confessing Our Sins**"

**[How should one go about confessing their sins to God? From the example of David, a good place to begin is...]**

**I. APPEAL TO GOD'S MERCY AND LOVE (1-2)**

**A. NOTE THE BASIS OF DAVID'S PLEA FOR FORGIVENESS...**

1. "according to Your loving kindness"
2. "according to the multitude of Your tender mercies" -- David sought forgiveness based upon God's loving kindness and tender mercies

**B. THE PARDON WE SEEK SHOULD HAVE AS ITS BASIS...**

1. Not in the merit or worthiness of man.
2. But in the goodness and grace of God!

**C. AS WE SEEK "WASHING" AND "CLEANSING" FROM OUR SINS...**

1. Don't base your appeal on your past accomplishments.
  - a. E.g., how much we have done for the Lord.
  - b. E.g., how long we have been a member of His church.
2. But upon the goodness and mercy of God!
  - a. Appeal to His mercy and grace!
  - b. Knowing He is slow to anger and abounding in mercy! - cf. **Psalm 103:8-1** - Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the publican! - **Luke 18:9-14**

**[As we seek forgiveness, we must of course...]**

## II. ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SINS TO GOD (3-4)

### A. NOTE HOW DAVID ACKNOWLEDGED HIS SIN...

1. He did not try to hide it: "my sin is ever before me"
2. He admitted that it was a sin against God Himself: "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight"
  - a. While it is true he had sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, and his own wives...
  - b. ...David knew that it was ultimately against God Himself!
3. He accepted the condemnation of God against him.
  - a. God was both "just" and blameless" in judging him.
  - b. God sent Nathan to condemn him.

### B. AS WE CONFESS OUR SINS...

1. Appreciate that this is key to receiving God's grace - cf. **1 John 1:9**
2. Acknowledge the sin; while we may at times simply confess the sin, it never hurts to actually mention the sin for which we seek forgiveness.
3. Understand that all sin is ultimately a sin against God Himself!
4. Don't fault God (His Word or His messengers) when we are exposed and condemned for our sins!

**[As we confess our sins, there is more that we should bear in mind. From David we learn that we should also...]**

## III. UNDERSTAND WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE GOD WANTS US (5-6)

### A. UNTIL FORGIVEN, ONE IS DEEP IN SIN...

1. Using a hyperbole so common in poetic language, David describes the depravity in which he finds himself.
2. He is not trying to escape responsibility by saying he was born that way; only that he knows he is utterly sinful.

### B. BUT GOD DESIRES MUCH MORE...

1. David knew that God wanted:
  - a. "truth in the inward parts"
  - b. "wisdom in the hidden parts"

- Again, figurative hyperbole illustrating that truth and wisdom are to be as pervasive as sin had been!
- 2. David knew that God desired to provide more than just forgiveness, He also desires:
  - a. Total restoration, with understanding and wisdom on our part
  - b. That we are equipped for faithful service

**[Understanding what God wants of us helps us to appreciate what David goes on to say. Indeed, confession of sins should also mean that we...]**

#### **IV. PRAY FOR RENEWAL AND RESTORATION (7-12)**

##### **A. DAVID DESIRED MORE THAN JUST FORGIVENESS OF SIN...**

1. He does pray for forgiveness, using figurative language in asking God...
  - a. To purge him with hyssop - **Psalm 51:7**
  - b. To wash him whiter than snow - **Psalm 51:7**
  - c. To hide His face from his sins - **Psalm 51:9**
  - d. To blot out all his iniquities - **Psalm 51:9**
2. But he also sought for more; he desired...
  - a. Joy and gladness - **Psalm 51:8**
  - b. A new heart, and renewal of a steadfast spirit - **Psalm 51:10**
  - c. Continuation of God's presence and Spirit - **Psalm 51:11**

-- As summarized in **verse 12**: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me with Your generous Spirit."

##### **B. AS WE CONFESS OUR SINS...**

1. We should look to God for more than just forgiveness!
2. We should also ask for:
  - a. A complete renewal and total restoration!
  - b. A return to "the joy of salvation" (that joy experienced when we first obeyed the gospel! - e.g., **Acts 8:35-39**)

**[As we consider further David's confession of sin, we find it proper to...]**

#### **V. RESOLVE TO OFFER GRATEFUL SERVICE (13-17)**

##### **A. DAVID RESOLVES...**

1. To teach other sinners and transgressors - **Psalm 51:13**
2. To praise God for His righteousness in delivering him from sin. - **Psalm 51:14-15**
  - a. Knowing that God delights in something more than animal sacrifices. - **Psalm 51:16**
  - b. A broken spirit and a contrite heart are what really please God. - **Psalm 51:17; cf. Isa 66:1-2; 57:15**

**B. SUCH RESOLUTION IS IN KEEPING WITH TRUE REPENTANCE...**

1. God desires more than just forgiveness, but total restoration. - cf. **Psalm 51:6**
2. And zealous service is indicative of true repentance, as taught in **2 Corinthians 7:10-11**

**C. AS WE CONFESS OUR SINS...**

1. We should look beyond obtaining forgiveness for past sin.
2. We should look beyond obtaining present joy and gladness of heart.
3. We should be making commitments regarding future service!

[Finally, as we come to the end of David's Psalm, we find that "The Art of Confessing Our Sins" includes that we...]

**VI. PRAY FOR GOD'S PURPOSES (18-19)**

**A. DAVID OFFERED A PRAYER REGARDING GOD'S PURPOSES...**

1. That God would fulfill His purpose for Zion - **Psalm 51:18**
2. That God would be pleased with Israel's sacrifices - **Psalm 51:19**
3. Thus, his confession of sin ends with a desire for that which pleases God.

**B. AS WE CONFESS OUR SINS...**

1. We should not be selfish, praying for only our needs.
2. What about God's desires? His purposes?
3. As Jesus taught us in "The Lord's Prayer", it is important to pray for God's will as well as our own (cf. "Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven")

## **CONCLUSION**

1. I hope I have not made the practice of confessing sins sound complicated...
  - a. Certainly, there are occasions where a simple "I have sinned..." may suffice.
  - b. As illustrated in the prayer of the tax collector. - **Luke 18:13-14**
2. Yet, if we desire to be less self-centered in confessing our sins, we can follow David's example:
  - a. Appeal to God's mercy and loving kindness.
  - b. Acknowledge our sins to God.
  - c. Understand where we are and where God wants us.
  - d. Pray for renewal and restoration.
  - e. Resolve to offer grateful service.
  - f. Pray for God's purposes.
3. By praying as David did, we are too sure to experience two things:
  - a. Forgiveness itself.
  - b. The joy of forgiveness.

-- As David expressed in **Psalm 32:1-5**, written after receiving forgiveness for his sins.

The Christian who confesses his sins is the truly happy individual ("**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven...**"), for they have the assurance of salvation. (cf. **1 John 1:9**).

## **Chapter 7**

### **How to Construct a Topical Sermon**

Sermons are typically either topical or expository. In a topical sermon, the preacher might not have a specific text the sermon on which he is focusing. Instead, the sermon focuses on a topic and moves throughout several passages to address the topic. There are many good topical sermons out there, but topical sermons can run the danger of proof-texting. Bible passages can be pulled from different sections of Scripture without regard for what the passage actually means in its context. Proof-texting can (and often does) happen in any sermon, but since many topical sermons are not bound by a specific text, they can be a little more at risk.

The topical sermon is usually based on a doctrine, teaching, or contemporary issue affecting the congregation. The preacher attempts to help the congregation understand and interpret the topic from the perspective of the gospel.

The preacher draws from many sources including the Bible, history, theology, and philosophy. Allen states the "text" of the sermon is the gospel and not a particular biblical text.

#### **When to Preach Topically**

Typical occasions to preach topically is when a particular issue is larger than one text, or when the Bible doesn't directly address a particular subject.

Allen notes that the great danger is what he calls "theological amnesia". Here the preacher spends so much time looking at the subject from many perspectives and never gets to the gospel perspective. An example may be when a preacher talks about the physiological, cultural, and economic impacts of racism, but never gets to what the gospel has to say about the issue.

#### **Analysis**

We should not think of the topical sermon as simply stringing together a number of texts. Instead, there should be a strong theological perspective undergirding the texts chosen. This is a subtle difference, but an important one nonetheless.

I think another problem that occurs when preachers preach topical sermons is that a preacher might become a "johnny one note". Here the preacher only preaches sermons on one topic over and over again. This can be an issue for all patterns, but more so for the topical one. the preacher can alleviate this problem by looking at the topic from different angles. In any case, this can be a powerful method to teach a doctrine

**Here is an example of a topical sermon by Mark Copeland**  
**"THE BENEFITS OF A SMALL CHURCH"**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Churches come in all sizes...
  - a. Some are large, numbering in the thousands, even tens of thousands.
  - b. Some are small, with as few as two or more people meeting in a home.
2. The definition of church sizes is rather arbitrary, but here is a definition.
  - a. A **small** church is less than **200** members (80% of churches).
  - b. A **medium** church has **201-400** members (10% of churches).
  - c. A **large** church as **401+** members (10% of churches).
  - d. For some, even 200 members constitute a large church.
3. Each size has its advantages.
  - a. There are things a larger church can do with its increased resources.
  - b. There are benefits of small churches often lost in larger churches.

[My purpose is not to encourage stagnation in church growth, but to remind us of the benefits (and obligations) of a small church lest we become discouraged...]

I. **BENEFITS OF A SMALL CHURCH**

**A. STRONGER SENSE OF FAMILY...**

1. A small church is one where almost everyone knows each another.
  - a. Face-to-face interaction is much easier.
  - b. Even when we don't remember their names, we remember their "face".

2. A small church is one where it is easier to develop familial relationships.

a. A sense of "family", which is proper - cf. **1 Timothy 5:1-2**.

b. An opportunity to cross generational lines.

1) Where children learn to relate to others besides their peers.

2) Where young and old benefit from each other's strengths.

3)

**-- The family of God is a wonderful blessing (Mark 10:28-30); a blessing most often experienced in small churches.**

## **B. GREATER OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW...**

1. More likely that **we are needed**

a. The roles to fulfill are not that much difference between large and small churches.

1) Roles such as serving in public worship, Bible classes, etc.

2) Whether large or small, the number of teachers, preachers, song leaders, etc., who are needed is about the same.

b. The ratio of roles to members is usually much greater in small churches.

1) Simply because we do not have a large pool of members from whom to choose.

2) Therefore, there is often a greater need in small churches.

2. More likely that **we are used to seeing:**

a. Larger churches often require a large rotation in its use of members.

1) Opportunities to preach, teach classes, serve in the public worship may be rare.

2) One may have the opportunity to be used only once in long while.

- b. Smaller churches use those willing to serve much more frequently.
  - 1) Out of necessity at times but can also be by design.
  - 2) Small churches are often the training ground where leaders for large churches developed their skills.
- 3. More likely that **we are missed in a small church.**
  - a. One's absence is more keenly felt in a small church.
    - 1) Especially when needed to fulfill a certain role (e.g. Bible class teacher).
    - 2) One's absence can be overlooked for several weeks in a larger church.
  - b. For those needing encouragement, this is important.
    - 1) It is too easy to get lost in a crowd.
    - 2) We need brethren who will take notice when we begin to show signs of weakness - cf. **Galatians 6:1-2.**

**-- Proportionally speaking, more preachers, teachers, elders, and average members have been developed by small churches more than in large churches.**

[Of course, there are many things a large church can do that a small church cannot. But small churches have their benefits we need to appreciate. They also have their obligations...]

## II. **THE OBLIGATIONS OF A SMALL CHURCH**

### **A. NURTURE SENSE OF FAMILY...**

- 1. Congregationally, by providing opportunities for spiritual fellowship.
  - a. E.g., Bible classes, gospel meetings, etc.
  - b. E.g., visitation programs, to encourage the weak, minister to the sick
- 2. Individually, we can provide opportunities for hospitality.
  - a. E.g., inviting others into our homes, going out together.
  - b. E.g., getting together for social occasions, such as potluck dinners.

**-- As we seek to nurture our sense of family, we must be careful not to limit our efforts to those in our physical families!**

## **B. PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH...**

1. Train those willing to learn and serve.
  - a. E.g., men's classes on serving in public worship, preaching, teaching.
  - b. E.g., ladies' classes on teaching ladies, children.
2. Utilizing those willing to develop their abilities and talents.
  - a. E.g., providing opportunities for men willing to preach, lead singing, etc.
  - b. E.g., likewise, for women willing to teach children, other women, etc.

**-- We should not feel that a preacher is shirking his duties when he opens his pulpit or Bible classes, so others can grow through such experiences - cf. 2 Timothy 2:2.**

## **C. WATCH FOR STAGNATION...**

1. It is tempting to want to remain small.
  - a. There are advantages to a small congregation.
  - b. It has warmth, friendliness, etc.
2. The Lord expects us to grow - cf. **Matthew 13:31-32; John 15:1-2.**
  - a. We should not be content to remain small.
  - b. We should be seeking to grow both as individuals and as a congregation.

**-- If we are not on an upward spiral of growth, we are likely heading downward.**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Again, there are advantages to different sizes in congregations.
  - a. My point has not been to suggest one size is superior to another.
  - b. My purpose has been to ensure we do not let smallness become a hindrance.
2. As a small congregation...
  - a. We need to focus on our strengths, which should lead to growth.
  - b. If we do not, we will likely stagnate, if not die altogether.

Focus on our strengths as a small congregation, and it is more likely we will remain healthy when we become a larger congregation!

## Chapter 8

# How to improve the Preaching Style and Sermon Delivery:

### How to Improve Sermon Delivery

#### **Listener, beware:**

The true expository preacher is not just about convictions regarding the Bible. It also involves convictions in relation to the congregation and the listeners. As a preacher, you are committed to bringing God's message from God's Word to the people God has prepared and brought together for a particular service. Give attention to both parts.

#### **Preach with Passion:**

It is easy to fake pulpit passion. All you have to do is raise the voice, pound the fists, point the finger, grimace a little, and before you know it, you have a fake pulpit passion. What does it take to have genuine passion? Why would you want it?

#### **Build Confidence:**

The preacher must build confidence in the listeners; confidence the preacher knows the message, knows how it will progress, and knows when it will end. Structure of Message - If the message is deductive, then the main idea is stated early. Confidence can be built by an effective preview of the message.

#### **Before you Speak:**

Between the start of the service, and the sermon, there are lots of dynamics at play in the mind, and heart of a speaker. This is especially true, I think when the speaker is a visiting speaker. In your own church, you have fewer surprises, and sometimes more influence over the first part of the sermon.

#### **Speak as Though This May Be Your Only Opportunity:**

This Sunday maybe it. The only chance you will get. There may be someone at church this Sunday who may never come again. It would be wise to spell out the gospel in detail, wouldn't it? After all, this may be the only opportunity and so it would make sense to spell it out, wouldn't it?

## **Conduct Yourself as a Leader:**

If you are a preacher, then you are a leader. Your self-esteem may not say so. Your mannerisms and style may not say this is so. Your church structure may not say this is so. However, when you preach, you have the influence of a leader. Of course, it is easy to be a poor leader. You can undermine the gospel teachings.

## **Your Preaching Style is Not an Excuse**

In reality, every one of us has our own style, when we preach. There has to be an integrity between who we are, and our style, which is why if you copy your favorite communicator, it doesn't seem to work very well (even if it seems to work in your mind). Ask your people.

## **Are People Listening?**

Who's responsible for the attentiveness of listeners? Is it the listeners? After all, they choose to come to church. They should be able to focus on what is happening. Is it the sound technician? That individual plays a huge role in removing certain distractions, but they cannot engineer attentiveness.

## **Preach Like It May Be Their Last:**

If you are preaching today, it is tempting to be caught up in your own world. Concerned about your presentation, the details of the sermon, even the peripheral details that you didn't delegate to someone more passionate about them. But know this - today's sermon may be the last some of those people ever hear.

## **How to Improve the Preaching Style Tips on Delivering Your Presentation**

When talking, make eye contact with individuals in the audience. Look at a person, and act as if you are speaking directly to him or her. After a minute, pick someone else. This helps you communicate with the audience rather than just read to them.

Speak loudly enough so that people in the back can hear you. If people are too far away, ask them to move closer before you start.

Use gestures, tone, and volume of voice to emphasize key points. Stick to your main points as outlined in the visuals and your notes. Don't go off on tangents.

Leave time for a question-and-answer period. Take all questions after the talk, rather than allowing interruptions.

At the conclusion, summarize your main points, and tell the audience what action they should take (or at least what you expect them to have learned, or want them to believe).

Making presentations is an unavoidable part of corporate life, so why not make the best of it? The following may help you prepare a more interesting, informative, and persuasive talk the next time you're asked.

How long should your presentation run? Experience shows that 20 minutes is good. Less seems insubstantial; more is boring. An hour is the maximum. If you're asked to speak for a longer time, stop after an hour, and give your audience a break.

Since the average person speaks at a rate of about 100 words a minute, a 20-minute talk is 2000 words long. This translates into eight pages of double-spaced typewritten copy (on the basis of 250 words per page).

A good pace for matching visuals with your narration is one visual for every minute you're speaking.

It is important to know your audience since different people are interested in different aspects of a subject for different reasons.

### **Steps to Preparation in Developing Your Style: Step One**

Choose a biblical topic for the sermon. Keep your audience in mind. Select a topic that inspires you. You can't inspire others if you're not inspired first.

### **Step Two**

Prepare an outline for the sermon based on your topic.

### **Step Three**

Write your sermon once you have found the biblical passages that backup or reinforce your sermon topic. Be authoritative in tone.

#### **Step Four**

Use real-life experiences and examples to back-up biblical passages. Be as brief as possible.

#### **Step Five**

Review your sermon several times before giving it in public. Sermon preparation is not difficult and can be very rewarding. The more sermons you write, the more you want to do.

It is a good practice to study the sermons of other preachers. From them, we gain insight and inspiration. However, it is almost impossible to preach another preacher's sermons like he preached them. Usually, they just do not fit your personality or style.

## Chapter 9

### The Necessity and Characteristics of God's Call to Preach

In God's calling orders of life, everything else becomes secondary. Paul is a good example of a man who made the move from driven to called. When he reflects on his life before he came to Christ, he gives an impressive list of accomplishments and things of which to be proud (Philippians 3:4-6).

Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees and stood above the rest in his zeal for Judaism's ancestral traditions (Galatians 1:14). Saul, as he was called then, was sharp. His accomplishment outshined everyone else. Paul's resume appeared to have given him pride and confidence.

It is interesting to note that Paul calls this having confidence "according to the flesh". He now considered those shining accomplishments as loss (Philippians 3:7). In other words, he put them away. They no longer define him. He threw them out as trash for the sake of knowing Christ, the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering, and being conformed to his death (Philippians 3:10).

#### **Changed from the inside out.**

The call of God through Christ changed Paul from the inside out. Paul considers himself to be "least of the Apostles" and "not fit to be called an Apostle" (1 Cor 15:9). Paul made it clear that his motivation was not to be a man-pleaser because if that were his motivation, he would not be a slave of Christ (Galatians 1:10).

After all, Christians were on the margins of society. They were ridiculed, hated, and persecuted. Having rank or status was no longer something important to Paul (Galatians 2:6). Paul had his share of critics who denounced him for his simple way of ministry (2 Corinthians 10:10). But this was not a threat to his identity. All that mattered to him was doing God's will (Galatians 2:20), which he could do regardless of the critics. So, when Paul was thrown in prison, he was not distressed (Philippians 1:12-14).

He found he could live out God's calling no matter where he was. Even when some ambitious rivals preached the Gospel, trying to "one up" Paul, who was in prison, and probably an embarrassment to them, it did not cause Paul to feel

threatened or competitive (Philippians 1:15-18). His sense of identity was wrapped up in Christ, not in his accomplishments, which were really not his anyway. He recognized he could do nothing without God being at work in him to will, and to work for Him (Philippians 2:13).

What a change we see in Paul before and after! The major difference appears to be Paul's motivation. As a Jew, Paul seemed to be motivated by his desire for personal achievements and success. After being called, his motivation underwent a radical change. Paul's sense of identity and purpose was wrapped up in the person of Christ, not in his job, role, abilities, or anything else. He could comfortably be with people in weakness and fear and much trembling (1 Corinthians 2:1-4), because it was not about Paul, but about God in him. He recognized the power of God works through his weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). He comfortably realized he was nothing, and the God, to whom he had dedicated himself was everything. In this, he found peace and joy.

### **John the Baptist was not threatened by the Ministry of Jesus:**

John the Baptist did the same sort of thing. At one point, the people had stopped following John and were now following Jesus. John was a popular preacher. Many people had been going to him. In fact, Josephus says more about John the Baptist than about Jesus, which indicates the amount of popularity John had. But now, people were leaving John to follow Jesus.

"And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him.' John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, I am not the Christ, but, I have been sent ahead of Him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So, this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease' " (John 3:26-30).

Some of John's followers felt threatened, but not John. John had a clear sense of God's calling in his life, and it had more to do with God, and his purposes than about John himself.

One of the characteristics of God's calling that stands out in both John and Paul is that they both understood stewardship. John recognized his followers were not his, his ministry was not his, and nothing he had accomplished was truly his.

"A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven." God gave him everything, including his ministry. Because they belonged to God, John was only too happy to give them back when his Lord wanted them. This was no threat to John. The same could be said for Paul. Paul understood his ministry as a "stewardship of God's grace" (Ephesians 3:2). There was no need to compete with rival preachers for notoriety. His ministry was not his but was God's.

Losing notoriety was no threat to Paul's identity when rival preachers tried to "one-up" him for selfish ambition. Followers leaving John to follow Jesus was no threat to John's identity. In fact, it is probable John's role changed some when Jesus began his ministry. His identity was not wrapped up in his "career" so-to-speak. His identity was wrapped up in the calling of God. His role, surroundings, and situation in life changed, but his calling did not. Paul understood this, which is why he never missed a beat, even when thrown in prison.

Our role and situation will change. The time will come when our kids will become adults and leave home. There will come a time when we are too old to preach from the pulpit. However, if we understand our calling correctly, then any job we do will be sacred, it all belongs to God. His calling remains constant even though our situation in life may change. It all belongs to him, and we must serve him through everything we do. Therefore, whatever our hands find to do, let us do with all our heart as for the Lord and not for man. Our motivation should always be to please God above all else.

Pastor Lawrence once said, "To serve God, you don't necessarily have to change 'what' you do, but change 'why' you do". All we do should be for the love of God, whether it is something small and menial, or something huge. God is not impressed with "what" we do. God is more concerned with "why" we do. My highest calling, then, is to love God, to be with him, to be like him.

### **Proverbs 9:1-5**

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars, she has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table, she has sent out her maidens, she calls from the tops of the heights of the city: "Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!" To him who lacks understanding she says, "Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed.

Forsake folly, and live, and proceed in the way of understanding."

**Nevertheless, there is a *unique* call to the ministry of preaching God's Word,**

In the New Testament, this call was always to men to devote themselves as much as possible to the preaching of the Gospel so the lost might be evangelized, and the church strengthened. In today's terms, we would speak of this as a call to pastoral, church-planting, evangelistic, or Bible-teaching ministry. Nowadays, there are countless other kinds of ministries on church staffs, the mission field, Christian organizations, etc., ministries to which people are guided by God. But here I am writing to those who are struggling with whether God is calling them to the "Gospel ministry," that is, a ministry where their *primary* task is to preach the Word of God.

## **IS A CALL FROM GOD NECESSARY FOR PREACHERS?**

### **Why do preachers need a special call?**

In addition to every Christian's call to evangelize, the New Testament makes plain God gives a special call to those whom He sends to preach the Gospel.

**Matthew 9:38**, "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest *to send out* workers into His harvest."

**Acts 13:2**, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which *I have called them.*"

**Acts 20:28**, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among *which the Holy Spirit made you overseers.*"

**Romans 10:15**, "And how shall they preach unless they are *sent?*"

**Ephesians 4:11**, "And *He gave* some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers."

"A preacher is not a Christian who decides to preach," declared the great British preacher, Martyn Lloyd-Jones. "It is God who commands preaching. It is God who sends out preachers."

You can no more send yourself into the pulpit than you can send yourself to China as an official ambassador from the US. A Gospel minister must be God-called.

The certainty of the call of God is not only necessary for sending one into the ministry, nothing is more essential for keeping you there. Regardless of the blessings, and fruitfulness God grants to your service, there will be dark, heavy

days when you would walk away from the Gospel ministry if it weren't for the bedrock of assurance that you are doing what God Himself has called you to do. Not having an unshakable sense of divine call is one of the main reasons why so few who begin to preach stay devoted to it for a lifetime. But preachers who, like Jeremiah, are sure of the fire of God's call in their bones (Jeremiah 20:9), can, as Jeremiah did, endure glaciers of opposition and icebergs of discouragement.

## **HOW WILL I KNOW I'M CALLED TO PREACH?**

God's call to preach His Word is much more than a personal spiritual experience. When God calls a man to the Gospel Ministry He calls him both internally, and externally. Each of these twin features of God's call also has two aspects of its own.

### **THE INTERNAL CALL**

Part of the internal call is an *aspiration*, which is, an irrepressible desire to engage in the work of the ministry. The imperative presence of this compulsion is reflected in 1 Timothy 3:1, "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man *aspires* to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he *desires* to do."

This may also be termed a "secret call" since this desire often begins to grow long before others recognize the person as a candidate for ministry. Some people first become aware of the call originating through their reading of the Bible. Many recall the powerful effect of a sermon or a book that initiated their sense of summons. Others will refer to the influence or example of a minister they admired. Regardless of the means through which God began to awaken you to His purpose, your encounters with the Scriptures should continually nourish, and affirm the secret call.

So, the internal call should be a *continuing* aspiration. Without choosing to think about it, you find it keeps surfacing in your thoughts. The more you wish to ignore the possibility God is calling you, the more preoccupied you become with it.

This aspiration for the Gospel ministry is also *self-sacrificing*. You feel drawn to preach God's Word, not for what it will do for you, but because you long to glorify God through the proclamation of His Gospel, the conversion of souls, and the building up of His church.

Besides aspiration, the other half of the internal call is the *qualification of life and character*. Those who would be the most visible representatives of Christ to His church and to the world must be growing in Christlikeness.

Above all else, ministers should model personal piety and devotion to Christ. Without this, no one can be an example to the flock (1 Peter 5:3).

Compare your life and character to the necessary ministerial qualifications revealed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Only Christ Himself would be perfectly qualified by these standards. If God demanded sinless conformity to such criteria, there would be no ministers. Moreover, it is a false humility that denies the evidence of grace and the presence of gifts given by God.

And yet, these standards aren't meaningless. A glaring violation means disqualification.

### **God equips with the needful gifts and abilities all those He calls.**

One essential skill for pastoral ministry, according to 1 Timothy 3:2, is the ability to teach. As I have, you've probably heard pastors who cannot teach. When God guides people to be accountants, He gives them a facility with figures. When He directs others to be farmers or musicians, He gives them the physical abilities they need for their job. When God calls people to preach, He gives them the ability to communicate His Word. Ministerial training is extremely important, and good training will develop gifts.

Training alone cannot furnish what God has not given.

For some who sense the internal call, there is a strong temptation to enter the preaching ministry immediately. While this zeal is commendable, wisdom would delay such decisive action in order to test one's ability to instruct and edify his hearers.

## **THE EXTERNAL CALL**

One aspect of the external, or public, side of God's call to the preaching ministry is *confirmation by others*. As your fellow Christians observe your life, and service, and compare what they see with the Scriptural qualifications for ministry, the Holy Spirit bears witness to them that God has called you, and they tell you so.

Who are the "others" whose opinions you should solicit regarding the evidence of God's call upon you? Normally you should include your pastor, and perhaps, other ministers you may know, as well as several spiritually mature believers in your church family. When possible, recognition of your call should be sought from your entire local church body.

The second factor in the external call is *verification in the response to your ministry efforts*. In other words, when you minister from the Word of God and serve in the church, do people often respond in ways that verify the presence of God's blessing upon your work?

This was how the Lord first manifested His call in my case. In college, I was part of a group of athletes who were often invited to churches and youth groups to tell of our faith in Christ. As months of doing this went by, increasing numbers of hearers would ask if I were called into the ministry. The more I heard it, the more I began to consider and pray about that possibility.

Remember, however, that no matter how strong your sense of internal *or* external call, God's true call includes *both*.

### **DO THESE THINGS MEAN I'M CALLED TO PREACH?**

None of the following, as desirable as many of them are, should be the reason why you believe God has called you to the ministry of preaching.

Ambition to be noticed, to prove yourself, or to "make a difference".

The confidence you could do well in the ministry.

Compassion for hurting people. Confusion about a mystical experience.

Fluency in public speaking.

Knowledge of the Bible.

Failure at all other types of work.

The belief that ministry would be the best means to an easy life, study, and intellectual pursuits, or wealth.

Acquiescence to the expectation of a parent or the selfish opinion of others.

The conviction that the church needs you.

**Do not enter the ministry if one of these is your main motivation. You must be called.**

## **WHAT DO I DO WHEN I THINK GOD IS CALLING?**

Once you believe God is calling you to preach His Gospel **the first step** is a *presentation* of yourself to your pastor. Tell him of your consciousness of call. He can give you not only experienced counsel, he can also inform you of any formal process you should follow in your church.

### **Your next step is *preparation*.**

A call to preach is a call to prepare. Would you want a physician who'd had no preparation? Preparation is even more important for a physician of *souls*. Develop your spiritual disciplines, especially those of the Word and prayer.

Devote yourself to your local church. Find a place to teach there. Study the Bible and theology as much as you can.

Seriously consider enrolling in a solid seminary. When I told my dad (a layman) God was calling me, he wisely advised, "If you can do anything else and be happy, do it". He was right. But I had to exclaim with the Apostle Paul, "I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians. 9:16). All along God knew better than I the path that was most joyful for me.

As a young boy of fifteen, I felt a deep calling to preach. I knew that in my own ability, it could never happen. I asked the Lord to verify my calling, by giving me the musical ability. At that time, I could neither sing nor play instruments. The Lord graciously granted that request. I am not strong on fleeces, but God honored a young boy's prayer. Today, when playing for a church, or for a public event, I never forget this is my verification from God to preach His word. I preached for more than 40 years before I pastored a church that paid me a salary. That is what the disciples did. Why not?

**Remember! "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."**

## **Chapter 10**

### **Persuasion in Preaching:**

#### **The Ready Mind:**

It may seem to us sometimes the Christians to whom we preach are not interested in the truth trails of Scripture; or worse, they won't get it. We hear so much about the postmodern mind we assume our postmodern people will reject the absolute logic of the Bible. It is true our listeners are susceptible to relativism. It is true we must not only make clear what is true from the Word but also demonstrate other ideas they may hold are *not* true. But, we may forget converted people have transformed minds.

Preaching biblical truth to unbelievers (in a seeker service, for instance) is an entirely different matter than preaching to believers. The truth isn't different. The capacity of the listener is. God promised Jeremiah that in the New Covenant he would "put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts".

New believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, almost immediately begin to understand spiritual realities that eluded them previously. It is like a gifted child. Sometimes, even before a child starts school, we realize "that kid has a mind for numbers," or music, or science. We say that because when they are introduced to something new in that sphere they understand it much more quickly than other children. It is like they are already wired for that kind of information. Christians are, from the moment of their new birth, wired for spiritual, biblical information. We "have a mind for it".

Thus, when a preacher stands and opens before them the logic of the Scriptures — the contemplations of a Psalmist or the doctrinal logic of an epistle — they understand it, like a gifted child. The logic of that text gradually becomes the logic of their own minds.

Truth trails preaching. The careful and persuasive exposition of Scriptural thinking shapes ready Christian minds for the everyday decisions unscripted in Scripture. When we face an ethical dilemma at work, or a discipline problem at home, our minds walk the truth trails we have learned, and we are able to reason our way, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to a biblical conclusion, even when no verse of Scripture directly addresses our situation.

When we preach only the principle, the bullet points, the bottom line, or when we try to make every sermon about an everyday problem, we may set truth in the minds of our hearers, but we do not set the logic, and pulse of God into their minds and hearts. On the other hand, biblical exposition that lays out the Lord's own logic and heartbeat shapes "doers of the Word, and not hearers only."

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come nor height, nor depth nor any other creatures, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Romans 8:38, 39.

**A CHRISTIAN BROTHER** was asked, one day, "To what persuasion do you belong?" He parried the question at first, for he did not think it was very important for him to answer. So, the enquirer asked him again, "But what is your persuasion?" "Well," said he, "if you must know my persuasion, this is it, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"

I also am of that persuasion. Somebody says, "That is Calvinistic doctrine". If you like to call it so, you may; but I would rather that you made the mistake of the good old Christian woman who did not know much about these things, and who said that she herself was "a high Calvarist". She liked "high Calvary" preaching, and so do I, and it is "high Calvary" doctrine in which I find in this passage. He who hung on high Calvary was such a lover of the souls of men that from that glorious fact I am brought to this blessed persuasion, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul was fully persuaded of this great truth. Did he not learn it by revelation? I doubt not that God at first supernaturally revealed it to him; but yet, in order that he might be still more sure of it, God was pleased to reveal it to him again, and again, until his trembling heart was more, and more completely persuaded of it. It may have seemed to him, as it does to some of us, to be almost too good to be true, and therefore the Holy Spirit so shed abroad this truth in the

apostle's mind that he yielded to it, and said, "I am persuaded". He may have thought, with a great many in the present day, that it was necessary to caution believers against falling from grace, and to be a little dubious about their final perseverance in the ways of God; but, if he ever had such fears, he gave them up, and said, "I am, —yes, I am persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The greatest persuasion in preaching comes from the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When preachers depend solely on preaching to convince man of sin, we will often be disappointed. That is why we pray and ask God to send the Holy Spirit to speak to the Hearts of those present.

I believe that the goal of preaching is ultimately to effect change in the listeners to bring them into conformity with the will and Word of God, to persuade the listeners. The definition of persuasion, therefore, by Woodward and Denton, given above, adequately provides a framework for my modified definition of persuasive preaching:

Persuasive preaching is:

- (1) the process of preparing biblical, expository messages using a persuasive pattern, and
- (2) presenting them through verbal and nonverbal communication means,
- (3) to autonomous individuals who can be convicted and/or taught by God's Holy Spirit,
- (4) in order to alter or strengthen
- (5) their attitudes, and beliefs toward God, His Word, and other individuals resulting in their lives being transformed into the image of Christ.