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LEADING CHURCHES TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION  
THROUGH EXPOSITORY PREACHING

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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by  
Sean David Cole  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

LEADING CHURCHES TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION  
THROUGH EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Sean David Cole

Read and Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hershael W. York (Faculty Supervisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
T. J. Betts

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To the generous and loving congregation  
of Emmanuel Baptist Church.

You have taught me how to pastor, lead, and love God's church.

To my father, Greg Cole, whose leadership and whose wisdom  
in pastoral ministry  
have helped mold me into who I am today.

And to my mother, Cheryl Cole, whose commitment and faith  
have always been my inspiration.

To our two wonderful boys, Aidan and Zachary.  
You are treasured gifts from Jesus.

And especially to my wonderful wife, Dawn.  
Your patience, kindness, and gentle spirit  
have been used by the Lord to encourage me  
as a husband, father, and pastor.  
I appreciate your sacrifice and love.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE .....	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Familiarity with the Literature .....	3
Void in the Literature .....	11
Statement and Explanation of Thesis .....	11
2. MOSES LED AS AN EXPOSITORY PREACHER .....	13
Introduction .....	13
The Word Dictates and Establishes the Mission of the Church .....	13
Preaching as the Motivation for Mission .....	15
The Mission of the Old Covenant People of God .....	17
Exodus 19:3-6 .....	17
Moses Commissioned to Lead as a Preacher .....	20
The Call of Moses in Exodus 4 .....	24
Moses' Personal Time with God Empowered His Leading and Preaching .....	26
Moses' Method and Model of Expository Preaching .....	29
Preaching the Whole Counsel .....	31
Clearly Explaining the Text .....	31
Determined, Passionate, and Urgent Preaching .....	34

Chapter	Page
An Analysis of Deuteronomy 1:6-6:40 as an Expository Sermon . . . . .	36
Conclusion . . . . .	45
3. JESUS LED AS AN EXPOSITORY PREACHER . . . . .	47
Introduction . . . . .	47
Jesus as Consummate Prophet . . . . .	47
The Mission of the New Covenant People of God . . . . .	49
Jesus’ Mission Marked by Authoritative Preaching . . . . .	52
Jesus as “Herald” in the Synoptic Gospels . . . . .	53
Jesus Led as an Expository Preacher . . . . .	61
Luke 4:14-30: An Expository Sermon in the Nazareth Synagogue . . . . .	63
Jesus Commissioned His Followers to Lead by Preaching . . . . .	79
Luke 24:13-49 . . . . .	80
Conclusion . . . . .	87
4. LEADING THROUGH EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN ACTS, THE EPISTLES, AND TODAY . . . . .	90
Introduction . . . . .	90
Christocentric Expository Preaching in Acts . . . . .	90
Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost . . . . .	92
Stephen’s Sermon before the Sanhedrin . . . . .	93
Philip’s Encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch . . . . .	94
Paul’s Sermon in Pisidia Antioch . . . . .	96
The Office of Pastor in the Epistles . . . . .	98
Ephesians 4:11-12: The Pastor-Teacher . . . . .	100
1 Timothy 3:1-2: The Qualifications of Pastor . . . . .	102
The Two Primary Responsibilities of Pastors . . . . .	103

Chapter	Page
Acts 6:1-7: The Apostles' Priority of Leading by Preaching .....	104
1 Timothy 5:17: The Key Text that Integrates Leading by Preaching .....	106
Paul's Definition of Leading Well .....	111
Other Descriptions of Leading in the New Testament .....	116
Laboring in Preaching and Teaching .....	124
The Need to Integrate Preaching with Leadership .....	135
Conclusion .....	138
<b>5. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEADING THROUGH EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH .....</b>	<b>140</b>
Introduction .....	140
Three Strategic Goals of Leading Through Expository Preaching ..	141
Living Under the Authority of the Word .....	142
Preaching for Gospel Transformation .....	152
Communicating a Theological and Missiological Direction .....	162
Conclusion .....	169
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>171</b>

## PREFACE

First, I want to thank my Father in heaven for the gift of my parents, Greg and Cheryl Cole, who raised me in the fear and admonition of the Lord. They have been the greatest example of a godly couple that has faithfully served him in ministry. Thank you for sharing with me the gospel at an early age and for modeling to me how a pastor loves his wife and family and serves the church. I am eternally grateful for your love, prayers, leadership, and encouragement. I want to thank my father for challenging me in how to integrate leadership with preaching, and I want to thank my mother, the English teacher, for proofreading my work.

Second, I wish to express my gratitude to the men of God who have mentored me in my spiritual growth. When I was called to the ministry as a teenager, my youth pastor, Bill Cox, gave me numerous opportunities to lead and teach as he helped confirm my calling. I also want to thank Dwain Gregory, my collegiate minister, who challenged me to have a heart for the nations and gave me opportunities to use my gifts in ministry. I especially want to thank Dr. Ron Clement, the first senior pastor under whose leadership I served. His patience and intentionality in mentoring me as a young youth pastor laid a solid theological foundation of how to shepherd and to love a flock through the ministry of prayer and the Word. I am grateful for the many nights we spent discussing church issues, processing theology, and praying through areas of conflict with church members.

Further, I am thankful for the faculty members at Southern who have helped me think deeply about the primacy of preaching and shepherding the flock of God as I have pursued my D.Min. in Expository Preaching. Dr. Robert Vogel has helped me understand the theology and history of expository preaching. Dr. Bill Cook challenged me in how to approach preaching the New Testament. Dr. T. J. Betts encouraged me to



have a greater appreciation for preaching the Old Testament. Dr. Hershael York has embodied what it means to integrate leadership with expository preaching and has motivated me to preach for obedience and transformation in my hearers. It has been a wonderful privilege to sit under the sound teaching of these fine men of God at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The most influential and instrumental person in my life as a husband, father, and pastor is my precious wife, Dawn Cole. Her gentle and quiet spirit, sacrificial service, and caring attitude continue to encourage me to grow deeper in Christ. Her contagious love for Jesus and strength in supporting me as I lead our home to godliness is a continual inspiration. She is a godly wife and mother to our two children, Aidan and Zachary, and has a special place in her heart for children with special needs.

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Finally, I am a debtor to mercy alone and praise my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has loved me with an eternal and unconquerable love. I am thankful for his imputed righteousness, which makes me accepted and forgiven before the Father. The Father chose me before the foundation of the world; Jesus secured my salvation on the cross; and the Holy Spirit applied that salvation to my heart when I was eight years old. I am forever in awe of God's sovereign grace in my life, and I give glory to him alone. He has not only chosen me for salvation, but also chosen me to shepherd his flock with compassion, integrity, and boldness. May I always keep my eyes fixed on Jesus!

Sean David Cole

Sterling, Colorado

May 2016

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

God's Word has always played a crucial role in transforming his people to active obedience in fulfilling their mission. Christopher Wright asserts, "The whole Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of the whole of God's creation."<sup>1</sup> In contemporary evangelicalism, many leaders have turned to man-centered pragmatism and secular business principles to grow their churches, instead of relying on the sufficiency of the Scriptures to dictate and establish the mission of the church. The church exists to display God's glory, declare God's gospel, and disciple for God's Great Commission. In the Old Testament, God called Moses to lead his people through a preaching ministry to fulfill their mission. He shepherded the Israelites to become a holy nation and kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6)<sup>2</sup> that would serve as a light to the Gentiles. The books of Exodus and Deuteronomy illustrate how Moses integrated leadership with an expository preaching ministry. Deuteronomy 1:5 describes how Moses "undertook to explain" the law by preaching three expository sermon discourses while on the border of the Promised Land, which served to lead the people of God to achieve their mission. His ministry exhibits a three-fold method and model of expository preaching: (1) preaching the whole counsel of God's Word, (2) explaining and applying the written Scriptures, and (3) displaying a passionate urgency in exhorting God's people to active obedience.

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<sup>1</sup>Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2006), 51.

<sup>2</sup>All Scripture references, unless indicated otherwise, are from the English Standard Version.

In the New Testament, Jesus led his followers to fulfill their mission through a preaching ministry as well. The Synoptic Gospels reveal Jesus as an authoritative preacher who proclaimed the kingdom of God. In addition, the synagogue sermon in Luke 4 demonstrates how Jesus preached an expository sermon urging his listeners to embrace him as Messiah as well as his mission to redeem lost humanity. In Luke 24, Jesus expounds the Old Testament Scriptures by showing how they all point ultimately to him as the center. This model provides more of a description of Jesus' preaching instead of a prescriptive mandate to emulate him. Nevertheless, pastors can adopt this expository hermeneutic as an effective way to integrate preaching with leadership. Both Moses and Jesus serve as examples of how leadership interfaces with preaching in order to shepherd God's people to fulfill their mission.

The early apostolic sermons in the book of Acts demonstrate that Jesus' disciples embraced his hermeneutic through their christocentric expositions of the Old Testament in leading the church to fulfill the Great Commission. In addition, the exhortations on pastoral leadership in the Epistles clearly reveal how pastors lead congregations by ministering the Word expositionally. First Timothy 5:17 stands as the foundational passage that explicitly links pastoral leadership with an expository ministry: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." Effective leadership involves the toilsome work of preaching and teaching in order to motivate the church to fulfill its mission. God still commissions pastors today to lead and shepherd his people through an expository preaching ministry in order to fulfill their mission as a church. Christ has gifted the church with the office of pastor-teacher (Eph 4:11-12) to equip the saints for works of ministry and to build up the body of Christ. Churches rise and fall on leadership, and subsequently, they rise and fall on preaching.

The combination of expository preaching with effective pastoral leadership

contains three principal goals. First, pastors must shepherd the congregation to live under the authority of the Word to dictate the mission of the church. Second, expository preaching aims for the church to experience gospel transformation and obedience, not simply the acquisition of information. Third, the pulpit emerges as the primary vehicle where pastors communicate both a theological and missiological direction for the church. Thus, pastors must infuse every aspect of their leadership responsibilities in expository preaching with the end result being a church culture and ethos displaying transformed lives in obedience to Christ.

When pastors lead through an expository preaching ministry, churches will depend upon the sufficiency of Scripture to accomplish their mission, instead of relying on man-centered methods and techniques. In doing so, pastors will be able to lead their churches to confront a deficient theology or lack of understanding about the mission of the church. They can challenge individual believers to take personal responsibility for their role in that mission. As a result, church members will be emboldened to make decisions in how to fulfill their mission as they live under the authority of the Bible, instead of adhering to their own personal agendas or passing fads.

### **Familiarity with the Literature**

Much literature from a wide variety of theological, philosophical, and methodological approaches addresses the pastor's role in leading churches through a preaching ministry. Within the literature from a conservative evangelical perspective, the supremacy of preaching has been elevated to the highest importance because of its stance on the authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of Scripture. In addition, the role of pastor as a called and qualified shepherd who leads God's people by feeding the flock has also been given much emphasis. In recent decades, books on pastoral leadership with an entrepreneurial bent and a focus on the importance of the leader's ability to clearly communicate vision to foster church growth have become more prolific as well. This

clarion call for effective pastoral and managerial leadership along with a desire for dynamic church growth has almost eclipsed the importance of the role of expository preaching in the life of the church. Yet, many books have stressed the importance of preaching as an effective way to lead churches.

Michael J. Quicke's book *360-Degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations* stands as one of the few works that combines the disciplines of leadership and preaching into a synthesized framework for pastors. While many books focus on the role of a pastor as a leader, and others teach the practices of effective preaching, Quicke integrates the practical aspects of leadership with a theological understanding of the office of the pastor-teacher. He argues that preachers can rediscover leadership through preaching because of their "unique calling that inseparably combines preaching with leading."<sup>3</sup> Quicke provides a snapshot overview of popular Christian books on leadership and subsequently shows their lack of emphasis on preaching. He laments how many pastors ineffectively lead their congregations through anemic "thin-blooded preaching," which he defines as individualistic, theologically spineless, fearful of conflict, characterized by a lowering of compliance, and missionally defective.<sup>4</sup> Theologically, Quicke stresses how leadership and preaching need each other because "leadership principles practiced apart from preaching can foster humanistic models, while reliance on human organizational skills leads to the serious danger of dispensing the Holy Spirit."<sup>5</sup> He offers an alternative model where the pastor leads congregational change through a preaching ministry that attempts to foster spiritual and relational vitality. Quicke suggests that pastors learn disciplines of successful leadership and thus implement an eight-stage process for change.

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<sup>3</sup>Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Leadership: Preaching that Transforms Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 17.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 33-39.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 62.

William Hull's book *Strategic Preaching: The Role of the Pulpit in Pastoral Leadership* offers a balanced treatment on combining leadership with a preaching ministry. Hull makes the case that literature on pastoral preaching seldom mentions leadership, while conversely, pastoral leadership resources normally ignore preaching. He offers an antidote to this problem with "strategic preaching," which is "the kind of Christian proclamation designed to guide a congregation in the fulfillment of its mission."<sup>6</sup> Presenting a more liberal approach to the authority of the Scriptures, Hull examines a biblical-theological framework for strategic preaching and explains the mechanics of preaching such as exegesis, contextualization, sermon preparation, and delivery skills. He asserts that a pastor should incorporate a team-based approach to preaching which can help a congregation discover its purpose, vision, and mission. Hull challenges pastors to first determine the church's purpose, stating, "The primary task of the pulpit is to help the church execute the purposes for which it was established; the sermon beckons and propels the people of God toward the actualization of their reality here on earth."<sup>7</sup> Hull demonstrates how the pastor must discover God's vision and mission for the church and then function as the "harbinger of hope, a pacesetter of change, a forerunner of the future that is yet to be"<sup>8</sup> through his preaching ministry. He provides sample case studies of pastors who implemented his model of strategic preaching to lead congregational change.

Timothy Laniak provides a solidly exegetical biblical overview of the role of pastoral leadership in his book *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, the thesis of which asserts, "One of the primary metaphors by

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<sup>6</sup>William Hull, *Strategic Preaching: The Role of the Pulpit in Pastoral Leadership* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 165.

which biblical authors conceptualized leadership is shepherding.”<sup>9</sup> Laniak offers a comprehensive treatment of the metaphor of the shepherd-leader through twelve specific biblical prototypes. Using Yahweh as Shepherd in the Pentateuch as a model, the author stresses three distinguishing characteristics that define the function of a shepherd leader; a shepherd leader must serve as a protector, provider, and guide. Laniak claims, “Good shepherding is expressed by decisions and behaviors that benefit the flock, often at great personal cost, which calls for the benevolent use of authority.”<sup>10</sup> The pastor leads congregational change through understanding these three functions and by studying the prototypes in the Bible, especially those that focus on a ministry of proclamation.

Timothy Keller’s *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* combines a gospel-centered theology with a missional strategy to help pastors lead congregational change. Keller argues for the centrality of the gospel and the importance of preaching: “It is critical, therefore, in every new generation and setting to find ways to communicate the gospel clearly and strikingly, distinguishing it from its opposites and counterfeits.”<sup>11</sup> He offers a biblical definition of gospel-centered theology and argues for the importance of Christ-centered expository preaching for gospel renewal or congregational change, writing,

Only when people see God as absolutely holy and absolutely loving will the cross of Jesus truly electrify and change them. . . . Preaching then must not simply tell people what to do; it must re-present Christ in such a way that he captures the heart and imagination more than material things which takes not just intellectual argumentation but the presentation of the beauty of Christ.<sup>12</sup>

Keller provides a solid theology of contextualization by giving a balanced approach to

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<sup>9</sup>Timothy Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 21.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 247.

<sup>11</sup>Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 21.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 77.

being a missional church without compromising the foundation of the gospel. The author urges pastors to lead congregational change through their preaching in this way:

“Evangelize as you edify, and edify as you evangelize.”<sup>13</sup> Keller also challenges pastors not to avoid controversy but to preach difficult doctrines, such as the exclusivity of Christ, the authority of Scripture, the reality of hell, penal substitution, and sexual ethics.

Mark Dever’s *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* has become a modern classic in resourcing pastors in leading congregational change. Expositional preaching represents the first mark of a healthy church. Dever claims, “My main role, and the main role of any pastor, is expositional preaching.”<sup>14</sup> He combines the roles of leading and preaching in this statement: “To charge someone with spiritual oversight of a church who doesn’t in practice show a commitment to hear and to teach God’s Word, is to hamper the growth of the church; in essence, allowing it to grow only to the level of the pastor.”<sup>15</sup> Dever argues that many pastors try to create a church around programs, personalities, denominational identity, or ethnicity, which, in the end, do not foster authentic change in the life of the church. He writes, “In the final analysis the people of God, the church of God, can only be created around the Word of God.”<sup>16</sup> By putting expositional preaching as the first mark, Dever elevates leading through preaching as the primary way God grows his church. He admonishes pastors:

It shouldn’t surprise you to hear that sound, expositional preaching is often the fountainhead of growth in a church. . . . Forget what the experts say; watch hungry people have their lives transformed as the living God speaks to them through the power of His Word.<sup>17</sup>

D. A. Carson’s *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1*

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<sup>13</sup>Keller, *Center Church*, 79.

<sup>14</sup>Mark Dever, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 39.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 54.



*Corinthians* offers some poignant insights into the role of leading congregational change through preaching. He eschews many of the modern church growth models and challenges pastors to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit in the foolish preaching of the cross in order to truly transform churches. The author writes,

Ever so subtly, we start to think that success more critically depends on thoughtful sociological analysis than on the gospel; Barna becomes more important than the Bible. We depend on plans, programs, vision statements—but somewhere along the way we have succumbed to the temptation to displace the foolishness of the cross with the wisdom of strategic planning.<sup>18</sup>

Carson also warns pastors of the danger of redefining preaching as simply “sharing” instead of the bold proclamation of God’s Word. He says, “It is not arrogant to re-present as forcefully as we can God’s gospel; it is simply faithful stewardship.”<sup>19</sup>

*Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God’s Agenda*, by Henry Blackaby, provides many positive insights and principles on pastoral leadership but lacks a strong emphasis on the specific role of expository preaching in communicating vision.

Blackaby expresses concern that many pastors act more like CEO’s of corporations rather than shepherds who spend time hearing from God. The author defines spiritual leadership as “moving people on to God’s agenda.”<sup>20</sup> Blackaby argues compellingly about the pastor’s role in communicating God’s vision but he does not explicitly state that this comes through preaching, writing, “Spiritual leaders don’t sell vision; they share what God has revealed to them and trust that the Holy Spirit will confirm that same vision in the hearts of the people.”<sup>21</sup> He espouses an almost quasi-mystical position that God reveals truth apart from the preached Word. Blackaby also asserts that two of the best

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<sup>18</sup>D. A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 26.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>20</sup>Henry Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God’s Agenda* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 20.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 75.

ways to communicate vision are through symbols and stories. This work shows great potential in demonstrating the role of the Holy Spirit and prayer in pastoral leadership, but fails to integrate the role of preaching into this process.

Timothy Witmer's *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church* helps elders engage in practical ministry within the local church. Witmer asserts that the "fundamental responsibility of church leaders is to shepherd God's flock."<sup>22</sup> In the first portion of the book he establishes both a biblical and historical foundation for the role of shepherds in leading congregational change. He gives elders a matrix for ministry and then provides a practical application for implementing his paradigm in the local church. Witmer argues that elders should incorporate both a macro and micro level of shepherding: "Macro-shepherding refers to those important leadership functions that pertain to the entire church, while micro-shepherding, on the other hand, refers to the personal ministry of the elders among the sheep."<sup>23</sup> He states, "A fundamental responsibility of any and every shepherd is to assure that the sheep are well nourished"<sup>24</sup> through overseeing the expository preaching ministries of the church. The author claims the "best way to provide a balanced diet is through the systematic expository preaching of the Scriptures verse-by-verse."<sup>25</sup> This work gives both a solid theological basis for shepherd leadership as well as a practical model for implementation.

Bill Hybels' *Courageous Leadership* embodies the popular seeker-driven, pragmatic church growth model of leading churches to fulfill their mission from the perspective of the CEO type mega-church pastor. His thesis claims that "the local church

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<sup>22</sup>Timothy Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 2.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 103-4.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 142.

is the hope of the world and its future rests primarily in the hands of its leaders.”<sup>26</sup> Hybels addresses areas such as character, building teams, leadership style, decision making, and personal prayer, but he does not clearly state that preaching plays a key role in leadership. Instead, the ability to cast vision become the leader’s most potent weapon. He calls for publically casting the vision with passion and clarity but he does not integrate this with expository preaching. He says, “One of the greatest gifts we leaders can give our churches is a clear, God-honoring vision that will outlast us,”<sup>27</sup> which in and of itself, has value for pastoral leadership. But the systematic expository preaching of God’s Word will ultimately stand the test of time and result in authentic congregational change. Hybels does not argue for this methodology in pastoral leadership.

In addition to books on preaching and leadership, *The New International Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* by Philip Towner serves as a great critical resource in understanding the exegetical and lexical meanings of the role of a pastor as laid forth by Paul to Timothy and Titus. While not written as a preaching commentary, this work provides the technical research necessary for the pastor to understand how preaching and leadership interact from a grammatical, historical, and textual standpoint. Towner says,

Theological description of the church is most evident where household imagery provides the dominant components. The church is God’s household. . . . Essentially, the leadership profile in these letters includes three related perspectives: qualifications for leadership, personal commitment to the mission, and personal holiness.<sup>28</sup>

Pastors, as qualified shepherds committed to God’s mission for the church, lead congregations to fulfill their mission through an expository preaching ministry.

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<sup>26</sup>Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 27.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>28</sup>Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 57-58.

## **Void in the Literature**

In the last few decades, numerous books have been written focusing on pastoral leadership as well as expository preaching. However, only two significant works actually demonstrate how pastors lead through preaching. Books on preaching seldom focus on leadership, while books on leadership seldom focus on the role of expository preaching. In *360-Degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations* Quicke notes that “much of the extensive literature on church leadership has little or nothing good to say about preaching having a leadership role.”<sup>29</sup> This book does not make a strong case for the primacy of expository preaching but includes others models as equally effective such as topical, narrative, and textual preaching. Hull’s *Strategic Preaching* adopts a more liberal approach to the authority of Scripture and does not specifically address the role of expository preaching in leading congregational change. Both of these books lament the absence of literature dealing with this topic, yet do not argue for an expository preaching ministry as the foundational way pastors lead their congregations to fulfill their mission. As a result, a regrettable void exists in the literature failing to combine leadership principles with expository preaching.

## **Statement and Explanation of Thesis**

This thesis asserts that the foundational way pastors lead believers to fulfill their mission as a church comes through an expository preaching ministry. Many valid alternative and popular leadership methodologies have emerged in the evangelical world to help pastors in this process, but none of these places a premium on an expository preaching ministry. Throughout the Scriptures, God has always used his powerful Word to lead his people to embrace his mission. He has specifically accomplished this effort by calling and equipping preachers to lead and shepherd his people to faithful obedience and

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<sup>29</sup>Quicke, *360-Degree Leadership*, 28.

gospel transformation through the ministry of the Word.

This thesis argues that God's Word established the mission of his Old Covenant people through the preaching of Moses, as well as the mission for the New Covenant people through the preaching of Jesus. Both Moses and Jesus were shepherds who led their people primarily through a preaching ministry. Furthermore, the early sermons in Acts as well as the New Testament Epistles provide solid evidence that effective pastoral leadership involves shepherding the flock through expository preaching. Thus, if my thesis is properly demonstrated and supported through both Old and New Testament methods and models, leading through expository preaching will have significant contemporary application for pastors who desire to faithfully shepherd their churches. Effective leadership results in effective churches fulfilling their mission while relying on the sufficiency and authority of Scripture, instead of on man-centered techniques and passing fads. A biblical theology of expositional proclamation as evidenced in Moses, Jesus, the sermons in Acts, and the Epistles evinces a powerful corrective to the practice of pastoral leadership devoid of expository preaching. In sum, preaching needs leadership, and leadership desperately needs preaching.

## CHAPTER 2

### MOSES LED AS AN EXPOSITORY PREACHER

#### **Introduction**

This thesis argues that the primary way pastors lead churches to fulfill their mission is through an expository preaching ministry. Before detailing how a pastor actually does such leading, this chapter will first demonstrate how the Word of God dictates and establishes the mission of the church. In addition, this discussion asserts that preaching serves as the primary means of motivating God's people to fulfill this mission. It will define the mission of God's Old Covenant people from Exodus 19 and will demonstrate how, in Exodus 4, God called Moses as a preacher to lead the Israelites to fulfill their mission. This chapter will illustrate from Exodus 33 and 34 how Moses' personal time with Yahweh empowered his leadership and preaching. It will also establish Deuteronomy 1:1-5 as a three-fold method and model for expository preaching and it will analyze Moses' first expository sermon in Deuteronomy 1:6-4:40.

#### **The Word Dictates and Establishes the Mission**

Much confusion exists in the evangelical world over the exact mission of the church. DeYoung and Gilbert quote Stephen Neill, who said, "If everything is mission, nothing is mission."<sup>1</sup> Do the Scriptures clearly reveal what God's people are supposed to accomplish? In order to understand more clearly a pastor's role in leading a church to fulfill its mission through an expository preaching ministry, one must have a solid understanding of the nature and mission of God's people as revealed in both Testaments.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 15.

The mission of the Old Covenant people sets the foundation for the mission of the New Covenant people. While aspects of the mission vary from the Old Testament to the New Testament, they both include the primary purpose in bringing glory to God alone by impacting the nations with the good news of salvation. This mission in both Testaments is accomplished through the leadership of a preaching ministry.

What exactly establishes and dictates the mission of God's people? This mission does not flow from the latest fads in marketing, from pragmatic man-centered techniques, or the peculiar whims of a pastor's hobbyhorse. Instead, the Word dictates and establishes the priorities of the church. John R. W. Stott says,

The church is the creation of God by his Word. . . . Not only has he brought it into being by his Word, but also he maintains and sustains it, directs and sanctifies it, reforms and renews it through the same Word. The Word of God is the scepter by which Christ rules the church and the food with which he nourishes it.<sup>2</sup>

If this claim is true, then preaching becomes crucial to the spiritual health and vitality of the church, and most specifically, in keeping focused on fulfilling its mission. Pastors must lead their churches to submit to the Kingship of Christ and to align their priorities under his "scepter," since his Word has established the mission for God's people.

Edmund Clowney writes, "The church is founded upon the Word of Christ given through the apostles, and the spread of the church is the spread of the Word."<sup>3</sup> The only way a church can faithfully fulfill its mission is fidelity to the Word of Christ. As a leader, not only must the pastor hold to the inerrancy and authority of Scripture to define the priorities of the church, but he must also believe in the sufficiency of the Scriptures to establish his methods and models for ministry. Second Timothy 3:16-17 establishes the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures, which states, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in

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<sup>2</sup>John R. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 109.

<sup>3</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 129.

righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” After Paul establishes the inspiration and profitability of the Scripture, he introduces the method and model for how a pastor leads a congregation as evidenced in 2 Timothy 4:2: “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” Thus, faithful proclamation of the Word stands at the center of the church’s primary mandate. R. B. Kuiper states, “The church’s task is to teach and preach the Word of God. Whatever else it may properly do is subordinate and subsidiary to this task. This is its supreme task.”<sup>4</sup> Mark Dever echoes this idea by saying, “The center and source of the congregation’s life is the Word of God. God’s promises to his people in Scripture create and sustain his people.”<sup>5</sup> God in his sovereignty has created the church through his Word and that Word has dictated and established the mission for his people.

### **Preaching as the Motivation for Mission**

Since the Word of God dictates the mission, a pastor must lead a church to embrace these values through an expository preaching ministry in order to motivate obedience and gospel transformation through the power of the Spirit. Preaching plays a central role in shaping the priorities and mission of the local church. A church’s success in accomplishing its mission rises and falls upon the effective leadership of its pastor. More specifically, how a pastor leads the people through an expository preaching ministry directly correlates to how effective a church will be in accomplishing its mission. Does the preacher simply impart information, similar to a biblical lecture? Does he provide life tips of conventional wisdom similar to a motivational speaker? Does he

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<sup>4</sup>R. B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 163.

<sup>5</sup>Mark Dever, *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 2012), 128.



espouse his opinions and use the Bible as a springboard for his agenda? Does he berate the congregation by ministering guilt? Or does he passionately lead and motivate his people to transformed lives through expository preaching? Stephen Olford says, “We have never finished preaching until we have lit the fires of desire that motivate members of our congregation to seek after God and hunger after righteousness.”<sup>6</sup> This motivation will only come when the pastor appropriately explains and applies the Scripture.

Abraham Kuruvilla writes, “The preaching of Scripture is not for the purpose of imparting information, but for transforming people by the power of the Holy Spirit—the changing of lives to conform to the image of Christ, by the instrumentality of God’s word.”<sup>7</sup> Jay Adams asserts, “The purpose of preaching is to effect changes among members of God’s church that build them up individually and that build up the body as a whole.”<sup>8</sup> Preaching that does not lead to life transformation and active obedience, and more specifically, to an embracing of God’s mission for the church falls short of its intended goal. It simply becomes a vehicle to transmit information, but never moves God’s people on to his agenda of fulfilling their mission. Hershanel York argues that expository preaching must be “engaging.” He writes,

The goal of preaching should be engaging exposition. The preacher of the Word should not settle for being a commentator or a communicator. His passion must be to preach the Word in such a way that he accurately teaches the meaning of the text and leads his audience to discover its implications for their life situations so that they respond in obedience and become more like Christ as a result.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Stephen Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 1998), 258.

<sup>7</sup>Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 268.

<sup>8</sup>Jay Adams, *Preaching with Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 13.

<sup>9</sup>Hershanel York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2003), 15.

## **The Mission of the Old Covenant People of God**

God has always used the preaching of the Word to lead his people to fulfill their mission. In the Old Testament, God called Moses as a preacher of his Word to lead and shepherd his people to fulfill their mission. Before examining how Moses actually led the Israelites through an expository preaching ministry, one must have a clear understanding of the mission of God's Old Covenant people.

### **Exodus 19:3-6**

This passage stands as the paradigmatic text that establishes and defines the mission of the Israelites. Exodus 19:3–6 reads,

While Moses went up to God, The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

Israel's mission was wrapped up in its identity to become a "kingdom of priests" and a "holy nation." In other words, their mission was to be "priestly" and "holy" so that the nations around them would know and be drawn to the one true and living God Yahweh. In this text, God claims to rule over the entire earth showing that he is a global God who deserves absolute worship.

What does it mean for Israel to fulfill the mission of being "priestly" and "holy"? First of all, the priests served two primary functions in the life of Israel. They were responsible for teaching the Law of God to the people, and secondly, they were instrumental as mediators of a substitutionary blood atonement to propitiate God's wrath against sin. Yet, corporately, as a nation, the Israelites were to collectively fulfill this priestly role to the nations. They were to reflect God's glory in such a way that they faithfully obeyed the Word of God and demonstrated to the nations the importance of the sacrificial system to forgive sins. Christopher Wright captures the essence of this priestly mission: "As a people of YHWH Israel would have the historical task of bringing the

knowledge of God to the nations, and of bringing to the nations the means of atonement with God.”<sup>10</sup> This mission of being a kingdom of priests involved a primary focus on a Word-based ministry and a sacrificial based system. Both the law of God and the need for atonement stood as the cornerstone for what Israel was to represent to a watching world in order to show that Yahweh stood supreme above all other so-called “gods.” Michael Goheen comments, “Thus Israel as a priestly kingdom lives for the sake of the nations; Israel is to be totally devoted to God’s service and to model in its corporate life allegiance to the true God and the life of blessing that God meant for all.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition to being a kingdom of priests, Israel was to live out the ethical demands as a “holy nation.” Their success in the mission of being a kingdom of priests in holding out God’s Word and the provision of a sacrificial atonement for sins would lie in their faithfulness to the law of God and its ethical demands. Overall, Israel’s mission entailed acting as God’s representatives to the nations by reflecting his very character—a character that demanded allegiance to his Word and a character demanding justice against sin be satisfied by a substitutionary atonement. Part and parcel of Israel’s mission involved fidelity to God’s Word as it lived a distinct lifestyle among the nations, elevating the need for the forgiveness of sin through atonement. R. Alan Cole says, “The thought of acting as God’s representative for, and to, the other nations of the world . . . was to be the mission of Israel.”<sup>12</sup> In essence, this same dynamic holds true for God’s people today. The church lives as a distinct people holding out the Word of God to a lost world by showing their need for the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross. Douglas Stuart comments,

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<sup>10</sup>Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 331.

<sup>11</sup>Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Bible Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 39.

<sup>12</sup>R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 153.

They were to represent him to the rest of the world and attempt to bring the rest of the world to him. . . . Priests stand between God and humans to help bring the humans closer to God and to help dispense God's truth, justice, favor, discipline, and holiness to humans. Israel was called to such a function.<sup>13</sup>

John Durham states,

Israel as a 'kingdom of priests' is Israel committed to the extension throughout the world of the ministry of Yahweh's Presence. . . . Israel as a holy people are to be a people set apart, different from all other people by what they are and are becoming—a display-people, a showcase to the world of how being in covenant with Yahweh changes a people.<sup>14</sup>

This idea of Israel's being a "display-people" reflects the true nature of their mission. It was not a centrifugal mission—that is, a moving outward from the center of Israel with the gospel. Instead, it was a centripetal mission in which Israel invited the nations to observe their radical distinction as a people under Yahweh's rule. Goheen says,

The missional calling of Israel is centripetal. . . . On the one hand, they are set apart for God's glory and purpose, oriented toward him to make known his majesty and thus play their role in his mission; on the other hand, they are set apart for the sake of the nations, oriented toward the surrounding peoples to be to them a mediator of God's blessing.<sup>15</sup>

Wright says,

The priesthood of the people of God, then, is a missional function, which stands in continuity with the Abrahamic election and impacts the nations. Just as Israel's priests were called and chosen to be servants of God and his people, so Israel as a whole is called and chosen to be a servant of God and all peoples. . . . The mission of God's people, then, includes being God's priesthood in the world. We are a representative people. Our task is to represent the living God to the world, and to bring the world to acknowledge the living God.<sup>16</sup>

Commenting on this passage, Walt Kaiser notes, "It is here that Israel's missionary role became explicit, if any doubt remained. The whole nation was to function on behalf of the kingdom of God in a mediatorial role in relation to the nations."<sup>17</sup> Peter Gentry and

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<sup>13</sup>Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2006), 423.

<sup>14</sup>John Durham, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 263.

<sup>15</sup>Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 39-40.

<sup>16</sup>Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 121-22.

<sup>17</sup>Walter Kaiser, "Israel's Missionary Call," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*,

Stephen Wellum describe Israel's mission in this way:

God is establishing his kingdom through covenant. The covenant entails relationship with God on the one hand and relationship with the world on the other hand. Israel will model to the world what it means to have a relationship with God, what it means to treat each other in a genuinely human way, and what it means to be good stewards of the earth's resources. As priests, they will mediate the blessings of God to the world and will be used to bring the rest of the world to know God.<sup>18</sup>

The mission of the Israelites in the Old Testament was to be a holy nation and kingdom of priests to display God's glory to the nations. God did not so much call them to evangelize the nations around them through an outreach or disciple-making process evidenced in the New Testament, but instead, their mission came in their identity as God's chosen people to be witnessed by the pagan nations around them. Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert write, "God certainly cares about how his chosen people will be an attraction or a byword among the nations. But the direction is 'come and see' not 'go and tell.'" <sup>19</sup> The mission of the God's Old Covenant people was intrinsically wrapped up in their identity as a holy nation, which was to be a light to the Gentiles. Isaiah 42:6 states, "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations." Wright says, "Israel definitely had a sense of mission, not in the sense of *going* somewhere but of *being* something. They were to be the holy people of the living God YHWH."<sup>20</sup>

### **Moses Commissioned to Lead as a Preacher**

How did God motivate and transform his Old Covenant people to actually fulfill this mission of being a "display-people" to the nations? He commissioned Moses as a shepherd and prophet who led the people through an expository preaching ministry.

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ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 13.

<sup>18</sup>Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 326.

<sup>19</sup>DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 36.

<sup>20</sup>Wright, *The Mission of God*, 504.

Before demonstrating that Moses preached expository sermons, a clear description of this type of preaching must be defined. Chapters 4 and 5 will provide a more comprehensive explanation of this topic. Albert Mohler defines expository preaching this way:

Expository preaching is that mode of Christian preaching that takes as its central purpose the presentation and application of the text of the Bible. . . . All other issues and concerns are subordinated to the central task of presenting the biblical text.<sup>21</sup>

Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix provide another definition: “An expository sermon is one that expounds a passage of Scripture, organizes it around a central theme and main points, and then decisively applies its message to the listeners.”<sup>22</sup> Mark Dever emphasizes, “Expositional preaching is preaching in which the main point of the biblical text being considered becomes the main point of the sermon being preached.”<sup>23</sup> Haddon Robinson has developed this definition:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.<sup>24</sup>

Bryan Chapell says, “The meaning of the passage is the message of the sermon. The text governs the preacher. Expository preachers do not expect others to honor their opinions. Such ministers adhere to the Scripture’s truths and expect their listeners to heed the same.”<sup>25</sup> Michael Abendroth defines it, “Expository preaching is essentially preaching the biblical text to people with accuracy and interpretational fidelity to the original meaning

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<sup>21</sup>Albert Mohler, Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago: Moody Publisher, 2008), 66-67.

<sup>22</sup>Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 29.

<sup>23</sup>Mark Dever, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2012), 36.

<sup>24</sup>Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

<sup>25</sup>Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 23.

so that hearers will understand who God is and what He requires.”<sup>26</sup> Stott asserts,

It is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching. . . . To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view. The expositor prizes open what appears to be closed, makes plain what is obscure, unravels what is knotted and unfolds what is tightly packed. The opposite of exposition is ‘imposition’, which is to impose on the text what is not there.<sup>27</sup>

Expository preaching is the God-glorifying, Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered explanation and application of any biblical text through the process of careful historical, grammatical, and literary exegesis and skillful organization. From this process, the actual sermon emerges from the meaning and structure of the text. Its ultimate purpose is to exhort hearers to spiritual transformation through the power of the gospel. First of all, this definition includes a clear Trinitarian understanding of preaching in the context of its doxological nature as an act of worship. In preaching, the Father receives the glory, the Son rules as Lord, and the Spirit empowers both the preacher and the congregation. The pastor’s aim lies in seeing first and foremost that what he is doing is an act of worship.

Second, expository preaching involves both the explanation and the application of any biblical text. Third, expository preaching must involve careful exegesis and skillful organization where the exegetical outline determines the homiletical outline. Stott writes, “In expository preaching the biblical text is neither a conventional introduction to a sermon on a largely different theme, nor a convenient peg on which to hang a ragbag of miscellaneous thoughts, but a master which dictates and controls what is said.”<sup>28</sup> Fourth, preaching is more than just a lecture for information acquisition. Preaching by nature is exhortatory. It declares, exhorts, and calls for a response that aims not only at the mind, but the heart and the will. The ultimate purpose of preaching is not to simply preach a message, but to preach in such a way that the hearers are gripped by

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<sup>26</sup>Michael Abendroth, *Jesus Christ, The Prince of Preachers: Learning from the Teaching Ministry of Jesus* (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2008), 145.

<sup>27</sup>Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 125-26.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

the truth and are being transformed spiritually by the power of the gospel. This spiritual transformation experienced through preaching can be either by for initial salvation (justification) or for progressive sanctification. Without a clear understanding of the doxological, exegetical, organizational, and hortatory elements of expository preaching, a comprehensive definition falls short. John Piper quotes Scottish preacher, James Stewart, who articulated effective preaching as follows: “The aims of all genuine preaching are to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”<sup>29</sup>

Moses serves as an excellent model for contemporary preachers in how God uses pastors to lead God’s people on mission. In the life of Moses, one sees this blueprint for preachers in three primary areas: (1) his calling to preach, (2) his personal time with the Lord which served as the spiritual fuel for his preaching ministry, and (3) his method and model of expository preaching as evidenced in the book of Deuteronomy. Many do not primarily think of Moses as an expository preacher, but focus more on his priestly role as leading the people through the wilderness and delivering God’s law on Mount Sinai. However in Exodus 4, God calls Moses to a preaching ministry. In Exodus 33 and 34, Moses’ personal time with God prepared and empowered him to lead the people through preaching. In addition, the book of Deuteronomy contains three expository sermons preached by Moses to motivate the Israelites to occupy the promised land as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. He stands as a called leader who shepherded the people of God by motivating them to fulfill their mission through boldly and faithfully proclaiming God’s Word. David Larsen asserts, “Moses must be seen as the model for the whole line of prophetic succession which includes Jesus Christ. Moses is the

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<sup>29</sup>John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 23.



trailblazer in challenging an idolatrous culture.”<sup>30</sup>

#### **The Call of Moses in Exodus 4**

In Exodus 4, God called Moses to a ministry that integrated leading with preaching. Yahweh appeared in the theophany from the burning bush and revealed his power as the “Great I AM” (Exod 3:14). He commissioned Moses to go down to Egypt and deliver his people from the clutches of Pharaoh. Moses recoiled at this command to lead God’s people and pleaded that he was not eloquent. Exodus 4:10-12 says,

But Moses said to the LORD, ‘Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.’ Then the LORD said to him, Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.

Moses protested by admitting that he literally had a “heavy mouth and tongue” (כִּבְד־פִּה) (וּכְבֵד לְשׁוֹן). Scholars debate whether Moses had a literal speech impediment or if he was simply using a figure of speech to exaggerate his feelings of inadequacy. The biblical text does not delve into the inner psyche of Moses; therefore, the only evidence we have is the rest of the Pentateuch, where he emerges as the key proclaimer of God’s Word to the people. Stuart explains Moses’ apprehension to preach this way:

The answer lies not in physiology but in culture—in the style of ancient Near Eastern ‘exaggerated humility,’ often employed in situations where one is appealing for help or mercy from someone else or showing one’s mannerly self-deprecation at being given a great assignment.<sup>31</sup>

Whether his speech impediment was literal or figurative, Moses felt the weight of such a high calling to lead God’s people and the importance of accurately proclaiming God’s Word in that leadership. The calling of Moses to preach serves as a healthy model to contemporary pastors. Leading God’s people through an expository preaching ministry

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<sup>30</sup>David Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers*, vol. 1 of *A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 23.

<sup>31</sup>Stuart, *Exodus*, 134.

requires a definite calling and commission from God, or the task will be in vain. Charles Bridges warns pastors this way:

To labour in the dark, without an assured commission, greatly obscures the warrant of faith in the Divine engagements. . . . On the other hand, the confidence that he is acting in obedience to the call of God—that he is in His work, and in His way—nerves him in the midst of all difficulty, and under any sense of his responsible obligations, with almighty strength.<sup>32</sup>

Howard Sugden and Warren Wiersbe say, “The work of the ministry is too demanding and difficult for a man to enter without a sense of divine calling. . . . Nothing less than a definite call from God could ever give a man success in ministry.”<sup>33</sup>

God made a profound promise to Moses in verse 12 when he told him that he, himself, would literally “be his mouth” (עַם-פִּיָּהּ הִיָּה). A play on words in the original Hebrew exists in this passage. Yahweh had revealed himself as “I AM” (אֲנִי־אֵלֹהִים) to Moses in Exodus 3:14, and now reiterates the power of his presence by saying “I AM your mouth” (עַם-פִּיָּהּ הִיָּה). In other words, the source of Moses’ power and effectiveness in preaching would come from God’s direct presence. This encounter illustrates the beginning of Moses’ prophetic ministry to speak the direct words that came from God’s mouth to the hearts of the people. Anthony Selvaggio asserts,

God answered Moses’ sense of incompetency by reminding him that God was not asking him to do this in his own power or to make up his own words. Instead, God promised to equip Moses for the task and to give him the words that would not return void. Moses’ sense of incompetence was answered with the sufficiency of God’s equipping power.<sup>34</sup>

Moses knew that in order to lead the people successfully to fulfill their mission, he needed to have the sufficiency of God’s Word as his source of power. In the same way, preachers today also need the assurance of God’s sufficient and powerful

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<sup>32</sup>Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2001), 101.

<sup>33</sup>Howard Sugden and Warren Wiersbe, *When Pastors Wonder How* (Chicago: Moody, 1973), 9.

<sup>34</sup>Anthony T. Selvaggio, *From Bondage to Liberty: The Gospel According to Moses* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2014), 66.

Word as their only source of authority in how they lead churches to embrace their mission. Expository preachers do not receive direct revelation from God like Moses, but instead take the written Scripture and deliver that Word unadulterated to God's people. In a sense, a preacher can find assurance in the fact that God will "be his mouth" as long as he does not deviate from the text, but instead lays bare the Scripture's meaning. York describes preaching the text this way:

Preaching is not just building a sermon, telling stories, inspiring an audience, or giving a speech. If the Bible is the Word of God, then preaching is speaking God's words. The purpose of preaching is to lay bare the meaning of the passage, to present its application, and to show its relevance to the audience.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, when pastors attempt to lead God's people in light of their own unique insufficiencies, they must depend entirely upon God for strength and wisdom. When pastors lead out of a sense of inflated competence in their own words, abilities, and eloquence, instead of humble submission to God's authoritative Word, they risk an imbalanced and possibly even abusive leadership. Durham elucidates a submission to God's Word this way: "This pattern is a metaphor of theological assertion in the Bible and everywhere it occurs, its fundamental message is the same: God's Word, God's rule, God's teaching, God's deliverance come not from man, no matter who that may be, but from God."<sup>36</sup> God's program for Israel to fulfill its mission will only succeed as long as Moses entrusts himself to God's power and his authoritative Word. Subsequently, he must preach that Word out of a true sense of his calling from the Lord in order to exhort the Israelites to corporate obedience.

### **Moses' Personal Time with God Empowered His Leading and Preaching**

After the disastrous rebellion of the Israelites with the Golden Calf episode in

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<sup>35</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 22.

<sup>36</sup>Durham, *Exodus*, 49.

Exodus 32, Moses doubted his calling as the nation's leader and wondered how the LORD would give him the strength and wisdom to lead the people to fulfill their mission.

**Exodus 33-34.** In Exodus 33:13 Moses pled with the Lord to show him favor by giving him direction in leadership. Exodus 33:14-15 reveals the desire of Moses' heart as a shepherd-prophet: "And he [Yahweh] said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' And he [Moses] said to him, 'If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.' " Yahweh promised his abiding presence, and Moses humbly and desperately begged for that presence as his only hope for leadership. Pastors who lead their churches to fulfill their mission through an expository preaching ministry need this same desperation and dependence upon the presence of the Lord for power. In dark times of doubting one's call or feelings of inadequacy, personal time with God, feeding on his Word, will be the only authentic source to bring sustaining energy. George Mueller writes, "The first thing I did was to begin to meditate on the Word of God; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon, but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul."<sup>37</sup>

As a desperate man, Moses desired to see the full glory of God's presence visibly. However, God hid him in the cleft of the rock and allowed him to see only his backside glory, lest Moses die. Selvaggio comments,

Moses wanted to experience fully the splendor of God's presence on a personal level. He was begging God for a unique form of self-disclosure and self-revelation. . . . He wanted full and unfettered access to the resplendent glory of God! This was the desire of Moses' heart.<sup>38</sup>

In that sacred and intimate moment when the LORD met Moses alone at a point of weary desperation and a lack of confidence in his ability to lead, he revealed his character in a

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<sup>37</sup>George Mueller, *Spiritual Secrets of George Mueller*: 60-62, quoted in Don Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 75.

<sup>38</sup>Selvaggio, *From Bondage to Liberty*, 147.

very profound way. Exodus 34:5-6 stands as credo to the character of Yahweh, which is repeated throughout the Old Testament (Ps 86:15, 103:8, 145:8, Num 14:18, Joel 2:13, Nah 1:3, Neh 9:17, and Jonah 4:2). It says,

The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.’

Stuart comments on this verse by saying, “However fickle and unreliable humans may be in their relationship to God, he is nothing of the sort but can be counted on in every situation and at all times to be completely faithful to his promises for his people.”<sup>39</sup>

Through this intimate experience the LORD renews his covenant with Moses and the people, and his servant comes down the mountain rejuvenated, empowered, and energized to lead the nation to fulfill its mission through a preaching ministry (Exod 34:29-35). Stuart says,

Though the Israelites increasingly showed Moses respect they had not yet otherwise formally acknowledged their mistake in rejecting him as leader and as Yahweh’s representative among them. Yahweh took care of all that by giving Moses an unmistakable credential: radiant glory, residual to an obvious divine encounter, that no one could doubt established him as a favorite of God.<sup>40</sup>

Not only must preachers be specifically called and commissioned by God as Moses was, but they also need the power and encouragement that comes from personal times alone with God to sustain their energy to lead and shepherd God’s flock. Moses, in his times alone with the LORD, modeled the importance for pastors to carve out time to experience this same empowerment that comes through reveling in God’s merciful character and finding strength in his Word. From these intimate experiences, the pastor then preaches to his people from the overflow that has come from his personal time alone with the LORD. The stressful demands of leading a people to fulfill their mission through

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<sup>39</sup>Stuart, *Exodus*, 716.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 737.

preaching requires nothing less than this same type of humble desperation and holy desire for the very presence of God that Moses demonstrated.

### **Moses' Method and Model of Expository Preaching**

As the called man of God, Moses had been equipped and empowered through his personal time with Yahweh to lead the people to fulfill their mission. This mission would ultimately come through an expository preaching ministry in particular. The book of Deuteronomy clearly illustrates Moses' role as not only a shepherd-leader, but as a preacher. The structure of the book consists of three expository sermons preached by Moses. The first starts at 1:6-4:40; the second begins at 4:44-26:68; and the third extends from 29:1-30:20. The Charles Simeon Trust expresses Moses' ministry this way:

Expository preaching is considered to be among the highest forms of teaching and is, perhaps, the greatest form of preaching. This ecclesiastic importance stems both from the rich Biblical tradition of exposition by example and from Biblical injunction. Much of the Scriptures are 'preached material' and we can learn much from God's preachers handling God's Word, explaining the plain meaning and intention. Moses did it.<sup>41</sup>

Christopher Ash argues, "Deuteronomy is the mandate for the people of God to assemble under the preached word of God, or to be more accurate, the written word preached. This is why Deuteronomy is not really a law book, but a preaching book."<sup>42</sup> Goheen argues that these three sermons address the missional identity of the Israelites, "The book of Deuteronomy records Moses' three sermons to missional calling as the people of Israel are about to enter the land."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>The Charles Simeon Trust, "The Biblical Foundation for Expository Preaching," accessed October 20, 2014, [http://www.simeontrust.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=217&Itemid=267](http://www.simeontrust.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=217&Itemid=267).

<sup>42</sup>Christopher Ash, *The Priority of Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2009), 23.

<sup>43</sup>Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 52.

## Deuteronomy 1:1-5

Deuteronomy 1:1-5 provides the context for the entire book and also introduces a three-fold method and model used to describe the nature of Moses' preaching ministry:

These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness. . . . In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him in commandment to them . . . . Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses *undertook to explain* this law.

The original Exodus generation had died in the wilderness due to disobedience, and now Moses has led this new generation to the brink of occupying the promised land. Wright says,

The opening verses thus set the scene for the rest of the book. Geographically, historically, and theologically, Deuteronomy is a book 'on the boundary', speaking powerfully through the ages to every generation of God's people called to move across the ever-shifting boundary from past experience of God into future unknown circumstances.<sup>44</sup>

This moving forward by crossing boundaries describes what pastors must do in leading their churches to fulfill their mission. A pastor shepherds the flock to move out of apathy and complacency by embracing the future-oriented nature of the mission of God. Pastors lead this progress particularly through an expository preaching ministry very similar to what Moses did at Moab. As they were poised on the plains of Moab to enter the land, Moses delivered three expository sermons in order to lead the people to fulfill their mission of being "priestly" and "holy" as they enter the Land. Three key elements of expository preaching emerge from this passage: (1) the necessity of preaching the whole counsel of God's Word, (2) the task of expositing and clearly explaining the text, and (3) preaching the text in a determined, passionate, and urgent manner.

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<sup>44</sup>Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books 1996), 22-23.

## Preaching the Whole Counsel

First, according to verse 3, Moses spoke “all” that that the LORD had given him to command the people. Following this pattern, the pastor preaches the whole counsel of God’s Word instead of picking and choosing what parts seem most expedient or culturally acceptable. Expository preaching by nature means that the people of God are exposed to the entirety of God’s Word. In Acts 20:26-27, Paul adopts this methodology in his preaching: “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” Derek Thomas warns, “In an age of relative biblical illiteracy in many parts of the world, the need to preach the whole Bible, rather than serendipitously picking a text from here and there, is all the more urgent.”<sup>45</sup>

## Clearly Explaining the Text

Second, the text says that Moses undertook to “explain” (בִּיאַר) this law. This word, rare in the Hebrew text, literally means “to dig or hew as if writing on a stone or tablets, but is used here metaphorically to speak of expounding or making clear.”<sup>46</sup> Gesenius defines it this way: “to explain, to declare—to dig out the sense, and to set it forth when dug out.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, Moses metaphorically “dug out” or “exegeted” the law of God, which had already been written down back in Exodus, and then proclaimed it by way of explanation and application. This process of “digging” or “exegeting” the written word and then preaching it by way of explanation and application stands at the heart of expository preaching.<sup>48</sup> Near the end of Deuteronomy in 27:8 this same word is

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<sup>45</sup>Derek Thomas, “Expository Preaching” in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, ed. Don Kistler (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 44.

<sup>46</sup>F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 91.

<sup>47</sup>W. Gesenius and S. P. Tregelles, *Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2003), s.v. “explain.”

<sup>48</sup>*The Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains* defines this word: “to expound the law by proclaiming and teaching its significance.” *The Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic*



used to denote making sure that “all the words of this law” were written down “very plainly” (פִּאֲרָה). In Habakkuk 2:2, the same word conveys the idea that the message would be written down on clay tablets in such a way that it would be read “clearly and plainly” (פִּאֲרָה).

The overall thrust of this Hebrew word “explain” (פִּאֲרָה) in the context of Deuteronomy means that Moses preached three expository sermons that were meant to be clear and understandable to his listeners with the aim of motivating and exhorting them to active obedience. Duane Christensen says that it means to “ ‘expound’ with the sense of making a written statement plain or distinct. In postbiblical Hebrew the term denotes an exposition or commentary.”<sup>49</sup> Spence-Jones explains clearly the nature of this word in relation to expository preaching: “What Moses set himself to do, then, was not to publish a new law, but to make plain to the people the Law already promulgated, to set forth clearly and pointedly what they were required by the Law to be and to do.”<sup>50</sup> This definition proves very important to the role of expository preaching, for preachers do not in a sense “publish” a new Word, but instead make plain what the inspired text already says. Moses took the Word that was already written down as Scripture (in Exodus), and through the sermons in Deuteronomy, he clearly and pointedly laid bare that text. He preached the written Word to the assembled congregation for the purpose of obedience to its inherent authority as Scripture. Peter Craigie states,

The word ‘expound’ had the sense of making something absolutely clear or plain. . . . It is important to stress that the content of Deuteronomy is an exposition of the law; the book does not simply contain a repetition of the earlier legal material known in Exodus and Numbers. . . . But the law here is to be explained and applied by Moses to the particular situation of the Israelites. They were about to enter the promised land, and the law of the covenant could not lie as a dead letter. It had to be

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*Domains* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “explain.” *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* defines it as “to make clear by explaining,” 1:87.

<sup>49</sup>Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 15.

<sup>50</sup>H. D. M. Spence-Jones, *Deuteronomy* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 4.

expounded and emphasized to all the Israelites for the success of the events lying ahead of them depended on this critical point.<sup>51</sup>

J. G. McConville states, “That Moses ‘explained’ the law emphasizes the concern of Deuteronomy not merely to give information, but to teach and persuade.”<sup>52</sup>

J. A. Thompson asserts, “It is characteristic of Deuteronomy that a law is first stated and then explained with accompanying hortatory material, thus pressing home the obligation which is laid upon the hearer.”<sup>53</sup> That comment aptly describes expository preaching. A preacher reads the text, then explains the text, and then exhorts listeners to respond with obedience to the text with appropriate application and motivation. Chapell stresses the importance of including these elements in his definition of expository preaching by commenting on another Old Testament example of preaching in Nehemiah 8:7-8. He states,

The exposition of the Word involved three elements: the presentation of the Word (it was read), explanation of the Word (making it clear and giving its meaning), and exhortation based on the Word (the priests caused the people to understand). These three elements in this OT proclamation consistently reappear in NT practice.<sup>54</sup>

Peter Adam expresses the fact that this method and model for preaching appears very early in the Bible through the ministry of Moses:

Moses has the distinction of being the first preacher whose ministry is described for us in the three sermons in Deuteronomy. . . . First, they are an exposition of the law given on Mount Sinai. . . . Second, Moses applies his text to his congregation. . . . Third, Moses exhorts the people to obedience. . . . Three elements of exposition, application, and exhortation. . . . It is fascinating to see them illustrated so early in the history of preaching.<sup>55</sup>

Wright describes the expository nature of Deuteronomy this way: “Deuteronomy is thus

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<sup>51</sup>Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 92.

<sup>52</sup>J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 62.

<sup>53</sup>J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 97.

<sup>54</sup>Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 88.

<sup>55</sup>Peter Adam, *Speaking God’s Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1996), 39-40.

‘preached law’—that is, law explained with prophetic urgency, divine authority, and a preacher’s clarity.”<sup>56</sup> That definition truly describes the nature of expository preaching. Pastors lead their congregations in the same way as Moses did with the Israelites demonstrating a passionate urgency that comes from expounding the authoritative text and then seeking to make that message clear and understandable. Commenting on this passage, Ajith Fernando asserts, “What the people needed most (from Moses) was not eloquence or attractive speeches. They needed a word from God. . . . When will we learn that our great responsibility as leaders is to get people into the Word?”<sup>57</sup>

### **Determined, Passionate, and Urgent Preaching**

A third observation about Deuteronomy 1:1-5 that demonstrates Moses’ method and model of expository preaching can be found in the wording in verse 5 that he “undertook” (הוֹצִיֵּל) to explain this law. This word shows the manner in which he expounded and preached the text. The word “undertook” (הוֹצִיֵּל) in the immediate context of expositing the law means to show a “willingness, or to be pleased and determined”<sup>58</sup> to preach. Moses did not begrudgingly preach the law to the people, but instead showed a willing heart that was determined to joyfully lead the people through his preaching ministry. Moses is a dying man who will not enter the promised land, so he preaches as a dying man to the congregation he has loved and led for the past forty years. Joshua Moon writes, “Deuteronomy is an ancient illustration of a passionate preacher delivering his final sermons: preaching as a dying man to dying men.”<sup>59</sup> Moses’ tone resonates with

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<sup>56</sup>Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 21.

<sup>57</sup>Ajith Fernando, *Deuteronomy: Loving Obedience to a Loving God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 33.

<sup>58</sup>This Hebrew verb is in the perfect tense with a Hiphil stem denoting the emphatic and urgent nature in which Moses expounded the text.

<sup>59</sup>Joshua N. Moon, “Preaching Deuteronomy as Christian Scripture,” *Southeastern Theological Review* 2 (Summer 2011): 41.

a passionate urgency as these are his last words to a generation who will need the authority of the preached Word to lead them into the Promised Land after he has died.

McConville asserts,

Furthermore, the making present of the word of God through Moses' speech at Moab is not an end in itself, but rather shows how it may become continuously present in Israel. In fact, the death of Moses in Moab, before entering the land, is a crucial part of this picture. It is the teaching of the covenant as bequeathed to Israel by Moses that will go with the people into the land.<sup>60</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch summarize the meaning of this word: "Here it signifies to expound this law clearly, although the exposition was connected with an earnest admonition to preserve and obey it."<sup>61</sup> They make the caveat that Moses preached these expository sermons with an earnest desire to exhort the people to active obedience.<sup>62</sup> Again, expository preaching is more than just transferring biblical information, but instead involves pleading and persuading hearers to respond with heartfelt and urgent obedience. The prophet Jeremiah echoes this attitude toward the urgency and passion of preaching in Jeremiah 20:9, which states, "If I say, I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name, there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." The apostle Paul also had this same urgency in 1 Corinthians 9:16 when he said, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"

The overall meaning of this word הוֹצִיִּיל connotes that Moses possessed a passionate motivation and urgency to preach expository sermons and found great joy and pleasure in doing so. Pastors lead their people to fulfill their mission through an expository preaching ministry, but this should be done with passionate urgency and joy.

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<sup>60</sup>McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 118.

<sup>61</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Pentateuch, Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 854.

<sup>62</sup>Gesenius defines this word as an emphatic term for being "willing and pleased" to preach. Gesenius and Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2003), s.v. "undertook." In other places in the Hebrew Old Testament, this word conveys the idea of being "joyful or pleased or content" to do something (Gen 18:27, 31; Josh 17:12; Judg 1:27, 35; 1 Sam 17:39, Hos 5:11).

The preaching task should not be perfunctory or lifeless. The preacher must realize that eternity hangs in the balance due to the high and holy calling of expository preaching. As such, he must expound the word with joy and urgency in order to faithfully lead the people to obedience and transformed lives. Mohler comments on Moses' role as a preacher in Deuteronomy:

The intensity here is enormous, because the necessity of obedience is a matter of survival for Israel. The entire theology of Deuteronomy comes down to the fact that God has spoken. Thus hearing and obeying is life, but refusing and disobeying is death. Moses wants the people of Israel to know that life and death hang in the balance of their willingness to hear God's Word and respond to it. It is a matter of life and death.<sup>63</sup>

In Deuteronomy 1:1-5, Moses emerges as a prototype of God's prophet-shepherd who stands before the people as he prepares them to enter the Promised Land. As a herald, he faithfully preaches the whole counsel of God's Word. He also takes great pains to read, explain, and apply the text with strong exhortations to the gathered congregation of Israel. Finally, he preaches this with joy, passion, and urgency. This three-fold method and model serves as a blueprint for all preachers who desire to shepherd their people to obedience through an expository preaching ministry. Ash again asserts,

So Deuteronomy foreshadows for us as the normative shape of the church an assembly called together by the word of God, called together to hear the preached word of God, called together as a place of unity of the whole people of God, and called together under grace and so filled with joy.<sup>64</sup>

### **An Analysis of Deuteronomy 1:6-4:40 as an Expository Sermon**

Deuteronomy 1:6-4:40 comprises the first expository sermon Moses preaches. Chapter 4 culminates as one of the most important sections of the entire book. The

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<sup>63</sup>Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 54.

<sup>64</sup>Ash, *The Priority of Preaching*, 83.

structure of the sermon can be classified as opening with an extended historical illustration, which includes contextual application, reminding the Israelites of their past history. Moses uses inductive sermonic elements to lead his audience to the climax of chapter 4, which includes powerful exhortations to obedience. He includes a specific focus on explaining and applying the Exodus 20 text on the dangers of idolatry. In terms of sermon points or movements, this text contains six major sections. The first five movements comprise an extended recounting of Israel's history interspersed with explanations and teachings, while the sixth movement finds its apex in chapter 4. Hughes Oliphant Old writes,

As we find in Deuteronomy, the Law is interpreted and applied to the situation at hand. The interpretation is not a matter of historical reconstruction but rather of contemporary application. In other words, Deuteronomy has a keen sense of hermeneutics.<sup>65</sup>

**Deuteronomy 1:6-3:29.** In chapter 1:6-8, Moses begins his sermon demonstrating that he is their shepherd-leader. He reminds them of their mission to leave Horeb and move forward to occupy the Promised Land. The second movement runs from chapter 1:9-18, where Moses teaches the importance of qualified leaders to help fulfill the mission. The third movement is found in chapter 1:19-46 where Moses illustrates from Israel's history their rebellion against God by not occupying the land following the report of the twelve spies in Numbers 13 and 14. The fourth movement found in chapters 2:1-3:22, demonstrates the consequences of rebellion and focuses on the wilderness wandering years. In chapter 3:23-29, the fifth movement focuses on a personal illustration from Moses's life when he is prevented from entering the Promised Land due to his anger. Up to this point, Moses has been using Israel's history and his own life as an extended illustration with an inductive structure to lead up to the climax of the

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<sup>65</sup>Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Biblical Period*, vol. 1 of *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 39.

sermon. Finally, the heart of the sermon comes in the sixth movement found in chapter 4 which will be explained in further detail below. The thesis or main idea of Moses' first expository sermon can be summarized as this: As the new generation, the Israelites must not rebel against the LORD in the way their forefathers had done. Instead, they must actively listen and heartily obey what Yahweh commands in order to fulfill their mission of being "priestly" and "holy" as they occupy the Promised Land. Hughes Oliphant Old comments on three components of preaching he sees in Deuteronomy:

The first component is remembrance; we find that Deuteronomic preaching puts strong emphasis on recounting God's saving acts. The second component is interpretation; preaching involves elaboration and application of the Law to the concrete situation of the day. The third component is exhortation; Deuteronomic preaching is characterized by its hortatory style, its constant urging that Israel be obedient to the Law.<sup>66</sup>

**Deuteronomy 4:1-2.** The tension of the entire sermon pivots on the introductory words of Chapter 4:1 where Moses urgently and passionately proclaims: "And now, Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you." This urgent plea encapsulates the entire thesis of the sermon. Jack Lundbom states, "This discourse in 4:1-40 is a hard-hitting and highly emotive sermon mandating single-minded worship of Yahweh and a rejection of idolatry."<sup>67</sup> The wording "And now" (וְעַתָּה) demonstrates a dramatic shift in the sermon. Moses has moved from the inductive model of using an extended opening illustration of their history, which has been steadily and dramatically building to the climax. He pivots from the past (chapters 1-3) and emphatically calls the entire assembly to listen and obey in the here and now (chapter 4). Eugene Merrill attests, "The connection between 4:1-40 and what

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<sup>66</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 37.

<sup>67</sup>Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 231.

precedes it is clear from the introductory formula ‘and now’ (וְעַתָּה), a use of the logical particle or adverb that builds the argument of the present passage on what has gone before.”<sup>68</sup> Moses has switched from recounting the past to now pointedly addressing them personally as their leader. Wright says, “The whole chapter, therefore, as an extended sermonic amplification of the opening chords of the Decalogue, powerfully presents the very pillars of Israel’s nationhood in covenant with their God.”<sup>69</sup>

Moses also emphatically exhorts them to listen and obey the statutes and rules that he is teaching them. Deuteronomy is the second giving of the Law, so Moses actually explains and applies the already written Word delivered from Sinai. This is not a new word from God, but an exposition and application of the written Word given a second time to a new generation on the brink of fulfilling their mission in the Promised Land. Moses urges intentional listening and active obedience. He is not just giving factual information about their past as historical trivia. He is urging them to obedience as a matter of life and death as well as success in fulfilling their mission.

In the course of this first expository sermon (especially in chapter 4), Moses used this three-fold model that was introduced in Deuteronomy 1:5. First, he urges obedience to the whole counsel of God’s Word, evidenced in verse 2, which states, “You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.” Wright comments,

The warning against tampering with the law by adding or removing anything expresses a concern for the integrity of God’s revelation. It was not to be treated like a menu from which one could select what suited one’s taste, nor as a mere foundation for personal inventiveness. God’s word must be taken whole in its overall meaning and thrust. It is not to be trifled or tampered with.”<sup>70</sup>

Just like Moses, expository preachers must submit to the authority of the entirety of

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<sup>68</sup>Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H Publishers, 1994), 114.

<sup>69</sup>Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 45.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.



God's Word and preach it as a well-balanced diet for the health of their congregations.

Fernando says of an expository preacher in the same vein as Moses,

The true servant of God bows in submission to the Word, acknowledging his fallibility and approaching the Scriptures like a child hungry to be fed. This is not bibliolatry, as some claim; it is a humble recognition that the Bible is the Word of God. So, out of devotion to its author we carefully study its texts so as to get at its meaning and are careful to obey what it commands.<sup>71</sup>

Second, Moses reads the text, explains the text, and applies the text as will be evidenced below. Third, he does this with passionate urgency as a matter of life and death. In verse 1, Moses commands them to “listen” (שמע). This Hebrew word means more than just taking information into the ears, but instead connotes active listening with a determined intention to obey. In verses 2 and 6, he repeats the word “keep” (שמר) in reference to God's law. This term carries the idea of guarding carefully. In addition, Moses repeats this same word (שמר) in verses 9, 15 and 23 in reference to the Israelites taking great pains to watch themselves and take care to obey with urgency. In verse 39, he concludes the sermon with a strong plea for them to “lay it to their hearts” (השבתי אל-י לְבַבְךָ). Moses wants them to give more than just a casual assent to the facts of his sermon, and desires for them to respond with careful and passionate obedience. Moses' repetition of these key phrases demonstrates the overall urgent and hortatory tone of this sermon. McConville writes, “This is one of the most characteristic expressions of deuteronomic preaching, used to express the urgency of the present decision.”<sup>72</sup> Old comments,

In fact, this hortatory style dominates the book of Deuteronomy in a remarkable and overpowering way. . . . The imperatives are phrased in so many artful ways like a patchwork quilt or colorful collage of bits and pieces of a great variety of sermons. This hortatory style flavors Deuteronomy with its own special spice.<sup>73</sup>

Moses provides four key exhortations in this chapter, which serve as the heart of the

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<sup>71</sup>Fernando, *Deuteronomy*, 117.

<sup>72</sup>McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 108.

<sup>73</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 40.

sermon.

**Deuteronomy 4:5-8.** The first exhortation is found in verses 5-8 and relates to their mission of being a “priestly” and “holy” nation as a “display-people” to the surrounding nations:

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

Israel’s active obedience to God’s statutes would elicit the attention of the watching nations around them and move them to wonder why Israel was so distinct and worshipped such a powerful and holy God. Their mission as a nation would be wrapped up in their identity as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to the observing pagan nations. Wright says, “The missiological challenge, therefore, is that the ethical quality of life of the people of God (their obedience to the law) is a vital factor in the attractiveness of the nations to the living God.”<sup>74</sup> He also writes, “Israel’s visibility to the nations was meant to be not merely historically remarkable but radically and ethically challenging. God’s mission involves God’s people living in God’s way in the sight of the nations.”<sup>75</sup>

**Deuteronomy 4:9-14.** The second exhortation comes in a specific application for parents to teach these laws to their children as they cross over to occupy the land. Wright asserts, “The educational thrust of the book of Deuteronomy as a whole is reinforced by frequent instructions for parents to take seriously their own teaching role

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<sup>74</sup>Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 49.

<sup>75</sup>Wright, *The Mission of God*, 470.

within the family network of the nation.”<sup>76</sup> Craigie writes,

The theme of educating the children is important in the context of the covenant. . . . Yet the continuity of the covenant, in its fullness, was contingent upon obedience. Forgetfulness opened the door to failure and so it was vital that the people of God not only remember their past experience of God’s mighty hand, but also that they pass on the memory, and thus the experience, to their children.<sup>77</sup>

Goheen links this exhortation to Israel’s mission, “No faithful missional community will survive that does not take seriously the task of training the next generation to walk in the way of the Lord. Without such instruction, that next generation will be terribly vulnerable to the idolatrous ways of the surrounding nations.”<sup>78</sup>

**Deuteronomy 4:15-23.** In this third exhortation Moses passionately urges them to be very careful not to break the first and second commandments as given in Exodus 20 or face the threat of exile. In verse 13, he makes specific reference to the Ten Commandments and two tablets of stone given at Sinai. Then in verses 15-18, he quotes or makes reference to Exodus 20:4 regarding fashioning carved images of false worship. Quoting this text shows that Moses was not delivering a new law, but preaching the written Word already delivered at Sinai. Then in verses 19-23, Moses explains the text and includes a strong exhortation in verse 23 to “take care, lest you forget” the covenant. Moses here models the expository practice of reading the text, explaining the text, and then applying the text. He preaches this in a way that connects to Israel’s mission.

Goheen addresses how Moses’ exposition and warning here serves to lead the people to fulfill their mission:

The people of Israel are warned that if they fail in this matter they will be scattered among the nations because they will have forgotten their identity and abandoned their role in God’s mission. . . . Thus, Israel’s calling is to a ‘missionary encounter’ with the pagan cultures of the surrounding nations, by which it is to confront

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<sup>76</sup>Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 49.

<sup>77</sup>Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 133.

<sup>78</sup>Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 53.

idolatry with the claims of the living God. Israel's life shaped by God's Torah is to stand in contrast to the nations, a light shining in the midst of pagan darkness.<sup>79</sup>

**Deuteronomy 4:24-40.** In the fourth and final exhortation, Moses preaches on some of the key attributes of God in order to motivate the people to remain true to their mission as his holy people by not transgressing into idolatry. In verse 24, he teaches that God is a consuming fire and a jealous God. Merrill argues, "The jealousy or zeal of God speaks not of a petty, selfish envy but of his right to sole recognition and worship by virtue of his sovereignty over and election of his people in covenant."<sup>80</sup> Wright describes,

The fire of Yahweh as a jealous God is the fire of an exclusive commitment to his people that demands an exclusive commitment in return. It is, in short, the fire of redeeming love that had brought them out of the fires of bondage and would therefore tolerate no rival.<sup>81</sup>

In almost paradoxical terms, verse 31 shows how Moses teaches that God is also merciful and loving. Yahweh promises not to abandon or forsake the rebellious Israelites. In verse 35, Moses explains the exclusivity of Yahweh as the one true and living God. Merrill writes,

Until this truth could be communicated and indelibly impressed upon his people, the Lord could not take them further down the pathway of covenant affiliation and service. His mighty acts were designed to demonstrate the sovereignty of the Lord and to put his uniqueness beyond any doubt. Upon that bedrock confession rests all hope of Israel's redemption and mission.<sup>82</sup>

Through Moses' preaching, the Israelites needed not only to have the knowledge and theology on the character of God, but this knowledge needed to lead to a decisive response of fear and obedience to help motivate them to fulfill their mission. They needed to respond to this jealous, merciful and exclusive God in an urgent and decisive

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<sup>79</sup>Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 53.

<sup>80</sup>Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 125.

<sup>81</sup>Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 53.

<sup>82</sup>Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 132.

obedience to his law. Moses does not just leave them with a theological lecture about the nature of God, but instead actually urges and motivates them to action in verses 39-40, which serve as the powerful conclusion to this first sermon. He summons them to “know” this exclusive God and to “lay upon their hearts” his absolute uniqueness and sovereignty for the purpose of active obedience to his commandments. Moses’ conclusion to the sermon presses them beyond the mere acquisition of theological information about God; he challenges them to genuine spiritual transformation, which would result in urgent obedience to Yahweh’s mission. Gary Millar says,

The preaching of Moses in chapters 1-11 draws heavily on the Exodus tradition to demonstrate the trustworthiness of God both in action and in word. . . . Yahweh can never again simply be a God who acts on behalf of his people; he has become a God who talks. . . . One cannot believe in the God of Deuteronomy and at the same time silence him. The choice boils down to that expounded by Moses; a choice between life and death.<sup>83</sup>

God acted miraculously in the history of Israel, but he also spoke his Word to them and had it written down into Scripture in the book of Exodus. Furthermore, this Word was to be preached expositively by Moses so that Israel would experience the blessings of life as they fulfilled their mission of being “priestly” and “holy” in the Promised Land. Lundbom says, “The sermon as a whole is a remarkable compendium of God’s dealing with Israel—election and grace . . . a covenant, a law, an inheritance of land, and Yahweh’s mercy being available if people seek him in sincerity and return to him in their distress.”<sup>84</sup> Merrill sums up the conclusion of the sermon this way:

This first lengthy parenthesis in Deuteronomy closes, then, on a most profound theological note: Yahweh, God of Israel, is the omnipresent and only God, the sovereign one who has redeemed his people and who now was about to reveal a magnificent covenant arrangement that would, in its keeping, guarantee them long and prosperous life in the land they were about to enter.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Gary Millar, “A Faithful God Who Does No Wrong: History, Theology, and Reliability in Deuteronomy,” in *The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture*, ed. Paul Helm and Carl Trueman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 11.

<sup>84</sup>Lundbom, *Deuteronomy*, 248.

<sup>85</sup>Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 134.

## Conclusion

In summary, God called and empowered Moses as a shepherd-prophet to lead the people to success in fulfilling their mission in the Promised Land. Psalm 77:20 describes the nature of Moses' leadership: "You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Moses served as the human instrument through which Yahweh led his Old Covenant people and the Psalmist likens him to a shepherd. In essence, Moses served not only a prophetic role in proclaiming and expositing God's Word, but assumed the role of "pastor" to the Israelites. Craigie describes the relationship between Moses' leadership and expository preaching this way:

In his role as prophet, Moses not only presented the words of God, but expounded them with emphasis in his preaching. . . . The prophetic role, in other words, was not simply to announce the word of God, but to persuade men of its living force, to call them to love and obedience, and also to warn them of the consequences of falling away from the intimacy of the covenant relationship. Moses was not simply the 'microphone' of God, but was a man with responsibility; he was responsible under God for the faithful presentation of the divine words and he was responsible for the people whom God had committed to his charge.<sup>86</sup>

Moses effectively led the people specifically through an expository preaching ministry that incorporated a three-fold method and model. This included proclaiming the whole counsel of God's Word, explaining and applying the text, and doing so in an urgent, passionate manner calling for a heartfelt and decisive response.

Stott describes the preacher's task as follows: "To preach is to open up the inspired text with such faithfulness and sensitivity that God's voice is heard and God's people obey him."<sup>87</sup> Therefore, the primary way a pastor leads a church to fulfill its mission is through an expository preaching ministry patterned after the ministry of the shepherd-prophet Moses. In the same way, pastors today serve as shepherd-prophets when they lead and feed God's people with a faithful sensitivity to the very voice of God

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<sup>86</sup>Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 39.

<sup>87</sup>John R. Stott, *The Contemporary Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 208.

as they preach from the inspired Scriptures. A pastor is a man who is called of God, empowered and sustained through personal times alone with God. He then leads with passion and urgency, through exposing God's people to the riches of his Word through clear and bold proclamation. His ultimate desire is for his people to hear God's voice through preaching the Word, and then to obey that Word with a joyful urgency.

## CHAPTER 3

### JESUS LED AS AN EXPOSITORY PREACHER

#### **Introduction**

This thesis argues that the foundational way pastors lead believers to embrace their mission as a church is through an expository preaching ministry. The primary goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how Jesus' ministry as an expository preacher was instrumental in leading the New Covenant people of God to fulfill their mission. Just as Moses' ministry was marked by expositing God's Word as a shepherd-leader, Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, served as the consummate preacher prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15-18 to proclaim the gospel. This chapter asserts that although the mission of the church flows directly from the mandate of the Old Testament to be a "display people," it also includes advancing the gospel through obedience to the Great Commission. Next, this chapter defines how the Synoptic Gospels reveal that Jesus' mission was to preach the good news of the Kingdom with authority. In addition, it demonstrates how his Nazareth sermon in Luke 4:14-30 provides a seven-fold model for expository preaching. Lastly, this chapter establishes Luke 24:44-48 as a positive hermeneutical method for pastors to adopt in leading through expository preaching. One of the principal ways pastors lead churches to fulfill their mission is by adopting the expository preaching and spiritual leadership model of Jesus.

#### **Jesus as the Consummate Prophet**

The previous chapter demonstrated that Moses preached three expository sermons in the book of Deuteronomy as the means of leading the Old Testament people to faithful obedience as they were poised to cross over into the Promised Land. Moses also prophesied that in the future God would raise up a consummate prophet who would



lead his people through a preaching ministry. Deuteronomy 18:15 states, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.” The LORD reiterates this in verse 18: “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” Moses did not give the identity of this future prophet, but the apostle Peter in his second sermon in Acts 3:22-23 identified this future prophet as none other than Jesus. Peter Craigie makes this connection:

The parallel between Jesus and Moses, expressed here prophetically, is striking. The prophet Moses, in his role as leader of the people and spokesman for God, was instrumental in founding the first kingdom, the kingdom of Israel. . . . Likewise, Jesus also marked the coming of a new kingdom. . . . These prophetic pointers in the past found their fulfillment in Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus as this greater Prophet would lead the New Covenant people to fulfill their mission through his preaching ministry. Graeme Goldsworthy says,

In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses, the first and definitive Old Testament prophet, promised Israel a new prophet. Many such prophets arose, but none perfectly fulfilled the prophetic role to the degree that Jesus did. . . . If there was any prophet who stood in the council of the Lord and was sent by God, it was Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Christopher Ash comments on this passage, “And so the prophetic succession comes to its climax in Jesus Christ. How does God govern his church? He governs it by the Prophet like Moses, the Mediator between God and people (1 Tim 2:5): we must listen to him.”<sup>3</sup> As this Prophet whose ministry would be marked by the primacy of preaching, Jesus would lead the New Covenant people to fulfill their mission. Because Jesus is God’s ultimate Preacher, his followers must listen to him.

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<sup>1</sup>Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 263-64.

<sup>2</sup>Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 42.

<sup>3</sup>Christopher Ash, *The Priority of Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2009), 32.

## **The Mission of the New Covenant People**

The identity of the Old Covenant people as a “holy” and “priestly” nation (Exod 19) serves as the foundation for the mission of the New Covenant people. This mission involves being a “display people” through their distinctive holiness, yet also combines a global vision stretching outward to the nations with the gospel proclamation. Peter borrows heavily from this Old Testament language and reinterprets it to describe the nature and mission of the New Testament people of God. First Peter 2:9 says, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” In similar fashion to the Old Testament people, the church now stands as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to bring God’s Word to the nations by preaching Jesus as the only substitutionary atonement for sin. The ultimate goal of the church having been given this identity by Peter as a royal priesthood and a holy nation lies in its mission of proclaiming the excellencies of this great God to the nations and how he has accomplished redemption in Christ. A vital connection exists between the mission of the Old Covenant and the New Testament church. Michael Goheen says,

The mission of God’s people is both centripetal and centrifugal. It is first centripetal. . . . When the church is a radiant manifestation of the Christian faith and exhibits an attractive lifestyle, drawing outsiders into its fellowship. . . . But such communities are now sent out to embody this life in every culture of the world. This is the new centrifugal dimension of the church’s mission.<sup>4</sup>

Edmund Clowney applies this concept to the New Testament church asserting, “The identity of the church is necessary for the mission of the church. Only as a holy nation, called out of darkness into the light of God’s presence, can the church discharge its mission.”<sup>5</sup> Instead of solely being a “display people” for pagan outsiders to “come and see,” the mission of the church also involves a centrifugal focus in that it moves outward

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<sup>4</sup>Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Bible Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 131-32.

<sup>5</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 162.

with the advancement of the gospel to the nations. Goheen comments, “On the basis of the resurrection and this new identity-giving commission, the people of God are the renewed-Israel people, now transformed through Jesus and the Spirit into a multi-ethnic, non-geographically-based people charged with a mission to the whole world.”<sup>6</sup> Gregg Allison says,

The church makes it a missional priority to be a distinctly Christian community in contrast to the perceptions and practices of its surrounding society; the church is continuously shaped by the gospel to be a demonstration of its claims, promises, and invitations; and the church relates itself to its surrounding world, near and far, as a community of the coming reign of God.<sup>7</sup>

In the New Testament, the resurrected Christ has given the church a crystal clear mission that flows from the mission of the Old Testament people. He commands his people to make disciples of all nations through the preaching of the gospel so that rebels will bow their knees to his lordship and worship him alone. The previous chapter asserted that the word of God establishes and dictates the mission for God’s people. Jesus himself, as the living Word and consummate Prophet, also reinforced this mission for God’s people. He mentioned this non-negotiable mission on five separate occasions.<sup>8</sup> In Matthew 28:19-20, he issued the Great Commission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

The primary command in this passage is to make disciples, with three participles or descriptors of how this is done.<sup>9</sup> The first participle involves the activity of “going” in the natural ebb and flow of life by interacting with lost people. The second involves

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<sup>6</sup>Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 116.

<sup>7</sup>Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 148.

<sup>8</sup>Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8.

<sup>9</sup>The verb “make disciples” (μαθητεύσατε) is in the aorist imperative denoting the main verb or command in the sentence followed by three modifying participles.

baptizing new believers and incorporating them into the life of the church. The final step in the disciple-making process is a never-ending one—teaching believers to observe all that Jesus commanded. Jesus emphasizes the importance of teaching, not just for information, but also for obedience. Craig Blomberg asserts,

The verb ‘make disciples’ also commands a kind of evangelism that does not stop after someone makes a profession of faith. The first of these (baptizing) will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second (teaching them obedience) proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, the focus of the Great Commission’s teaching for obedience closely resembles the overall thrust of Moses’ expository sermons in Deuteronomy. In essence, both Moses’ and Jesus’ final words to their followers focused on the importance of obedience. Wright comments,

Even the language of the Great Commission is almost pure Deuteronomy. . . . The emphasis on obedience, implicit in the command to make disciples, which is Deuteronomic enough in itself, is crystal clear in the phrase ‘to observe everything that I have commanded you’—the constant refrain of the whole book of Deuteronomy. Mission is the unavoidable imperative founded on the covenantal lordship of Christ our King. Its task is to produce self-replicating communities of covenantal obedience to Christ among the nations. And it is sustained by the covenantal promise of the enduring presence of Christ among his followers.<sup>11</sup>

God sent Jesus as both Prophet and Redeemer on a rescue mission to seek and save the lost and calls the church to embrace this mission for the ultimate goal of glorifying him. John Piper links the motivation of displaying God’s glory with obedience to the mission mandate: “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. . . . Therefore, worship is the fuel and goal of missions.”<sup>12</sup> Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert provide a helpful and succinct description of the mission of the church:

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<sup>10</sup>Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 1992), 431.

<sup>11</sup>Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press Academic, 2006), 355.

<sup>12</sup>John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993), 17.

The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father.<sup>13</sup>

Jesus, as the living Word, dictates and establishes the mission of the church.

This mission revolves around being a distinctly holy people who purposely make disciples of all nations through the proclamation of the gospel for the glory of God. John R. W. Stott asserts,

The highest of all missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission (important as that is), nor love for sinners, who are alienated and perishing (strong as that incentive is), but rather zeal—burning and passionate zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ. . . . Before this supreme goal of the Christian mission, all unworthy motives wither and die.<sup>14</sup>

Yet without solid leadership, how will the church succeed in actually accomplishing this monumental task? Is expository preaching the most effective means of exhorting the church to fulfill its mission? What role does a pastor's preaching play in leading the church? Just like Moses' preaching ministry effectively led the Israelites to fulfill their mission, Jesus also effectively led his followers to fulfill their mission through his preaching ministry. His leadership example of shepherding the New Covenant people through expository preaching provides a powerful model for pastors today.

### **Jesus' Mission Marked by Authoritative Preaching**

The Synoptic Gospels clearly reveal that Jesus' mission placed a premium on the authoritative preaching of the kingdom of God. Michael Quicke notes, "Thomas Goodwin the Puritan remarked that 'God had only one Son and he made him a preacher.'"<sup>15</sup> Michael Abendroth quotes Thomas Watson has also said, "He alone is the

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<sup>13</sup>Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 62.

<sup>14</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 53.

<sup>15</sup>Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 19.

Prince of Preachers. He alone is the best of expositors.”<sup>16</sup> Albert Bond says, “Jesus of Nazareth was the world’s Master Preacher. His ministry was brief but epochal. Through his own custom and his direction for the later ministry of the apostles Jesus created the Christian pulpit.”<sup>17</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old says, “Jesus was preeminently a preacher of the Word. . . . Again and again revivals of preaching have begun with the recognition of this fundamental fact: Jesus was a preacher and he gave a major portion of his energy to preaching.”<sup>18</sup> Ted Traylor says, “Every preacher has role models when it comes to preaching. We learn from many and we should be ever improving. However, there is no more superior example in preaching than Jesus. We should study His pattern of proclamation.”<sup>19</sup> Raymond Bailey offers this exhortation to pastors:

A study of the Synoptic Gospels reveals that the contemporary preacher can learn a great deal from analyzing the preaching of the carpenter from Nazareth. . . . The modern apostle (one sent by God) should imitate Christ. Christ Himself should be our spiritual example, our human model, our moral model, our pastoral model, and our preaching model.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Jesus as “Herald” in the Synoptic Gospels**

The Synoptic Gospels reveal Jesus as a “herald” (κηρυσξ) who preached with authority. One of the primary words used to describe Jesus’ preaching comes from the word group κηρυσξ or κηρυσσω. Before describing Jesus’ role as a herald, the meaning of

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<sup>16</sup>Thomas Watson, *The Beatitudes: An Exposition of Matthew 5:1-12*, quoted in Michael Abendroth, *Jesus Christ, The Prince of Preachers: Learning from the Teaching Ministry of Jesus* (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2008), 17.

<sup>17</sup>Albert Richmond Bond, *The Master Preacher: The Study of the Homiletics of Jesus* (New York: American Tract Society, 1910), 13.

<sup>18</sup>Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Biblical Period*, vol. 1 of *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 111.

<sup>19</sup>Ted Traylor, “Jesus Came Preaching,” *Preaching Magazine* (July 2004) accessed January 22, 2015, <http://preaching.com/resources/articles/11549442>.

<sup>20</sup>Raymond Bailey, *Jesus the Preacher* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 14.

this word group must be established according to its semantic domain usage in the New Testament. In ancient Greek culture, the office of the herald was extremely important for both the political and cultural life of the Empire. Entrusted with a message from his sovereign, a herald held no authority to deviate from the message, but instead had to deliver it faithfully as the official spokesman for his superior.<sup>21</sup>

Stott claims, “Heralding is not the same as lecturing. A lecture is dispassionate, objective, academic . . . but the herald of God comes with an urgent proclamation of peace through the blood of the cross, and with a summons to men to repent.”<sup>22</sup> Robert Dabney asserts, “The preacher is a herald; his work is heralding the King’s message. Now the herald does not invent his message; he merely transmits and explains it. It is not his to criticize its wisdom or fitness; this belongs to his sovereign alone.”<sup>23</sup> A. W. Tozer said of preachers, “We are not diplomats but prophets, and our message is not a compromise, but an ultimatum.”<sup>24</sup> Clowney states, “The New Testament noun for preaching implies that the gospel is a royal proclamation and the preacher is the King’s herald.”<sup>25</sup> H. B. Charles offers this insight:

The herald was on assignment to deliver the message of the king. It was not his message. And he did not have editorial authority over it. He could not change the message to suit the crowd. Neither can we. The pulpit is not the place for personal testimonies, political speeches, group therapy sessions, motivational talks, self-help

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<sup>21</sup>Gerhard Friedrich says, “It demanded, then, that they deliver their message as it was given to them. The essential point about the report which they give is that it does not originate with them. Behind it stands a higher power. The herald does not express his own views. He is the spokesman for his master.” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 3:687-88.

<sup>22</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), 37.

<sup>23</sup>Robert L. Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric: A Course of Lectures on Preaching* (Lexington, KY: Alacrity Press, 2010), 11.

<sup>24</sup>A. W. Tozer, *Man: The Dwelling Place of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers, 1997), 34.

<sup>25</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1979), 20.

advice, worldly philosophies, or scientific theories. The pulpit is the throne of the Word of God. Therefore, the sacred text must be the priority for our preaching.<sup>26</sup>

As a herald, Jesus elevated the sacred text and preached it with both clarity and authority.

He summoned people to repent and believe the gospel. Sidney Greidanus explains the need for preachers today to function as heralds imitating the role of Jesus:

If contemporary preachers preach with authority, then congregations can no longer dismiss their sermons as merely personal opinions but must respond to them as authoritative messages. The only proper authority for preaching is divine authority—the authority of God’s heralds, his ambassadors, his agents. . . . Contemporary preachers, if they wish to speak with divine authority, must speak not their own word but that of their Sender.<sup>27</sup>

**Matthew.** After his baptism and subsequent testing in the wilderness, Matthew introduced Jesus’ public ministry as that of a herald. Matthew 4:17 says, “From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” The word employed for “preach” is κηρυσσω. John MacArthur states,

Preaching was a central part of Jesus’ ministry and remains a central part of the ministry of the church. . . . Jesus preached His message with certainty. He did not come to dispute or to argue, but to proclaim, to preach. Preaching is the proclamation of certainties, not the suggestion of possibilities. What He proclaimed not only was certain but was of the utmost authority.<sup>28</sup>

J. C. Ryle notes, “Let us notice the way in which our Lord commenced his mighty work. ‘He began to preach.’ There is no office so honorable as that of the preacher. There is no work so important to the souls of men. It is an office which the Son of God was not ashamed to take up.”<sup>29</sup>

Matthew emphasizes Jesus’ role as a preacher again in 4:23, which states,

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<sup>26</sup>H. B. Charles, Jr., *On Preaching: Personal and Pastoral Insights for the Preparation and Practice of Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2014), 16-17.

<sup>27</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 12.

<sup>28</sup>John MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 108.

<sup>29</sup>J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, vol. 1, *Matthew-Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2007), 28.



“And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”

This verse stresses the three-fold nature of Jesus’ ministry as preaching, teaching, and healing; but the priority seemed to be upon preaching. Abendroth comments,

Notice that Matthew did not say that Jesus ‘shared’ or ‘dialogued’ or that he engaged in any kind of group think abounding with moral platitudes. Why? Because the role of the herald forbids it. . . . Heralds give out information in a one-directional approach.<sup>30</sup>

Matthew 9:35 repeats this same theme, “And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.”

Time does not permit delving into the richness of Matthew Chapter 10, but it is here that Jesus mobilizes his disciples to preach the gospel in order to fulfill God’s mission to reach the Jews. At the end of this discourse, Matthew gives a summary statement in Matthew 11:1: “When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.” The word “instructing” (διατάσσω) is a rare Greek word which means “to give detailed instructions as to what must be done—to order, to instruct, to tell, to command.”<sup>31</sup> It carries the idea of military language in giving orders.<sup>32</sup> David Scaer notes,

The Greek word *diatasso* translated as ‘instructing,’ means to set troops in order for battle and pictures Jesus ordering his disciples as missionary-soldiers to carry out the evangelization of Israel and, within the context of the entire Gospel, the evangelization of the whole world.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Abendroth, *Jesus Christ, The Prince of Preachers*, 82.

<sup>31</sup>J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:424.

<sup>32</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer define this word as “to give (detailed) instructions as to what must be done, *order* (Jos. Ant. 4, 308; 15, 113) Military terminology τὰ διατασσόμενα *orders*.” W. Arndt, F. W. Danker and W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “instructing.”

<sup>33</sup>David P. Scaer, *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 270-71.

The preaching ministry of Jesus in Matthew proved instrumental in leading his followers to fulfill their mission of reaching the lost with the gospel. In his first sermon discourse<sup>34</sup> (the Sermon on the Mount) in Matthew 5:1-7:29 Jesus not only referenced the Old Testament but in his second sermon discourse in Matthew 10:5-11:1, he also trained and commissioned his followers to preach as heralds as well. Old comments,

If anything is clear from the Gospel of Matthew it is that Jesus laid great stress on the centrality of preaching in the apostolic ministry of the Church. Jesus gave much time to preaching himself, but he also gave much time to preparing the Twelve to go out and preach. Then, finally, as the crowning act of his earthly ministry, he sent his apostles out to preach.<sup>35</sup>

**Mark.** Mark introduces Jesus by portraying him as a preacher. Mark 1:14–15 states, “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’” This word used for “proclaiming” is also κηρυσσω. Jesus spoke of the urgency of his preaching mission in Mark 1:38-39: “And he said to them, ‘Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.’ And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.” He remained focused on his role as a leader sent on a mission to preach the gospel. Yet, the disciples wanted to capitalize on his simply being a traveling miracle worker. As such, they tried to hinder him from his mission of preaching. Yet, knowing that his Father has sent him with the expressed purpose to preach the gospel, Jesus remained undeflected from this mission. William Lane comments on the nature of Jesus’ heralding a call to repentance:

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<sup>34</sup>Most scholars believe that Matthew structures his gospel around five key discourses—Matt 5:1-7:29, 10:5-11:1, 13:1-53, 18:1-19:2, and 24:1-25:46. D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984); Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992); R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

<sup>35</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 152.

Jesus calls men to radical decision. . . . Jesus proclaims the kingdom not to give content but to convey a summons. He stands as God's final word of address to man in man's last hour. Either a man submits to the summons of God or he chooses this world and its riches and honor. . . . His purpose is to confront men with the demand for decision in the perspective of God's absolute claim upon their person.<sup>36</sup>

Jesus came as the Consummate Prophet to whom people must listen, and to refuse to listen is an act of defiance. Coenen emphasizes,

The verb *kerysso* characterizes the concrete proclamation of the message in a particular instance. . . . It includes information, but is always more than mere instruction or a bare offer, and is equally distinct from the communication of philosophical teachings or general wisdom. *Kerysso* sets a standard, to ignore which is not simply indifference, but refusal.<sup>37</sup>

One cannot simply ignore Jesus' message. He does not simply impart general wisdom or philosophical information or tidbits of Bible trivia. Because of the kerygmatic nature of his preaching it demands urgent and immediate compliance.

**Luke.** Luke's gospel pictures Jesus as a preacher sent from a sovereign God to proclaim the gospel with urgency, both in the synagogues as well as the marketplace and countryside. Luke 4:43–44 states, "But he said to them, 'I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.' And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea." Jesus stressed the urgency of his mission to preach the gospel by using the term "I must." Commenting on this passage Quicke argues, "We must never lose the centrality of preaching to the leadership of Jesus. Jesus has a world to love and save and does it by preaching/leading to the cross and beyond. It is his preferred method."<sup>38</sup> Luke 8:1 reads, "Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God."

Some have argued that there is a sharp distinction between preaching

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<sup>36</sup>William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 66-82.

<sup>37</sup>L. Coenen, "Proclamation, Preach, Kerygma," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 3:57.

<sup>38</sup>Quicke, *360-Degree Leadership*, 175.

(κηρυσσω) and teaching (διδασκω) in the ministry of Jesus. They assert Jesus taught or explained the Scriptures strictly in the synagogues but never preached like a herald in that context. Conversely, they maintain he never taught expositionally in public among the crowds, but only preached the gospel of the Kingdom.<sup>39</sup> Newman and Stine respond,

Some scholars attempt to differentiate between ‘teaching’ and ‘preaching’ on the grounds that teaching relates primarily to the polemical dialogues that took place between Jesus and the religious leaders in the synagogues, while preaching is essentially the proclamation of the Good News. But such a distinction is difficult to maintain, since the Sermon on the Mount is introduced by the form “and he began to teach them” (5:2, TEV). Whether teaching or preaching, Jesus is the promised herald of good news, which he proclaims both in synagogues and along the roadside.<sup>40</sup>

While Jesus’ preaching ministry reflected the uniqueness of containing generative truth and new revelation, he often combined both authoritative declaration of the kerygma as well as didactic exposition of Old Testament texts in his sermonic discourses. Greidanus posits,

The New Testament does not separate preaching and teaching into such rigid, ironclad categories. . . . Although preaching in a mission situation must have had a different emphasis than preaching in an established church, there appears to be developing consensus today that preaching and teaching were never sharply separated by the first Christians and should not be separated by us today.<sup>41</sup>

Authoritative preaching involves the bold proclamation of the gospel, but it also includes the exposition of Scripture in order to unfold the implications and applications of the proclamation. MacArthur comments,

Whereas didasko (teaching) relates to explaining a message, kerusso (proclaiming) relates simply to announcing it. While interpreting the Old Testament in His teaching He was also proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, announcing the fact that God’s long-promised Messiah and King had come to establish His kingdom. . . .

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<sup>39</sup>C. H. Dodd is the most popular and influential proponent of this sharp dichotomy, as evidenced in his work *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1936).

<sup>40</sup>B. M. Newman and P. C. Stine, *Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 99.

<sup>41</sup>Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and Ancient Text*, 6-7.

The message proclaimed needs to be explained, and vice versa.<sup>42</sup>

The Synoptic Gospels consistently demonstrate that Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom with authority and urgency. William Wilkinson claims, “Jesus taught with authority. Nothing in his preaching is a trait more marked, more pervasive, more indelibly waterlined into the texture of his discourse, than this.”<sup>43</sup> Don Kistler asserts,

Jesus must have been an amazing preacher, because Scripture tells us that when He preached people were amazed. But what was the source of their amazement? He taught as one who had authority, not like the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 7:28-29). It is to be feared that we have far too many scribes and Pharisees in pulpits today. They do not preach with authority and the people are not amazed—amused, perhaps, but not amazed. Nowadays, preachers make suggestions; they do not preach with authority. Jesus preached with authority.<sup>44</sup>

Robert Mounce claims, “The portrayal of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels is supremely that of one who came heralding the kingdom of God. This characteristic phase of Jesus’ ministry is represented by the verb *kerussein* more than twenty times.”<sup>45</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, “I suggest that in the Gospels, and in the life and ministry of our Lord Himself, you have this clear indication of the primacy of preaching and of teaching.”<sup>46</sup> Abendroth echoes this thought:

Even a cursory and brief glance at the Gospels conspicuously demonstrates that Jesus viewed preaching as preeminent. For the Savior, there was nothing greater than preaching. Frankly, Jesus ordained preaching. Jesus put a premium on preaching and anything less, therefore, is actually satanic opposition.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7*, 124-25.

<sup>43</sup>William C. Wilkinson, “Jesus as Preacher,” *The Biblical World* 6 (December 1895): 476.

<sup>44</sup>Don Kistler, “Preaching with Authority,” in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, ed. Don Kistler (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 117.

<sup>45</sup>Robert H. Mounce, *The Essentials of New Testament Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1960), 28.

<sup>46</sup>D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 28.

<sup>47</sup>Abendroth, *Jesus Christ, The Prince of Preachers*, 20.

## Jesus Led as an Expository Preacher

Jesus authoritatively proclaimed the gospel as a herald as evidenced by the repeated occurrences in the Synoptic Gospels. Most scholars do not question the kerygmatic nature of Jesus' preaching ministry, but many question the expositional nature of his proclamation. Was Jesus in fact an expository preacher? Francis Handy argues,

A careful study of our Lord's utterances reveals that he both proclaimed and expounded the word of God or good news of the kingdom according to the particular situation confronting him and his understanding of its need. Sometimes the element of preaching dominates, sometimes the element of teaching, and often the two are blended. He stands near to the modern preacher in his conception of preaching.<sup>48</sup>

Bond denies that Jesus was an expository preacher: "Jesus was not an expository preacher. Popular thought so classes him, but incorrectly so. He was a Scriptural preacher in the sense that he often referred to the Scriptures, but he did not give extended exegesis of the Old Testament."<sup>49</sup> Jason Meyer counters this: "The Synoptic Gospels stress that Jesus's sermons are expositions of what the Old Testament anticipated. He shows that what the Old Testament envisioned has arrived with him. He presents Himself as Isaiah's end-time herald (Isa 52:7)."<sup>50</sup> Hershael York argues that pastors should not attempt to preach like Jesus, especially the inductive nature of the parables. He says, "Frankly, we are never told to preach like Jesus and probably shouldn't try."<sup>51</sup> Admittedly, pastors are not omniscient as God Incarnate like Jesus. As such, this poses many limitations in imitating the preaching of Christ. Preachers cannot read the minds or penetrate the souls of their listeners in the miraculous ways Jesus could. In agreement with York, pastors should not attempt to preach in many of the ways Jesus preached. However, the New

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<sup>48</sup>Francis J. Handy, *Jesus the Preacher* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), 11.

<sup>49</sup>Bond, *The Master Preacher*, 88.

<sup>50</sup>Jason Meyer, *Preaching: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2013), 183.

<sup>51</sup>Hershael York and Burt Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 15.

Testament gives evidence of Jesus' preaching expository sermons from the Old Testament Scripture in a propositional and deductive manner. Therefore, pastors should attempt to model and employ this method in their preaching ministry, while avoiding the other models such as parables, all the while realizing their limitations as mere humans. York admonishes pastors, "Certainly, we should emulate many elements of Jesus' preaching: his passion, his high view of Scripture, his confrontation and application, and his tendency to force a decision of acceptance and rejection."<sup>52</sup> If the New Testament actually reveals an expository method and model of preaching from Christ himself, then should not pastors emulate that as well?

Since he was the incarnate Son of God, some argue Jesus was not an expository preacher because the bulk of his preaching material was his own (parables, saying, proverbs, stories, etc.) But yet, the Gospels reveal a few examples of his reading, explaining, and applying the Old Testament Scripture in a deductive and propositional manner. Abendroth claims,

To a large degree, Jesus was an expository preacher. While He did not preach 'through a book of the Old Testament' sequentially, verse by verse over three years, He did always expose people to the God-intended meaning of the text and implore them to obey.<sup>53</sup>

Expository preaching regulates itself to the God-intended meaning of the text and then declares it as propositional truth to be obeyed. Handy argues,

Good preaching, like the preaching of Jesus, centers around profound truths. His preaching was more than mere heralding, it was teaching. True preaching is both a proclamation and a body of truth. So not only must the preacher proclaim as an evangelist and call men to God; he must teach, expound, and build his people up in God.<sup>54</sup>

Expositing God's Word as a herald defined the mission of Jesus at times. He declared the

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<sup>52</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 15.

<sup>53</sup>Abendroth, *Jesus Christ, Prince of Preachers*, 145.

<sup>54</sup>Handy, *Jesus the Preacher*, 119.

gospel by explaining and expounding the Old Testament Scriptures with authority. Handy describes the nature of Jesus' expository preaching,

Jesus brought to his expository preaching a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, a deep spiritual understanding, a clear insight into the things of God, a grasp of essential meanings, and an ability to draw out the core of the passage and to display it significantly and convincingly. All these qualities are as necessary to expository preaching as expository preaching is necessary today.<sup>55</sup>

Expository preaching means that pastors draw out the meaning of the Scripture and then declare it with confidence. While Jesus employed many different elements in his discourses, he did at times minister as an expository preacher.

### **Luke 4:14-30: An Expository Sermon in the Nazareth Synagogue**

In Luke 4:14-30, Jesus visited his hometown of Nazareth and preached an expository sermon from Isaiah, demonstrating the nature of his Messianic mission. Robert Stein says, "Luke began his portrayal of Jesus' ministry with the account of Jesus' first sermon. This sermon is quite important, for it is programmatic, and in it Luke provided his readers with Jesus' own description of his mission and ministry"<sup>56</sup> Joel Green says, "Luke's presentation indicates not only that Jesus regularly demonstrated his piety by attendance of the synagogue on the Sabbath, but also that it was his habit to take the role of the one who read and expounded the Scriptures."<sup>57</sup> Luke's emphasis of Jesus' custom or pattern of attending the synagogue shows that he placed an importance on expository preaching over his three-year ministry. Yngve Brilioth offers an interesting argument that Jesus' sermon in the Nazareth synagogue serves as a template for all future Christian preaching. He describes it as having three main components: "liturgical,

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<sup>55</sup>Handy, *Jesus the Preacher*, 80.

<sup>56</sup>Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 153-154.

<sup>57</sup>Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 209.



exegetical, and prophetic.” He writes,

The liturgical element: Jesus’ sermon was delivered within the context of the Jewish service. . . . The exegetical element: Jesus spoke from a text. . . . The prophetic element: the sermon was prophetic in the deepest sense, inasmuch as it is the essential nature of prophecy to speak to the present with divine authority and to transform the historical revelation into a contemporaneous, dynamic reality.<sup>58</sup>

Luke provides a description of Jesus’ expository preaching in this passage, but nowhere does Jesus specifically command or prescribe this type of preaching as normative for pastors to emulate. Yet, this discourse presents a positive model of expository preaching that pastors should cautiously adopt in light of their limitations as humans, whereas Jesus was the incarnate Son of God. This passage in Luke clearly demonstrates that Jesus indeed ministered as an expository preacher and here provides a seven-fold blueprint or model for expository preaching. First, it involves the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit in order to preach with authority. Second, preaching usually happens within the context of a corporate worship service. Third, this model involves reading and giving an exegetical exposition of the text. Fourth, this kind of preaching involves a christocentric focus on the gospel of salvation proclaiming Jesus as Savior and Lord. Fifth, Jesus models pastoral awareness by addressing the particular needs of the congregation. Sixth, his expository preaching involves not only providing information faithfully from the text, but also the exhortation to respond with immediate faith and obedience. Seventh, Jesus supplements his exposition with illustrations, stories, and aphorisms/proverbs to engage his listeners on an emotional level.

**Spirit-empowered preaching.** In 4:14, Luke explains how Jesus emerged from his testing in the wilderness as a preacher anointed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Greg Heisler says, “Simply put, our Lord’s communion with the Holy Spirit was established *before* he took on his public ministry of teaching and preaching. . . . The

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<sup>58</sup>Yngve Brilioth, *A Brief History of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 8-10.

Spirit's empowerment was evident even before Jesus opened his mouth to preach. So may it be with us today.”<sup>59</sup> Arturo Azurdia comments,

If, for the effectual heralding of the word of God, such an endowment of power proved necessary for the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles and other Christians of the New Testament, and even the incarnate Son of God Himself, how much more will such power be necessary for contemporary preachers of the gospel?<sup>60</sup>

Even though Jesus was God incarnate, he still needed the empowering of the Holy Spirit in order to preach and teach with authority. Lloyd-Jones asserts, “What is significant is that even our Lord Himself, the Son of God, could not have exercised His ministry as a man on earth if He had not received this special, peculiar anointing of the Holy Spirit to perform His task.”<sup>61</sup> This passage provides a model for the modern expository preacher who desires to proclaim truth in the power of the Spirit. Pastors who desire to lead people on mission must rely on the power of the Spirit to transform their preaching just as Jesus did. Stephen Olford says,

Preaching with the unction of the Holy Spirit never neutralizes an individual, group, or a congregation. On the contrary, Holy Spirit-anointed preaching always precipitates a decision. . . . What we need today is a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit if our ministry is to penetrate the hearts of saint and sinner alike. Where there is an anointing there is the authority.<sup>62</sup>

The empowering by the Holy Spirit for Jesus to preach also has a vital connection to the written text or scroll of Isaiah. Heisler comments,

It is also important to note that the Spirit's empowerment came in direct relationship to the scroll being handed to Jesus. The implication is compelling support for Spirit-led expository preaching: even the living Word used the written Word under the anointing of the Holy Spirit as an authentication of the authority and power of his

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<sup>59</sup>Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 27.

<sup>60</sup>Arturo Azurdia, *Spirit Empowered Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publishing, 2003), 119.

<sup>61</sup>Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 324.

<sup>62</sup>Stephen F. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 1998), 225-27.

teaching.<sup>63</sup>

Effective pastoral leadership requires the empowering of the Holy Spirit, just like Jesus' did, in order to preach the text faithfully. John Piper says, "How utterly dependent we are on the Holy Spirit in the work of preaching! All genuine preaching is rooted in a feeling of desperation."<sup>64</sup>

**Preaching in corporate worship.** In addition to the powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit, this text reveals that expository preaching usually occurs within the context of gathered worship—in particular the synagogue. In the synagogue, rabbis read the text and then followed it by giving an expository discourse.<sup>65</sup> It was Jesus' custom to preach on a regular basis as he valued the importance of joining corporate worshippers in the synagogue as they gathered under the authority of the preached Word. Jay Adams claims, "We have no record of an apostolic address given in a Christian assembly. But we do have Jesus, 'as was his custom,' entering the synagogue and preaching from a biblical portion assigned for the day (Luke 4:16-32)."<sup>66</sup> The context in which pastors can most effectively lead God's people on mission lies in a consistent pulpit ministry with systematic and faithful exposition in the local assembly. Like the rabbis in the synagogue and Jesus himself, pastors today read, expound, explain, and apply the text with the sermon as the central aspect of corporate worship. Mohler boldly asserts,

It may be shocking to some to say that preaching is the central component of Christian worship. . . . Music is not the central act of Christian worship—nor is evangelism, nor even the ordinances. The heart of Christian worship is the authentic

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<sup>63</sup>Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 27.

<sup>64</sup>John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 41.

<sup>65</sup>Stein comments, "This is the oldest account we possess of a synagogue service, which apparently contained the following: the singing of psalms, the reading of the Shema; the repetition of the Eighteen Blessings (the Shemoneth Esreh); a reading of the Law in Hebrew, followed by a translation in Aramaic; a reading from the Prophets in Hebrew, followed by a translation in Aramaic; a sermon on the Scripture; and a concluding blessing by the ruler of the synagogue." Stein, *Luke*, 155.

<sup>66</sup>Jay Adams, *Preaching with Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 16.

preaching of the Word of God.<sup>67</sup>

**Reading and expositing the text.** The third element of Jesus' template for expository preaching involves both reading and giving an exegetical explanation of a text of Scripture. Luke uses two key words to describe the nature of Jesus' preaching. In 4:15, Luke says that Jesus "taught" (διδάσκω) in their synagogues; and in 4:18-19, Jesus was also anointed to "preach" (κηρύσσω). Jesus proclaimed like a herald but also emphasized didactic exposition with an evangelistic focus. In other words, it was authoritative exposition. In 4:16-17, Jesus stands and reads the Septuagint scroll of Isaiah 61:1-2. John Calvin says, "Christ rose up to read, not only that his voice might be better heard, but in token of reverence: for the majesty of Scripture deserves that its expounders should make it apparent, that they proceed to handle it with modesty and reverence."<sup>68</sup> Effective expository preaching requires pastors to actually read the text with reverence and then not deviate from that text throughout the remainder of the sermon. Piper laments,

We need to get people to open their Bibles and put their finger on the text. Then we need to quote a piece of our text and explain what it means. . . . We are simply pulling rank on people when we tell them and don't show them from the text. This does not honor the word of God or the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>69</sup>

F. B. Meyer comments,

We cannot find an argument upon this single act, but it is at least significant that the Lord gave His sanction to the systematic reading and consideration of the inspired Word in His earliest sermon. Our Lord was also careful to consider the text in relation to its context and the whole tenor and teaching of Scripture. The habit of taking a little snippet of a verse from any part of the Bible and making it the subject of discourse, exposes the preacher to the danger of an unbalanced statement of truth, which is very prejudicial.<sup>70</sup>

Jesus does not preach this text from Isaiah in isolation but perceived the full

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<sup>67</sup>Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 35-37.

<sup>68</sup>John Calvin, *Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 1:227.

<sup>69</sup>Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 45.

<sup>70</sup>F. B. Meyer, *Expository Preaching Plans and Methods* (Toronto: The Upper Canada Tract Society, 1910), 78.

weight of its historical and cultural background in the life of Israel. This Old Testament passage provided words of hope to an idolatrous and rebellious nation that needed liberation and freedom from oppression. The text in Luke does not indicate that Jesus explained the historical background of this Isaiah passage probably because it was so well known by the congregants in the synagogue. Jesus reinterprets its historical reality focusing solely upon him as the fulfillment of this Messianic promise in order to inaugurate the spiritual realities of the gospel. Bock says, “The OT background of the passage is significant, as is the history of the interpretation of Isaiah 61. It is a picture of forgiveness and spiritual liberation, which is at the center of Jesus’ message.”<sup>71</sup> Old says, “As Luke presents the sermon, extensive use is made of the principle that Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture. When Jesus preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath he was an expository preacher. His sermon was an interpretation of Scripture.”<sup>72</sup> Expository preachers rely heavily upon the “analogy of faith”<sup>73</sup> hermeneutic that Scripture is to be interpreted in light of other Scriptures. Jesus understood the God-intended meaning of the Isaiah passage in its original historical-grammatical context<sup>74</sup> and gave further explanation and application that related to its immediate fulfillment in him as Messiah.

The grammatical structure of Jesus’ exposition of the Isaiah passage focuses on four verbal infinitives that express what Jesus had now come to actuate as the Messiah.

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<sup>71</sup>Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 406.

<sup>72</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 132.

<sup>73</sup>Robert Plummer provides this helpful definition: “The hermeneutical guideline of Scripture interpreting Scripture has long been espoused by Christian interpreters going back at least to Augustine (A.D. 345-430) and Iraneaus (A.D. 130-200). If we believe that all the Bible is inspired by God and thus non-contradictory, passages of Scripture that are less clear should be interpreted with reference to those that are most transparent in meaning.” Robert Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 97.

<sup>74</sup>Walt Kaiser clearly defines the historical-grammatical hermeneutic: “Under the strong impetus of the Reformation there was a renewed emphasis that there is only one sense or meaning to be gleaned from every passage if the interpreter is true to his mission. The sole object of the expositor is to explain as clearly as possible what the writer meant when he wrote the text under examination. It is the interpreter’s job to represent the text, not the prejudices, feelings, judgments, or concerns of the exegete.” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981), 45.

Kostenberger and O'Brien say, "Jesus is the Spirit-anointed prophet who announces the new era of salvation which he brings to pass as the anointed Messiah. The nature of his mission is marked out by four infinitival expressions, three of which involve preaching."<sup>75</sup>

Jesus first comes to "proclaim good news to the poor" (v. 18). The Greek term used here is not κηρύσσω, but εὐαγγελίζω, which means to announce or bring the good news of salvation. Bock says, "Fundamental to Jesus' task is the call to preach good news to the poor. This prophetic role fits nicely with Luke's emphasis on Jesus as prophet or teacher."<sup>76</sup> Secondly, Jesus came to "proclaim" (κηρύσσω) liberty to the captives" (v. 18). This involves Jesus' mission as one sent by the Father to bring liberation from spiritual bondage. Again, Bock claims,

In the OT, reference to captives meant the exiled, but often it had spiritual overtones, especially since the OT viewed the exile as a result of sin. The image is of release from captivity; but in Luke, the picture includes release from sin and spiritual captivity.<sup>77</sup>

In these first two infinitives Luke emphasizes Jesus' mission as a preacher.

The third infinitive focuses on Jesus' setting free captives or providing forgiveness of sins (v. 18). He highlights the word "liberty" or "release" (ἄφεσις), which in Lukan theology (Luke-Acts) is often translated as "forgiveness" or "release from sins."<sup>78</sup> Ultimately, Jesus' mission as a preacher was not only to announce or proclaim that this forgiveness was indeed possible to those spiritually dead and bankrupt but that, as the Messiah, he would personally obtain their eternal redemption through his sacrifice on the cross. Announcing to sinners the forgiveness of sins through the cross of Christ is

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<sup>75</sup>Andreas Kostenberger and Peter O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 116.

<sup>76</sup>Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 408.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 409.

<sup>78</sup>ἄφεσις is often translated "forgiveness" or "pardoning of guilt". Luke 1:77, 3:3, 5:20-23, 7:47-49, 11:4, 12:10, 17:3-4, 23:34, 24:47; Acts 5:31, 8:22, 10:43, 13:38, 26:18.

one of the key tasks of effective expository preaching; it combines authoritative heralding, explaining the text, and evangelistic pleading (εὐαγγελίζω). Pastors lead their people to obey the Great Commission as a church when they preach forgiveness found in the gospel to “spiritual outsiders” who are poor, blind, captive, and needy. The Old Testament context of Isaiah 61 shows the nation of Israel’s overwhelming political and cultural oppression and the promise of the coming anointed Servant of the Lord to bring deliverance. Jesus expounds this Old Testament theme and expounds upon its current spiritual realities related to himself and his audience. Beale and Carson comment,

The poor symbolize not only Israel in suffering, but also those who are without means and the outcasts in general. . . . The blind likewise can be used in a symbolic way to describe those without salvation. . . . The release can refer to the freedom from the power of Satan.<sup>79</sup>

The final infinitive involves proclaiming (κηρύσσω) the year of the Lord’s favor (v. 19), which most probably alludes to the Old Testament concept of the “The Year of Jubilee” in Leviticus 25. Again, the focus centers on Jesus’ mission as both preacher and liberator as the Year of Jubilee allusion plays a major role in the identity of Christ as the Messiah. Green says, “This interpretive tradition encourages a reading of Luke 4:18-19 as the announcement of the eschatological epoch of salvation, the time of God’s gracious visitation, with Jesus himself presented as its anointed herald.”<sup>80</sup> William Hendriksen says, “This is a symbol of the Messianic age, for it is only by faith in Jesus Christ that true freedom is obtained: freedom from living in constant fear, from obligation to ever so many manmade ordinances, from guilt, pollution, Satan, sin, and its results.”<sup>81</sup> Clowney comments, “Jesus was the Anointed Preacher, the Messenger of the Jubilee, filled with the Holy Spirit. His declaration was with authority. . . . He did not just teach

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<sup>79</sup>G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books 2007), 289.

<sup>80</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 212.

<sup>81</sup>William Hendriksen, *Luke, New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1978), 254.

about the meaning of the Jubilee as law and promise. His message was a trumpet call.”<sup>82</sup> In the same way, preachers today “trumpet” the gospel through expository preaching as a means of announcing God’s grace available only through Christ. Wright demonstrates the continuity of Jesus’ mission with that of God in the Old Testament: “Luke will not allow us to interpret this jubilee language as flowery metaphors or spiritual allegories. . . . Jesus fulfilled the Jubilee that he proclaimed. His radical mission was the very mission of God found in the Old Testament proclamation of Jubilee.”<sup>83</sup> The mission of God in the Old Testament involved Israel’s identity as a “display people” and light to the nations as they pictured salvation in Yahweh through the sacrificial system. Jesus continues this mission by now showing its fulfillment in him. In this expository sermon, Jesus not only re-established God’s mission given to Israel, but led the New Testament people to embrace this same mission by preaching salvation to the nations. He not only came as a herald to preach with authority but also came as a teacher to exposit the Old Testament Scriptures in light of himself. Friedrich describes Jesus’ combination of didactic exposition with kerygmatic proclamation by saying,

Jesus did not give theoretical teaching when He spoke in the synagogue. He did not expound Scripture like the rabbis. His teaching was proclamation. His exposition was a herald’s cry. His teaching concerning the coming of the kingdom of God was an address demanding decision either for it or against it.<sup>84</sup>

Pastors must emulate this type of expository preaching that proclaims with authority and also explains the text faithfully.

Luke does not give us any more details in this passage noting whether Jesus gave a fuller exposition of Isaiah, yet there is a grammatical and contextual clue in 4:21: “And he began [ἤρξατο] to say to them, ‘Today [σήμερον] this Scripture has been

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<sup>82</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 127-28.

<sup>83</sup>Wright, *The Mission of God*, 301.

<sup>84</sup>Gerhard Friedrich, “*Keryx, Kerusso, Kerygma*,” in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 3:713.



fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke’s usage of the term “began to say” (ἤρξατο) indicates that Jesus may have given a lengthier exposition than what is recorded.<sup>85</sup> Bock also notes the immediacy of the preaching moment when he states, “The text also says that Jesus began to speak, suggesting that he gave more than one sentence of exposition.”<sup>86</sup> Alfred Plummer affirms Jesus may have included more exposition:

It points to the solemnity of the moment when His words broke the silence of universal expectation. What follows may be regarded as a summary of what was said. It gives us the main subject of His discourse. We are led to suppose that He said much more; perhaps interpreting to them in detail the things concerning Himself (24:27).<sup>87</sup>

Mounce explains how heralding also involves further exposition, “They needed to be taught the implications of this announcement. Thus, teaching is expounding in detail of that which is proclaimed. . . . Kerygma is the foundation and didache is the superstructure; but no building is complete without both.”<sup>88</sup> Expository preaching involves declaring the truth like a herald, but it also involves helping the congregation understand the applications and implications from the text to which they are responsible to obey. David Larsen says,

The sermon seems brief. . . . The engaging move to contemporary application is clear when Jesus says, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’ The pattern seems to be that Jesus the preacher takes a text of Scripture, reads it, explains it, and applies it. This is biblical preaching, and it was a central methodology employed by the Savior in his earthly ministry.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Commenting on v. 21 Marshall states, “ἤρξατο may be simply a case of Semitic redundant usage, especially if what follows is to be regarded as a summary of the sermon rather than its opening words. It could simply refer to the transition from reading to preaching. But surely what follows is the arresting opening of a sermon, so that the use of the verb is justified.” I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke, A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 184-85.

<sup>86</sup>Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 412.

<sup>87</sup>Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896), 123.

<sup>88</sup>Mounce, *The Essentials of New Testament Preaching*, 42.

<sup>89</sup>David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers*, vol. 1 of *A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 42.

J. C. Ryle says, “It is evident that the full exposition of the passage in Isaiah, which our Lord gave, has been withheld from us. The words which are recorded in this verse are probably the beginning of what our Lord said, and form the key-note of His sermon.”<sup>90</sup> Thus, pastors today should adopt Jesus’ expository practice of reading, explaining, and applying the text, especially using the grammatical-historical method of determining its God-intended meaning.

**Christocentric gospel focus.** Not only was Jesus anointed by the Spirit; not only did he preach in corporate worship, reading and expositing the text; he also emphasized a christocentric focus of the gospel of salvation by proclaiming himself as Savior and Lord. Greidanus quotes John Calvin, “We ought to read the Scriptures with the express design of finding Christ in them.”<sup>91</sup> Stott says,

Indeed, preaching was Jesus’ own understanding of his mission at that period. He claimed in the Nazareth synagogue that, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 61, the Spirit of the Lord had anointed him to preach his liberating message. Consequently, he ‘must’ do so. It was ‘for this purpose’ he explained that he had been sent.<sup>92</sup>

Bock comments on the gospel implications of this exposition in light of the church’s mission: “So, the oppression in view in Luke 4 is largely aimed against spiritual aspirations, as the light and blindness imagery makes especially clear. The church must face these implications and reflect aspects of its mission.”<sup>93</sup>

The church’s primary mission is to preach the gospel in obedience to the Great Commission. Pastors become more effective at leading this mission when they model the

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<sup>90</sup>J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, vol. 2, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 119.

<sup>91</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 227.

<sup>92</sup>John R. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 17.

<sup>93</sup>Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 401.

expository preaching of Jesus, which focused on explaining the gospel. Dennis Johnson exhorts preachers, “Preaching must be Christ-centered, must interpret biblical texts in their redemptive-historical contexts, and must aim for change with passion and personal application.”<sup>94</sup> Faithful exposition requires pastors not only to accurately explain the text but also to point to its gospel implications found only in Christ. Brilioth also says,

Jesus’ words have thus given the highest authorization to the claim of the Christian preacher that he also stands in the prophetic succession. Furthermore, they have placed upon the preacher the overwhelming responsibility of being more than a commentator on a text. He is to interpret every text so that out of its swaddling clothes the Lord of Scripture and the fulfiller of prophecy appears as the contemporary teacher and Lord.<sup>95</sup>

**Pastoral awareness in preaching.** In this synagogue sermon, Jesus also modeled how preachers must have a pastoral awareness of their congregation so that they can preach to immediate congregational needs. Pastors need to understand their limitations here in emulating Jesus because they are not omniscient. Yet, good pastoral care allows them to know the flock and apply the Scriptures to their current situation and needs. Richard Lischer says,

The New Testament gospel addresses the realities of defeat, blindness, oppression, and every other situation in which the presence of a gracious God is desperately needed. Preaching carries on the work of God’s incarnation; it remembers that God did not merely become a person, but a poor person, and that he identified with human pain in order to defeat it. Whenever preaching is separated from pastoral participation in suffering, its proclamation of God’s victory sounds a hollow and discarnate note.<sup>96</sup>

One caution needs to be expressed. Pastors in no way can replicate the “incarnational” ministry of Jesus, as his coming in the flesh was a unique, non-repeatable, and once-and-for-all reality. Instead of being incarnational, pastors are “re-presentational” in that they

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<sup>94</sup>Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from all the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2007), 54.

<sup>95</sup>Brilioth, *A Brief History of Preaching*, 10.

<sup>96</sup>Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Wipft and Stock Publishers, 2001), 35-36.

re-present Christ in the gospel as revealed in the sacred text. As the infinite God-Man, Jesus knew the history, prejudices, and pride of his audience and then applied the text pastorally to address their current condition. His expository preaching involved more than just giving a running commentary on Isaiah 61. It involved pastorally confronting his hearers with their sin and their need to recognize him as the coming Messiah. Calvin comments,

The object of his discourse was, to expound the prediction clearly to his hearers: just as expositors handle Scripture in a proper and orderly manner, when they apply it to the circumstances of those whom they address. He says that it was fulfilled in their ears, rather than in their eyes, because the bare sight of the fact was of little value, if doctrine had not held the chief place.<sup>97</sup>

Old says, “The sermon is thoroughly expository and yet at the same time takes up into it the concerns, capacities, and interests of the congregation.”<sup>98</sup> Pastors may explain the text accurately in its grammatical-historical context, but they must combine this with effective pastoral leadership that applies the text to their audience’s immediate situation. Preaching positionally, with an acute awareness of the needs and context of the church, makes pastors more effective at leading the church to embrace the mission. While pastors cannot imitate the soul-penetrating attributes of the deity of Christ, in a sense, they can emulate the prophetic tone of Jesus as herald by poignantly addressing the specific needs of their particular congregation. This modeling after Jesus requires prophetic and pastoral expository preaching, as opposed to giving a lecture. Lecturing often comes off as dispassionate and disconnected from reality, while expository preaching with pertinent application demonstrates effective leadership and the sensitivity to address what the congregation does not necessarily “want” to hear, but what they actually “need” to hear. Jesus did not “tickle the ears” of his synagogue congregation but confronted them with their own deeply imbedded idols of self-preservation and

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<sup>97</sup>Calvin, *A Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists*, 230.

<sup>98</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 132-33

ethnocentric pride.

**Preaching for a response.** Jesus concludes his expository sermon with an urgent plea to respond to him as Messiah and Lord, in the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Friedrich asserts,

He proclaims, like a herald, the year of the Lord, the Messianic age. When heralds proclaimed the year of jubilee throughout the land with the sound of the trumpet, the year began, the prison doors were opened, and debts were remitted. The preaching of Jesus is such a blast of the trumpet. Its result is that the Word proclaimed becomes a reality. For the divine Word is a creative force. It gives what it declares.<sup>99</sup>

Paul claims, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). Authoritative expositional preaching of the Scriptures produces a powerful impact that confronts hearers with a crisis of faith. Michael Fabarez says, "The word 'kerysso' depicts an act that is always relevant, always important, and always powerful. When the ambassador proclaims the message of the king, the royal citizens cannot be passive. They are compelled by the nature of the communiqué to respond."<sup>100</sup> Darrell Johnson says, "The word of the Lord is living and active, powerful and creative. The word of God not only informs, it performs, it transforms. The Word of God makes things happen."<sup>101</sup> As an expository herald, Jesus urgently called for a response in verse 22 by emphasizing the word "TODAY!"<sup>102</sup> His message demanded immediate faith in that very moment. Green comments on the importance of Jesus' usage of the word "Today:" "By building on the traditional role of hearing in revelation and the symbol of the listening ear as a sign of openness to the divine message, this phrase invites, even demands, a

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<sup>99</sup>Friedrich, "Keryux, Kerysso, Kerygma," 706-7.

<sup>100</sup>Michael Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 7.

<sup>101</sup>Darrell W. Johnson, *The Glory of Preaching: Participating in God's Transformation of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2009), 25.

<sup>102</sup>Bock states, "Jesus says the fulfillment is present today (σήμερον). The emphasis falls on the fulfillment's current availability, as the position of σήμερον at the head of the sentence shows. Σήμερον is a key term in Luke's theology and stresses that the opportunity for salvation is this very moment." Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 412

response.”<sup>103</sup> Johnson describes Jesus’ urgency, “Of course, kerysso, ‘heralding,’ makes happen what it proclaims. ‘Todayness’ is what this verb accomplishes . . . and the only appropriate response is faith. The message demands a decision on the part of the hearer.”<sup>104</sup>

Did Jesus’ expository message focus on the sovereign grace of God in salvation? In 4:22, the people marveled at his “gracious words,” which grammatically focus more on the content of his words about God’s grace rather than being an adjective describing the nature of his words.<sup>105</sup> As an anointed preacher who expounded the Old Testament, Jesus confronted the people in a way that heralded God’s amazing grace in the gospel of salvation. His exposition involved more than simply explaining the text but had a hortatory element of calling people to a decision in light of God’s grace. Ryle says, “They could find not find any flaw in this exposition of Scripture they had heard. They could not deny the beauty of the well-chosen language to which they listened. But their hearts were utterly unmoved and unaffected.”<sup>106</sup> John Nolland says, “As a charismatic figure Jesus speaks words endued with the power of God’s grace (v. 22). This grace guarantees the words a dramatic impact.”<sup>107</sup>

The content of expository preaching lies in its faithful explanation of the author’s intended meaning of the text but it does not stop there. Its ultimate aim is to impact hearers with the truth of the gospel so that they will bow under Christ’s authority. Expository preaching is more than just a mere lecture, which lays forth bare facts to be

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<sup>103</sup>Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 214.

<sup>104</sup>Johnson, *The Glory of Preaching*, 84.

<sup>105</sup>Stein says, “Whereas the Greek expression ‘words of grace’ may be understood as a descriptive genitive (i.e., ‘grace’ describes the kind of words—gracious words), it is better to understand the expression as an objective genitive describing the content of his words, i.e., words concerning God’s grace.” Stein, *Luke*, 158.

<sup>106</sup>Ryle, *Luke*, 118.

<sup>107</sup>John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 202.

understood mentally. Instead, this type of preaching exposes the text in such a way that it demands a response from the hearer affecting both mind, heart, and will. Engaging exposition calls people to immediate commitment. Jesus' sermon was not solely to transmit information, but his exposition demanded a response. York addresses this, "Like the prophets and the apostles, we preach for a decision, not merely for information."<sup>108</sup>

In the previous chapter which focused on Moses' preaching in Deuteronomy, he repeatedly exhorted the Israelites to "hear" and "obey" the word of the Lord with a passionate urgency. Following the expository method of Moses, Jesus does the same here. At first, the people's response is somewhat positive, but it quickly turns to vehement opposition as he provides two sermon illustrations from their history to show how God showed sovereign grace to Gentile outsiders. Hendriksen comments, "In every way, therefore, the passage read that day in the Nazareth synagogue was not only informative but hortatory. The invitation to accept this great salvation is clearly implied."<sup>109</sup> Expository preaching includes not only the didactic explanation of the text. It is also hortatory in nature because it urges people to a decisive commitment of their total lives to Christ "*today*."

**Supplements to expository preaching.** The final element in Jesus' expository model includes using illustrations, parables, and examples to supplement the exposition of Scripture. In 4:23-24, Jesus confronted his audience with two proverbial sayings or aphorisms: "Physician heal yourself" and "No prophet is acceptable in his hometown." Bock says, "The stakes in the discussion escalate with the introduction of a warning and a historical analogy."<sup>110</sup> Expository preaching involves more than just exegeting the text.

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<sup>108</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 17.

<sup>109</sup>Hendriksen, *A Commentary on Luke*, 254.

<sup>110</sup>Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 417.

Its implications must be applied creatively in ways that viscerally connect with the audience.

In addition to proverbial sayings, Jesus also gave two illustrations from Israel's history poignantly demonstrating the universal scope of his gospel proclamation. In 4:25-28, he mentioned the widow of Zarephath in Elijah's day (1 Kgs 17:8-24) and Naaman the Syrian during Elisha's ministry (2 Kgs 5:1-19). Strikingly, both stories involved God's gracious dealings with Gentile outsiders. The synagogue congregation responded with fierce anger at these penetrating illustrations. Jesus brought an emphatic closure to his primary message that the gospel of salvation was not only for Israel, but that it also had a universal scope to the nations. Chapell says,

Illustrations with emotive content force the mind into action. When a preacher elicits emotion through enabling a person to experience a life-situation illustration and at the same time dispenses sound teaching, rationality and resolve unite as powerful agents of change. Thus, the primary purpose of illustration is not merely to clarify but to motivate.<sup>111</sup>

After clarifying the text from Isaiah, Jesus used colorful illustrations from their own history to motivate the synagogue congregation to respond to God' grace, which extended not only to them as Jews, but also to the Gentiles.

### **Jesus Commissioned His followers to Lead by Preaching**

Jesus' sermon in the Nazareth synagogue presents a seven-fold model for expository preaching. This serves as a powerful blueprint for modern preachers who desire to emulate Jesus, who is the consummate preacher. After his resurrection, he presented an expository hermeneutic to his followers in how to read the Old Testament Scriptures and then commanded them to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sin to the nations in obedience to his mission.

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<sup>111</sup>Bryan Chapell, *Using Illustrations to Preach with Power* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 40.



## Luke 24:13-49

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus expounded the Old Testament Scriptures to two of his disciples. Carson and Beale write,

The narrative of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus contains several terms that speak of scriptural interpretation: *syzeteo* (24:15), *dianoigo* (24:31-32), and *diermaeneuo* (24:27), characterizing Jesus as teacher and Jesus' followers as interpreters of OT Scripture.<sup>112</sup>

Luke 24:27 states, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." The Greek word "interpreted" (διερμηνεύω), also used in Acts 9:36 and 18:6, means "to clarify something so as to make it understandable or to explain, interpret."<sup>113</sup> Johannes Behm states, "Luke 24:27 presents the risen Jesus to those who walked to Emmaus as the expounder of the OT prophecies of His passion and exaltation. . . . It rests on an exposition of Scripture, which is new in content, though not in method."<sup>114</sup> In other words, Jesus had done this type of exposition before in his ministry, especially in the Nazareth synagogue. In the context of Luke 24, this word "interpreted" means that Jesus explained, disclosed, and expounded the entirety of Old Testament Scriptures in light of himself.<sup>115</sup>

In doing this interpretive exercise, Jesus taught his disciples the new hermeneutic: the christocentric exposition of the Old Testament. Jesus did more than just read to them the text; he expounded the Scriptures showing himself as the promised Messiah. Luke 24:32 states, "They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?'" The key word

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<sup>112</sup>Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 400.

<sup>113</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "interpret."

<sup>114</sup>Johannes Behm, "διερμηνεύω," in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 11:661-62.

<sup>115</sup>This word means: "interpret, explain, bring to expression what is hidden" H. R. and G. Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 85-95, 118-20. Louw and Nida describe the term as "to explain on a more extensive and formal level the meaning of something which is particularly obscure or difficult to comprehend—to explain, to interpret." *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v. "interpreted."

in this passage is “opened” (διδάσκω), which is very similar word to what Luke used in the previous verse to demonstrate that Jesus expounded or explicated the Scriptures.<sup>116</sup> Luke uses this same term when Paul entered the city of Thessalonica on his second missionary journey to reason from the Scriptures in the synagogue. Acts 17:2-3 states, “And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining (διδάσκω) and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.’” Jesus’ exposition involved explaining the text to these men in such a way that they in turn could explicate, teach, and preach the Old Testament using this new hermeneutic. Just as the Luke 4 passage was descriptive and not prescriptive, here Jesus does not explicitly charge them to preach using this particular hermeneutic. Yet, evidence from the early sermons in Acts reveals that they did adopt his method by preaching christocentric expositions of the Old Testament (see chap. 4).

The result of Jesus’ exposition of the Old Testament Scripture resulted in intense joy in the hearts of these disciples whose eyes were opened to the richness of how Christ stands as the center of the entire Bible. Bock says,

His exposition gave them intense emotion and excitement. . . . They had great excitement and comfort at hearing the Scripture opened up to them in this way. . . . They had been treated to a rare tour of the OT and received insight into God’s plan as a result.<sup>117</sup>

Norval Geldenhuys writes,

And the Savior, who knows the Word of God perfectly, expounded to them in broad outline all the Scriptures that referred to Him, from the first books of the Old Testament and right through to the end. With burning hearts, but still unaware that it was Jesus Himself who was teaching them, they listened to his incomparable exposition of the deepest contents of the Old Testament.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>According to Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, this word means to “explain, interpret the Scriptures.” Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “opened.”

<sup>117</sup>Bock, *Luke, 9:51-24:53*, 1920-21.

<sup>118</sup>Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 634.

As the risen Christ, only Jesus can perfectly give this incomparable exposition of the Scriptures; again, showing the limitations for preachers today who sometimes have to struggle for hours at times in order to discern the author's intended meaning in the text.

Luke reiterates Jesus' hermeneutical method a third time in 24:45-47, which says,

Then he opened their minds [διανοίγω] to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'

As finite humans, pastors cannot supernaturally "open the minds" of their hearers in the way Jesus did here. Today, they rely on the Holy Spirit to illuminate hearts and minds when the text is faithfully preached. In essence, the Spirit uses expository preaching to "open the minds" of hearers so that they can understand the truths of the Scriptures. The Bible not only needs to be proclaimed with boldness (heralding) like Jesus, but also explained with accuracy (didactic exposition) as Jesus had done both in Luke 4 and here in Luke 24. Jesus emphasized the need for Holy Spirit empowered preaching in 24:49 which states, "And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Jesus helped his disciples to understand the Scriptures through a christocentric exposition and explanation. The emphasis and principle content of this message focused on the death and resurrection of Jesus, as well as the commission to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations. The Scriptures must be explained or expounded through preaching as the primary means to lead God's people to fulfill their mission. Hendriksen asserts, "Only when we see how all the Scriptures are centered in Christ, as the revelation of the Triune God, so that in the Old Testament everything points forward to him, and in the New everything proceeds from him will we be able to understand the Bible."<sup>119</sup> Richard Sibbes has said, "To preach is to open the mystery of Christ, to open

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<sup>119</sup>Hendriksen, *Commentary on Luke*, 1068.

whatsoever is in Christ; to break open the box that the Savior may be perceived of all.”<sup>120</sup>

In essence, Jesus modeled a christocentric hermeneutic to assist his followers to engage in expository preaching that focuses on the centrality of the gospel in order to lead the church to reach the nations. Geldenhuys says,

On that first day He had explained to the men of Emmaus the deepest meaning of the Old Testament, and now He also opened the minds of the whole group of disciples, and gave them the spiritual capacity to understand the real meaning of the Scriptures. . . . Now the tremendous responsibility of preaching these glad tidings of repentance and forgiveness of sin rests upon those who are witnesses to His death and resurrection.<sup>121</sup>

In the same way, pastors today have the same tremendous responsibility to preach expository messages that announce the gospel. As seen back in Luke 4 in his Nazareth synagogue sermon, Jesus proclaimed himself as the Messianic fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy who would bring forgiveness and salvation to desperate sinners. He did this in an expository sermon by explaining the text and then confronting the people with the urgency to respond in faith. Now here in Luke 24, Jesus commissioned his followers to do the same. They are to proclaim forgiveness through repentance of sins by means of Spirit-empowered christocentric expository preaching. Green states,

The act of ‘proclaiming’ binds the work of the disciples to that for which Jesus was Spirit-anointed (4:18). . . . Repentance will be a key term describing the appropriate response to the offer of salvation in Acts (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 5:31, 8:22). . . . The missiological role of the disciples is summarized in the words, ‘You are witnesses of these things.’<sup>122</sup>

The missiological role of the church is closely tied to expository preaching. Bock notes how Jesus charged them to preach the gospel expositionally, “God’s activity in Christ makes scriptural sense after this personal exposition. . . . Since these disciples have witnessed God’s plan and now understand it, they are commissioned to proclaim

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<sup>120</sup>Richard Sibbes, *The Works of Richard Sibbes*, ed. Alexander Grosart (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1981), 505.

<sup>121</sup>Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 641.

<sup>122</sup>Green, *Luke*, 856-58.

it.”<sup>123</sup> Christocentric expository preaching will be instrumental in the book of Acts to advance the gospel (as chapter 4 will examine). In like manner, it will also serve as the primary way pastors shepherd the church in its missional task of being a “holy people” and discipling the nations. Nolland writes,

The scriptural need for the preaching of the gospel to all nations is a note that has not been clearly sounded before. . . . Preaching to the nations is indicated as the next stage of the career of Christ: it is to be carried on by people representing Christ, and empowered by him.<sup>124</sup>

Thus, preachers, anointed by the Spirit just as Jesus was in Luke 4, represent him by preaching positionally as they lead the church to fulfill its mission. Simply put, Spirit-empowered expository preaching proclaims the truth in order to lead the church in obedience to the Great Commission.

The comprehensive nature of preaching the totality of Scripture stands as another key component of Jesus’ expository hermeneutic. Jesus showed from Moses (the Law), the Psalms, and the Prophets how the Old Testament points to himself. He modeled the need to preach the whole counsel of God’s Word through expositional proclamation. The link between the mission of the Old Covenant people (as a holy nation and light to the Gentiles) and the New Covenant people (obedience to the Great Commission) is found in Christ as this Greater Prophet (Deut 18:15-18 and Acts 3:22-23) who would not only preach salvation but personally obtain salvation through the cross. Hendriksen says,

The fact that the proclamation of the gospel must reach all the nations shows that the Old and New Testament are in reality one book. That world wide proclamation of the gospel is one of the main themes of the New Testament is clear not only from our present passage but also from Matthew 28:19. . . . Both Old and New Testament proclaim a Christ *for all the nations*.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1938.

<sup>124</sup>Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 1221.

<sup>125</sup>Hendriksen, *Commentary on Luke*, 1075.

One cannot forcefully argue that Jesus mandated his followers to preach in the way that he expounded the Old Testament. He modeled for them a christocentric hermeneutic, but the text in Luke 24 shows no evidence of Jesus actually commissioning his followers to preach in the way that he expounded the Scriptures. This text demonstrates that he only mandated them to preach his death, burial, and resurrection and to call people to repent for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would empower this type of preaching to enable the church to fulfill its mission of reaching the nations. Yet, this final command in Luke 24 includes many of the elements present in Jesus' expository model established in Luke 4. Goldsworthy says,

Whatever transpired in the hermeneutical lecture that Jesus gave in Luke 24:47, it must have formed the basis for the later apostolic ministry. As Jesus speaks to this larger group of disciples and opens their minds to understand the Scriptures, it would appear that Luke intends us to understand the centrality of his suffering and resurrection for hermeneutics (Luke 24:45-47). This point cannot be emphasized enough for it signifies that the meaning for all the Scriptures is unlocked by the death and resurrection of Jesus. . . . Can we truly and faithfully expound any text of Scripture apart from this heart of the gospel event?<sup>126</sup>

Expository preaching not only explains the meaning of the text using the grammatical-historical hermeneutic but also includes the kerygma—that is, the announcement of Christ as Lord and the command to repent and believe in him alone for salvation. Expository preaching is more than just conveying information, but it is also an authoritative proclamation from God's herald calling people to decision about Jesus. Old writes, "Jesus sends the disciples out to do expository preaching, to explain the Scriptures as he himself had explained them."<sup>127</sup> Tom Farrell says,

The Lord Jesus was both a preacher and a trainer of preachers. . . . Preaching was a priority of our Savior during His earthly ministry. . . . Preaching consumed the life of our Lord, and when the time came that He should return to His Father, He made sure His disciples would continue to spread the Word.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup>Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 54-55.

<sup>127</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 137.

<sup>128</sup>Tom Farrell, *Preaching That Pleases God: The Keys to Life-Changing Bible Exposition* (Lancaster, CA: Striving Together Publications, 2010), 4-5.

In sum, Jesus modeled expository preaching in Luke 4 and then trained his followers in a christocentric hermeneutic in Luke 24. While not specifically commissioning them to preach expositionally, one can make the case that following Jesus' example in Luke 4 and His hermeneutic in Luke 24 constitute one, but not the only, effective way for pastors to practice expository preaching. Abendroth states,

Luke chapters 4 and 24 fit the bare minimums for expositional preaching, that is: Christ's messages were based only on Scripture, contained proper exegesis, properly interpreted the Word in context, explained the authorial intent of the passage, and pushed hearers to obey.<sup>129</sup>

Pastors today can adopt Jesus' expository model in Luke 4 and his hermeneutic in Luke 24 as a very helpful and strategic way to lead their congregations to fulfill God's mission of reaching the nations. Just as Jesus was a herald proclaiming his lordship, pastors heed his call as heralds proclaiming the universal sovereignty of the King. Friedrich says, "At the heart of the New Testament kerygma stands the lordship of God. Preaching is not a lecture on the nature of God's kingdom. It is a proclamation, the declaration of an event."<sup>130</sup> Modern pastors imitate Jesus as they herald the gospel with authority through careful exposition of the Scriptures with the ultimate aim of seeing people bow to the Lordship of Christ. In doing so, they can effectively lead the church to fulfill its mission of being a "display people" through obedience to the Great Commission. Wright comments on the importance of the Old Testament,

Jesus Himself provided the hermeneutical coherence within which all disciples must read these texts, that is, in the light of the story that leads *up to* Christ (messianic reading) and the story that leads *on from* Christ (missional reading). That is the story that flows from the mind and purpose of God in all the Scriptures for all the nations. That is the missional hermeneutic of the whole Bible.<sup>131</sup>

Goheen address how preaching the gospel in obedience to Christ is the foundation for the

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<sup>129</sup>Abendroth, *Jesus Christ, Prince of Preachers*, 150.

<sup>130</sup>Friedrich, "Keryx, Kerysso, Kerygma," 3:710.

<sup>131</sup>Wright, *The Mission of God*, 41.

church's mission: "The apostolic message is the story of Jesus (particularly his death and resurrection), told as the climax of the story of God and Israel and thus offering itself as both the true story of the world and the foundation and energizing force for the church's mission."<sup>132</sup>

### Conclusion

Jesus' ministry as an expository preacher was instrumental in leading the New Covenant people to fulfill their mission in reaching the nations. He preached as an authoritative herald announcing the good news of salvation. He modeled a seven-fold blueprint for expository preaching in the sermon in the Nazareth synagogue. In addition, he commissioned his followers to lead the church to fulfill its mission through preaching the gospel. F. B. Meyer claims, "He was the Prince of Expositors"<sup>133</sup> Hendriksen asks, "What was it that made Jesus' teaching so popular? Answer: it was lively, authoritative, well-organized, practical, interesting, true. Does not this fact contain a hint that should be taken to heart by present-day preachers?"<sup>134</sup> Edwin Dargan says,

The character of his preaching was a wonderful union of power and charm. Its dominant note was authority, supreme confidence in God, in himself, his mission and message. He ranged from scathing invective to tender invitation; he employed argument, aphoristic saying, parable, exposition of Scripture, with wonderful skill and effect; he mingled with all a yearning for men's good and God's honor which abides the ideal motive for all worthy preaching.<sup>135</sup>

Pastors who desire to lead their congregations to embrace their mission would do well to emulate the "worthy preaching" of Jesus, particularly his model of authoritative exposition. Larsen writes, "Jesus Christ is himself the preacher above all other preachers,

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<sup>132</sup>Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*, 205.

<sup>133</sup>F. B. Meyer, *Expository Preaching Plans and Methods* (Middleton, DE: Forgotten Books, 2012), 77.

<sup>134</sup>Hendriksen, *Commentary on Luke*, 248.

<sup>135</sup>Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905), 1:23.



and in his majestic and powerful message we have the prototype of what all preaching is to be.”<sup>136</sup>

God has called his people in both Testaments to fulfill his mission of being a “display people” to the world by offering the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For his Old Testament people, God raised up Moses as a shepherd-leader to faithfully preach the Scripture as the foundational means to motivate them to fulfill this mission. In the New Testament, Jesus as the consummate Prophet foreshadowed in Moses, also served as a shepherd-leader who preached with authority in order to challenge his followers to fulfill the mission. Both leaders did this through an expository preaching ministry that prepared their followers to obey in their absence. Moses delivered his final words on the plains of Moab as his last will and testament to the flock he had shepherded and loved. Jesus delivered his final words on a mountain in Galilee giving his followers the Great Commission before he ascended to the Father.

In Deuteronomy, Moses’ last words to his people showed a method and model of expository preaching which included preaching the whole counsel of God, explaining and expositing the text, and calling people to respond with urgent obedience. In the same way, Jesus’s last words in Luke to his disciples also echo this method and model of expository preaching. Like Moses, he used the whole counsel of God’s Word in the totality of the Law, Psalms, and Prophets. Like Moses, Jesus expounded and opened their minds to understand the Scripture. And like Moses, our Savior commissioned his followers to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit so that their hearers would respond with urgency in repentance. Both Moses and Jesus serve as powerful examples of leaders who shepherded God’s people to fulfill their mission by means of their expository preaching ministries. Quicke writes, “Jesus is first and foremost a proclaimer! No one else in human history has been able to reveal words with power like Jesus. . . . Jesus leads

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<sup>136</sup>Larsen, *The Company of Preachers*, 1:43.

as a preacher by his preaching; he preaches as a leader.”<sup>137</sup> Bond says, “Jesus will forever remain the Peerless Preacher. . . . The Christian pulpit has not produced his equal in the art of giving the truth to men through oral discourse. Jesus of Nazareth abides without a rival the world’s Master Preacher.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Quicke, *360-Degree Leadership*, 50.

<sup>138</sup>Bond, *The Master Preacher*, 288.

CHAPTER 4  
LEADING THROUGH EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN  
ACTS, THE EPISTLES, AND TODAY

**Introduction**

Following the pattern of Moses, Jesus, and the early church, the sovereign God still commissions pastors to lead and shepherd his people through an expository preaching ministry in order to fulfill their mission. This chapter will examine how many of the early sermons in Acts reveal that the apostles employed Jesus' preaching model demonstrated in Luke 4 and his hermeneutical method in Luke 24. In addition, this chapter will assert that the Epistles define the office and primary responsibilities of a pastor as one who leads by ministering the Word expositionally in order to equip the church in maturity and obedience to its mission. An exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:17 will display how this key text combines pastoral leadership with preaching and teaching. Finally, this chapter will argue the need to integrate effective pastoral leadership with expository preaching in order to equip the church to obey the Great Commission.

**Christocentric Expository Preaching in Acts**

The early apostolic sermons in the book of Acts reveal that Jesus' apostles did indeed follow his christocentric hermeneutic by preaching expositionally in order to lead God's people to reach the nations. The preaching in Acts links the mission of God's people in the Old Testament to be a holy nation with the mission of the New Covenant people to obey the Great Commission. Michael Goheen writes,

We see a close continuity between the mission of the Old Testament people of God and the emerging community Luke describes as this gathered messianic people resume Israel's mission to be a light to the nations. On the other hand, we see something radically new, as this body gathers around Jesus the Messiah, is filled with the Holy Spirit, and is sent on the eschatological mission of Jesus to the ends of

the earth. Both elements of the church's character, the old and the new, contribute to a profoundly missional identity for the people of God.<sup>1</sup>

While one cannot force an absolute template on the preaching in Acts to exactly duplicate Jesus' sermon in Nazareth in Luke 4, many of the expository elements he used there occur in these apostolic sermons. These sermons focus primarily upon Jewish audiences who had sufficient background knowledge of the Old Testament. The apostolic preachers could reference and exposit the Old Testament Scriptures to prove and convince their hearers that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. Some of these sermons took place in the synagogue (similar to Jesus in Luke 4), while others occurred in various contexts. The later sermons in Acts (directed toward Gentile pagans) do not contain expositions of Old Testament texts because the Gentiles did not have the cultural, religious, and historical background that the Jews did in relation to God's history of redemption. These expositions in Acts are both evangelistic and edifying to believers through their emphasis on the importance of rehearsing the gospel event—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Dennis Johnson makes this distinction,

The sermons of Acts were recorded to build up people like Theophilus, who have been taught the message of Jesus. They show how to preach to believers as well as how to witness to the watching world. The preaching in Acts is truth-centered, revelation-centered, God-centered, and Christ-centered.<sup>2</sup>

The previous chapter's treatment of Luke 24 revealed that Jesus (1) explicated and expounded the Old Testament Scriptures in a christocentric manner, (2) focused on his suffering on the cross and resurrection, (3) urged sinners to repent in order to receive forgiveness of sins, and (4) told his disciples to rely on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Invariably these four elements show up in most of these sermons. Thus, the apostles emulated the expository model of Jesus in Luke 4 and obeyed his commission in Luke 24 to preach the gospel. Peter Adam asserts that the model sermons in both Luke

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<sup>1</sup>Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Bible Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 121.

<sup>2</sup>Dennis E. Johnson, *The Message of Acts* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1997), 158.

and Acts contain the foundational elements of expository preaching, which should include “explanation or exegesis, application, and appeal.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost**

Just as the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus before he preached his first sermon in Nazareth, the Spirit also empowered Peter’s preaching on the day of Pentecost. In Acts chapter 2, he stood and delivered the Pentecost sermon by doing an exposition of Joel 2:28-32, Psalm 16:8-11, and Psalm 110:1. He pointed to how all of these Old Testament Scriptures find their fulfillment in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Peter preached the Old Testament expositionally, propositionally, and christocentrically. Darrell Bock claims, “This speech is one of the most important theological declarations in the New Testament.”<sup>4</sup> As an authoritative herald, Peter called his audience to repentance so that they could receive forgiveness of sins. He also demonstrated a pastoral awareness of his audience as he addressed them as fellow Israelites who knew the history of the Old Testament, but who were also personally culpable for the death of Jesus. Modeling how Jesus preached for a verdict in Luke 4, Peter did the same here. Acts 2:36-38 reads,

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’

The Holy Spirit used the preaching and leadership of Peter to advance the gospel and motivate the church to fulfill its mission as three-thousand people were saved on that day (Acts 2:41). Hughes Oliphant Old comments, “This sermon is a very weighty piece of

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<sup>3</sup>Peter Adam, *Speaking God’s Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1996), 78.

<sup>4</sup>Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 108.

exegesis. One does not even suspect the beauty of the sermon until one sees it as an exposition of Scripture.”<sup>5</sup> Adam argues, “Peter’s ministry of the Word includes an exegesis of the Old Testament (Joel and Psalms), an application to his hearers, and also an appeal encouraging them to act in response to the Word of God which they have heard.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Stephen’s Sermon before the Sanhedrin**

In addition to Peter, Stephen also engaged in christocentric expository preaching as evidenced in his sermon in Acts 7. Similar to both Jesus and Peter, the Spirit also empowered his speaking (Acts 6:10). He expounded the history of Israel by making allusions to Abraham, Joseph, Moses and the Exodus, and Solomon’s building of the temple. He carefully explained and applied the Old Testament texts to his audience and then urged them to repent and trust in the lordship of Christ. Bock says, “Stephen faces his opponents directly and uses the most potent weapon in response, the Scripture.”<sup>7</sup> Stephen also followed the expository model of Jesus set forth in Luke 4 and 24. He relied on the empowerment of the Spirit as well as expounded the Old Testament text in its grammatical-historical context using propositional statements. He emphasized Christ’s suffering and resurrection and poignantly called them to respond with urgent obedience and faith to this declaration. Stephen practiced expository heralding as he preached not just to inform them of Israel’s history but also to penetrate their hearts with their personal guilt in killing Jesus. John R. W. Stott asserts,

What he did was not just rehearse the salient features of the Old Testament story, with which the Sanhedrin were familiar as he, but to do so in such a way as to draw lessons from it which they had never learned or noticed. . . . Stephen’s mind had evidently soaked up the Old Testament, for his speech is like a patchwork of

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<sup>5</sup>Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Biblical Period*, vol. 1 of *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 169.

<sup>6</sup>Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 78.

<sup>7</sup>Bock, *Acts*, 276.

allusions to it.<sup>8</sup>

He confronts their rebellion in Acts 7:51-53, which states,

You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.

Even in his death, Stephen led the church to fulfill their mission through his expository preaching, which resulted in a great persecution (Acts 8:1-4). God sovereignly used his preaching and subsequent martyrdom to push the church out of Jerusalem in order to reach the nations. Acts 8:4 reads, “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.” These believers followed the emboldened evangelistic leadership of both Peter and Stephen.

### **Philip’s Encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch**

Philip also modeled the expository preaching of Jesus when he interacted with the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. The Holy Spirit anointed and empowered his ministry (Acts 8:29) by leading him in this preaching encounter. As the royal official read from Isaiah 53:7-8, he needed that text expounded, explained and applied to him. In Acts 8:31 he admits he needs someone to “guide” (οδηγεω) him in understanding the Scripture. This word “guide” (οδηγεω) means to “instruct, explain, lead.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, Philip expounded the Old Testament text in a christocentric way in order to lead this man to understand the gospel. While not standing at a pulpit, Philip nevertheless preached expositionally in 8:35, which states, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.” That proclamation is none other than expository preaching. He read, explained and applied a text of Scripture by focusing

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<sup>8</sup>John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 130.

<sup>9</sup>Wilhelm Michaelis, “οδηγεω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 5:97.

on the death and resurrection of Christ. Here Philip modeled what Jesus taught his disciples to do in Luke 24. David Peterson says, “Jesus is the key to unlock the meaning of the OT (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47) and passages such as the one being read by the Ethiopian cannot be satisfactorily understood apart from their fulfillment in him.”<sup>10</sup> John Polhill says,

His response enunciates a basic principle that runs throughout Luke-Acts concerning the interpretation of the Old Testament prophetic texts—the need for a Christian interpreter. The disciples themselves had needed such guidance, and Christ had ‘opened the Scriptures’ for them (Luke 24:45). They in turn sought to explain the Scripture in light of Christ to the Jews in Jerusalem. How indeed would this Gentile pilgrim from a distant land understand the real meaning of Isaiah’s servant psalms without a guide?<sup>11</sup>

F. F. Bruce asserts, “Philip’s persuasive exposition of the Servant’s passion found its way home to the Ethiopian’s heart; apparently he also told him that the appropriate response to such good news was repentance and baptism.”<sup>12</sup> Stott claims,

The fact is that God has given us two gifts, first the Scriptures and secondly teachers to open up, explain, expound, and apply the Scriptures. . . . The way in which this story is told bears some structural resemblances to another story in which a Stranger joined two travellers and opened up the Scriptures to them, and disappeared from view (Lk. 24:13-15).<sup>13</sup>

How was this sermon effective in leading God’s people to fulfill their mission since it was a one-on-one encounter? This man’s salvation resulted in joy and many scholars believe his journey back to Ethiopia proved instrumental in spreading the gospel as the first missionary to the African continent.<sup>14</sup> Terry Stephens writes,

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<sup>10</sup>David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 294.

<sup>11</sup>John B. Polhill, *Acts*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 224-25.

<sup>12</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 189.

<sup>13</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 161.

<sup>14</sup>Bruce comments, “Irenaeus tells us (Against Heresies iii.12.8) that he became a missionary among his people, which we should naturally expect, though Irenaeus may have had more information on the matter than we ourselves have. What became of him we do not know.” Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 190.



Though their interaction was brief, it is a model all preachers do well to heed. The result was a transformed life and a new disciple, who (we can hope) returned to his home country and replicated the fundamental interaction that he had with Philip—a clear explanation of the gospel. In keeping with this ever widening trajectory of global evangelization, the conversion of this Ethiopian especially demonstrates God's intention for the message of salvation to be proclaimed to the world.<sup>15</sup>

### **Paul's Sermon in Pisidia Antioch**

When he preached in the synagogue<sup>16</sup> in Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13, the apostle Paul also imitated the expository model of Jesus. Bruce compares these two events:

There are two places in the NT where we have a fairly detailed account of a synagogue service: this one, the other is in Luke 4, where Jesus preaches in the synagogue in Nazareth. . . . Jesus delivered his address in a sitting position; Paul stood to preach. Our Lord's address was an exposition of the Scriptures, whereas Paul's was rather an exhortation.<sup>17</sup>

Paul's preaching involved both an exposition of Scripture as well as a "word of exhortation"<sup>18</sup> which comes the closest to modern day expository preaching. This type of preaching involves the faithful exposition of a text followed by exhortations, challenges, and calls to respond in faith and obedience. Bock says, "Paul's speech here parallels another synagogue speech that Jesus gave in Luke 4:16-30. . . . The ministry of Jesus continues through Paul."<sup>19</sup> He explicated Old Testament texts that relate to the Exodus, the time of the Judges, the ministry of Samuel and the kingship of Saul, the anointing of David, and the coming of John the Baptist. Paul then pointed them to the reality of Jesus

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<sup>15</sup>Terry Stephens, "Expository Preaching and Relational Disciple Making," *Preaching Magazine Online* (November 2014), accessed March 9, 2015, <http://preaching.com/resources/articles/11721757>.

<sup>16</sup>Peterson says, "This sermon functions as a model of Paul's synagogue preaching. . . . As well as being an evangelistic, it demonstrates how Christians engaged in a defence of their gospel from the Jewish Scriptures." Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 383.

<sup>17</sup>Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 271.

<sup>18</sup>Bruce remarks, "This expression was perhaps a synagogue term for the sermon which followed the Scripture reading." Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 268. This term is also used by the writer of Hebrews to refer to his epistle (Heb 13:22) which many scholars believe is an actual sermon preached to encourage believers.

<sup>19</sup>Bock, *Acts*, 448.

as the crucified and risen Messiah by quoting from Ps 2:7, Isa 55:3, Ps 16:10, Hab 1:5, and Isa 49:6. As a herald, Paul proclaimed the gospel of Christ in Acts 13:28-32 which states,

And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus.

Johnson writes,

Thus, in Luke's narrative this is Paul's inaugural sermon, like Jesus' sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth and Peter's sermon on Pentecost. . . . It also resembles Stephen's speech in rehearsing Israel's history. . . .<sup>20</sup> These parallels emphasize Paul's continuity with the preachers who preceded him.

This expository sermon resulted in fulfilling the mission of reaching the lost. That Jewish congregation had never heard preaching like this before in the synagogue as evidenced by Acts 13:42: "As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath." Paul's expository preaching was a passionate, christocentric, grace-filled exhortation that explained and applied the Old Testament Scriptures clearly. As a result of this preaching event, the word of the Lord spread throughout the whole region (Acts 13:49). Old says,

Having recounted the story of redemption, the apostle gives an exposition of several of the classic messianic passages from the Old Testament. Finally, Paul ends his sermon with a call to repentance. All this is familiar material to us. Paul, like Peter and the other apostles, must have preached this sort of sermon frequently.<sup>21</sup>

These introductory sermons in the book of Acts clearly demonstrate that Jesus' followers put his hermeneutical method of expository preaching into practice. The sermons were faithful expositions of the Old Testament, thoroughly christocentric, and demanded an immediate response of repentance and faith. Johnson comments,

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<sup>20</sup>Johnson, *The Message of Acts*, 155.

<sup>21</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 175.

The pervasive, dominant theme in the sermons of Acts is Jesus—who he is and what he has done. . . . The preaching that builds people toward spiritual maturity does not take them beyond Christ. Rather, it takes them more deeply into Christ, so that their thoughts, attitudes, values, desires, reactions, words, and behavior are transformed by their death with Christ to sin and their resurrection with Christ to life and righteousness.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul serve as examples of leaders who motivated God’s New Covenant people to fulfill their mission by the means of an expository preaching ministry.

### **The Office of Pastor in the Epistles**

In addition to Moses, Jesus, and the apostolic sermons in Acts, the New Testament Epistles clearly define the role/office and responsibility of pastors to lead their congregations effectively through an expository preaching ministry in order to fulfill the church’s mission. Any treatment of pastoral leadership must begin with the role of Christ as Chief Shepherd of the church. Two primary words describe the role of a pastor—that of a “shepherd” (ποιμην) and an “overseer” (επισκοπος). First Peter 2:25 refers to Jesus as “the Shepherd [ποιμην] and Overseer [επισκοπος] of our souls,” which means that the ultimate model for pastoral leadership must be Christ himself as the one who builds, rules, and shepherds the church. Pastors are first and foremost sheep themselves that submit to the lordship of the Chief Shepherd. Since Jesus rules as the Senior Pastor of the church, any model of pastoral leadership must reflect his sovereign lordship as the Chief Shepherd and Overseer of souls.

Throughout redemptive history, God has commissioned leaders to shepherd God’s people through a preaching ministry. Moses served as a shepherd of God’s Old Covenant people and led them to obedience through his preaching ministry. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, led God’s New Covenant people through his preaching ministry. After Peter’s grievous failure in denying Christ three times, Jesus restored him and

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<sup>22</sup>Johnson, *The Message of Acts*, 160-61.

commissioned him to lead God’s people as reflected in commanding him in John 21:15-17 to “feed the sheep.” The book of Acts demonstrates that Peter did this pastoral leadership primarily through preaching. On the road to Damascus, Jesus powerfully invaded Paul’s life with the charge to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; thus Paul also ministered as a shepherd who led God’s people through a preaching ministry. Following this pattern of shepherds who submitted to the lordship of Christ (Moses, the prophets, Peter, Paul, and the early church leaders), pastors today serve as undershepherds who follow Jesus by leading and preaching. Andreas Kostenberger says,

As an outworking of our personal discipleship, we are obligated to feed, tend, and care for God’s people as we take our place in the biblical trajectory of good shepherds (Moses, David, Jesus) rather than joining the ranks of the bad shepherds who were motivated by self-interest and personal gain and had no care for the sheep. . . . Jesus is the Chief Shepherd who ultimately provides for, feeds, protects, and guides his flock, while he also commissions undershepherds to work alongside him, through the Spirit, in his shepherding activity.<sup>23</sup>

Pastors who desire to lead their church must submit to Christ by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Bruce Ware says,

These elders, although they have authority and are called to lead their sheep along paths of life and renewal, are under authority themselves. . . . There must be a deeply self-conscious awareness that they must be and do, only rightly and properly, what Christ wants them to be and do. Glad and willing submission, then, is the first hallmark of those in positions of New Testament leadership. . . . As supreme leader, teacher, and builder, Christ alone has unchallenged authority over every leader and every church.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, the New Testament office, roles, and responsibilities of a pastor must fundamentally align themselves under the sovereign authority and leadership of Jesus as the Overseer, Shepherd, and Senior Pastor of the church.

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<sup>23</sup>Andreas J Kostenberger, “Shepherds and Shepherding in the Gospels,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 53.

<sup>24</sup>Bruce Ware, “Putting It All Together: A Theology of Church Leadership,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 286-88.

## **Ephesians 4:11-12: The Pastor-Teacher**

Christ, the Chief Shepherd, has gifted the church with the office of the pastor-teacher in order to equip believers into maturity who obey the Great Commission. Ephesians 4:11-12 reads, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” The office Paul describes combines leading (shepherds) with an expository preaching and teaching ministry (teachers). Scholars have debated the grammatical structure of this passage arguing whether Paul had two distinct offices in mind—pastors as separate from teachers—or that this was one combined office—the “pastor-teacher.” Throughout church history, Chrysostom, Jerome, Aquinas, Hodge, and Barth are among the many popular voices that came to the exegetical conclusion that these two words describe one office. On the other hand, John Calvin stands as the most notable scholar who dissented and viewed them as two separate offices.<sup>25</sup> Others have argued for a non-dogmatic middle ground.<sup>26</sup> Syntactically and grammatically, Paul uses only one article (τοὺς δὲ) followed by two plural nouns (ποιμένας, διδασκάλους) separated by “and” (καί). Daniel Wallace, in his *Greek Grammar*, argues on syntactical grounds that the shepherds were part of the teachers.<sup>27</sup> New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce comments, “Teaching is an essential part of pastoral ministry; it is appropriate, therefore, that these two terms, ‘pastors and teachers,’ should be joined together to denote one order of ministry.”<sup>28</sup> William Hendriksen argues that they are one office on

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<sup>25</sup>John Calvin, *Galatians-Philemon, Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 279-80.

<sup>26</sup>O’Brien asserts, “Pastors, whose functions are similar to those of overseers and elders, exercise leadership through nurture and care of the congregation. They manage the church. . . . Pastors and teachers are linked here by the single definite article in the Greek, which suggests a close association of function between two kinds of ministers who operate within one congregation. . . . It is more likely that the terms describe overlapping functions.” Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 300.

<sup>27</sup>Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 126.

<sup>28</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984),

syntactical grounds as well:

Pastors and teachers are best considered one group. The word “*tous de*” are not repeated before “*didaskalous*”. . . . In the present case we have a parallel in 1 Tim 5:17 where mention is made of men who, in addition to exercising supervision over the flock together with the other elders, also labor in the word and in teaching. These shepherds and teachers are one group.<sup>29</sup>

Based upon the syntactical and grammatical evidence, along with Paul’s other references in the Pastoral Epistles, one must conclude that the office of the pastor-teacher is indeed combined as one. Keith Schooley writes, “These offices were intended as metonymous expressions for a single office: the pastor-teacher. It is reasonable to infer from this construction that teaching is to be understood as a principle element of the pastoral office.”<sup>30</sup> O’Brien defines the teaching role of a pastor: “Teaching is often an exposition or application of Scripture. . . . Teachers did not just simply impart information or open up new ways of thought. They also urged their hearers to live by what they taught.”<sup>31</sup>

After describing how Christ has gifted the church with specific individuals or offices, Paul then provides their chief function or purpose. The primary role of the pastor-teacher involves equipping the church to do the works of service so that the entire body will grow into maturity in obedience to God’s mission. The word Paul uses for “equip” (*καταρτισμὸν*) means “making something adequate or sufficient.”<sup>32</sup> In the context of this Ephesians passage, Christ has gifted the church with the pastor-teacher to lead, equip, train, teach, and preach for the purpose of helping believers grow in godliness and

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<sup>29</sup>William Hendriksen, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1967), 197.

<sup>30</sup>Keith Schooley, “What Is A Pastor? Examining the Biblical Job Description of the ‘Poimenas’ of Ephesians 4:11,” *Quodlibet Journal* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2000), accessed February 13, 2015, [www.quodlibet.net](http://www.quodlibet.net).

<sup>31</sup>O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 301.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 303.

maturity.<sup>33</sup>

### **1 Timothy 3:1-2: The Qualifications for Pastor**

Paul's burden in the Ephesians passage shows how Christ gifts the church with specific ministry offices; but in 1 Timothy 3, he specifies the particular character qualifications of one who aspires to the office of pastor. Alexander Strauch writes, "Timothy is one of the most relevant New Testament letters for understanding the mission, organization and life of the local church."<sup>34</sup> First Timothy 3:1-2 reads, "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach." Paul uses terms interchangeably to refer to the one office or role of a pastor. He uses "office of overseer" (ἐπισκοπή)<sup>35</sup> here while at other times uses the term "elder" (πρεσβύτερος). The author of this thesis argues that the role of the pastor-teacher (Eph 4:11) is synonymous with Paul's usage of the word "overseer" and "elder" that he uses in the Pastoral Epistles. Culturally in Paul's time, a slight distinction existed between the usage and meaning of the words "elder" and "overseer." The word "elder" (πρεσβύτερος) borrowed from Jewish tradition as every synagogue had elder men who led the worship service and did expositional preaching. The word "overseer" (ἐπισκοπος) originated from Greek civil culture as it was used of

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<sup>33</sup>Harold Hoehner claims, "Before NT times, the term καταρτισμός was rare and used in medical practices of setting a limb or bone or the restoration of a shoulder. In NT times, it is used of furnishing a room or preparation of a garment. . . . It appears thirteen times in the NT and can mean 'to restore or mend' fishing nets, to 'restore' a fallen brother, to 'prepare,' 'to put into order, complete, furnish,' 'to perfect,' or 'instruct.' Returning to the noun in the present context, it 'refers to the preparation of the church for becoming perfect.' This preparation includes instructing and equipping believers so that they can minister effectively in the church." Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 549-50.

<sup>34</sup>Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995), 181.

<sup>35</sup>William Mounce says, "The use of the different form ἐπισκοπή suggests that Paul is thinking specifically of the office." William H. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 168.

city officials, local mayors, and civil leaders.<sup>36</sup> Paul combines both of these meanings together to describe the one office of pastor. In other words, the pastor-teacher serves as an elder who leads/oversees.

In this text, Paul provides a list of character traits for the office of pastor/elder, and also inserts one task or duty—the ability to teach. He stresses the ability, talent, and aptitude in teaching God’s Word. Therefore, in comparison to the Ephesians 4 passage, the overseer serves as pastor-teacher who exercises shepherd leadership primarily through a teaching ministry. Stott asserts, “Pastors are essentially teachers. Indeed, what distinguishes Christian pastoral ministry is the pre-eminence in it of the Word of God.”<sup>37</sup> Lea says,

The appeal to be ‘able to teach’ demands competence and skill in communicating Christian truth. . . . An overseer needed the ability both to explain Christian doctrine and to refute or oppose error. He would use this skill in giving instruction to converts, building up the church, and in correcting error.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Two Primary Responsibilities of Pastors: Leading and Ministry of the Word**

The scriptural instructions from Paul in both the Ephesians 4 passage as well as the Pastoral Epistles describe the nature of the office of pastor-teacher. An apostolic model in Acts 6 as well as further instructions in the New Testament Epistles demonstrate that a pastor-teacher has two primary responsibilities: (1) providing godly and effective leadership by shepherding the flock, and (2) ministering the Word through expositional preaching and teaching. While a pastor has many other important duties in the life of the

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<sup>36</sup>Philip Towner says, “The Greek term for ‘elders’ was used in Hellenistic Judaism to refer collectively to the older members of the community. It was mainly a term that denoted status or prestige rather than function. . . . The term ‘overseer’ views leaders from the perspective of function (oversight), while ‘elder’ views the leader from the perspective of position or status.” Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 246.

<sup>37</sup>John R.W. Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 95.

<sup>38</sup>Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 111.



church, his principal calling comes in leading the flock by feeding the flock. Acts 6 reveals both the apostolic need and model for combining these two roles (leading and preaching) of the pastor/elder in the life of the early church.

### **Acts 6:1-7: The Apostles' Priority of Leading by Preaching**

The apostles used wise leadership in managing a benevolence need in the early church when the Hellenistic widows complained that they were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. Acts 6:2-5 reads,

And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

This text illustrates that the apostles placed a primacy on preaching, as they noted the importance of "devoting" (προσκαρτερέω)<sup>39</sup> themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Michael Quicke says,

Acts 6 provides an early indication of how preaching is fused with leadership. . . . By appointing seven others full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom so that the apostles might give 'our attention to prayer and ministry of the word,' they show a priority of preaching with prayer but also demonstrate leadership as they direct others into new tasks.<sup>40</sup>

Acts 6:2 shows the apostle's priority of leading by preaching, and by extension, the importance for modern day pastors. Stott says, "True, pastors are not apostles, for the apostles were given authority to formulate and teach the gospel, while pastors are responsible to expound the message which the apostles have bequeathed to us in the New Testament."<sup>41</sup> Pastors lead their churches when they make expository

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<sup>39</sup>J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida define this term: "to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of difficulty—to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in." *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. "devote."

<sup>40</sup>Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 51.

<sup>41</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 123.

preaching a priority and empower the congregation, especially the diaconate, to do the works of ministry. Echoing Ephesians 4:11, the pastor-teacher equips the saints for works of ministry specifically through his commitment to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Bock writes, “In the apostles’ view, this ability to prioritize activities and not be responsible to do everything reflects good leadership and stewardship.”<sup>42</sup> Peterson claims,

The apostles here are presented as a model of those who would lead and inspire the church. . . . The ministry of the word doubtless included the whole pattern of preaching the gospel and teaching its implications illustrated in the apostolic sermons and in the later account of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus (Acts 20:18-35).<sup>43</sup>

Pastors lead and inspire the church to fulfill its mission when they give priority to the expository preaching and teaching of the Word as their primary ministry methodology.

The apostles’ wisdom in leadership and setting priorities resulted in the advancement of the church’s mission as evidenced in Acts 6:7 where the Word of God spread, the church grew, disciples were made, and great numbers of people came to faith in Christ. When pastors equip and empower the people to do the works of ministry while prioritizing prayer and expository preaching for themselves, the church can succeed in fulfilling its mission of being a “display people” through obedience to the Great Commission. Many times pastors believe that they have to do all of the work by taking on unnecessary burdens. Instead of empowering, training, encouraging, and leading the people to active service, they shoulder the brunt of ministry and eventually may suffer “burn out.” A weekly, consistent pulpit ministry serves as the principal means for the pastor to mentor, train, equip, and motivate the largest number of people.

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<sup>42</sup>Bock, *The Book of Acts*, 259.

<sup>43</sup>Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 234.

## **1 Timothy 5:17: The Key Text that Integrates Leading by Preaching**

First Timothy 5:17 stands as the foundational passage that explicitly combines the role of leading by preaching. While Ephesians 4 and other passages in the Epistles in general characterize the pastor's role as a leader who preaches and a preacher who leads, this one text specifically links these two functions together. Paul writes, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." The wording "ruling well" denotes the focus on effective pastoral leadership, while the use of "preaching and teaching" describes an expository Word-based ministry. Clearly, this passage sets forth the two primary responsibilities of a pastor: to lead well and to do this leading through an expository preaching and teaching ministry.

Scholars debate how to understand the Greek term "μάλιστα" translated as "especially" in how Paul describes elders who labor in preaching and teaching. Does "especially" describe a subset of elders who were charged to do the majority of preaching and teaching in the local church, while the other elders shared in the overall pastoral leadership but not in preaching and teaching? On the other hand, can it be translated "that is" or "namely" referring to the same group of elders but who have stronger gifting in the area of preaching and teaching. George Knight argues,

The phrase beginning with μάλιστα gives a further delineation of these elders. The phrase may indicate a special subgroup of elders that is especially in view (μάλιστα taken as 'especially'). But if Skeat is correct ('Especially the Parchments'), as I think he is, that μάλιστα can at times have the meaning 'that is,' then Paul is giving here a further description of those he has already mentioned.<sup>44</sup>

Historically Presbyterians have seen a distinction between "ruling" elders and "teaching" elders arguing that all elders are called to "rule" but there is a subset of paid or ministerial elders who minister the Word.<sup>45</sup> John Calvin promulgated the idea of making

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<sup>44</sup> George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992) 232.

<sup>45</sup> Church historian Nathan Finn writes, "Presbyterians argue two types of elders: teaching

a distinction between two types of elders—“ruling elders” and “teaching elders.” He writes,

We may learn from this that there were at the time two kinds of elders; for all were not ordained to teach. The words plainly mean, that there were some who ‘ruled well’ and honorably, but who did not hold the office of teachers. And, indeed, there were chosen from among the people men of worth and of good character, who, united with the pastors in a common council and authority, administered the discipline of the Church.<sup>46</sup>

Hendriksen espouses a modified Presbyterian view by distinguishing between elders who lead and those who teach. He writes,

All rule, and to a certain extent all teach, but some (in addition to ruling) labor in preaching (expounding the Word to the assembled congregation), and teaching. They specialize in it, working hard at it. It requires much of their time and effort: preaching, teaching, and preparing for it.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast, Baptists have historically taken the position that all elders must be able to teach and that 1 Timothy 5:17 makes a distinction between personal giftedness rather than a formal distinction between two classes of elders.<sup>48</sup> Phil Newton summarizes the historic Baptist view of elders: “It can be argued that some excel in teaching while others excels in governing, but to make a distinction seems artificial.”<sup>49</sup>

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elders and ruling elders. Presbyterians believe that all of the elders are elected by the congregation, ordained to the eldership, and share in the governance of the church. Nevertheless, only the teaching elders are expected to be gifted to preach and teach the Scriptures.” Nathan Finn, “The Rule of Elders: The Presbyterian Angle on Church Leadership,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel Books, 2014), 200.

<sup>46</sup>Calvin, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 138-39.

<sup>47</sup>William Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews, New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1957), 180.

<sup>48</sup>Shawn D. Wright asserts, “Ruling elders were never the norm among Baptists. They were not represented at the assembly that released the 1689 Confession. . . . At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, William Williams repeated the standard explanation that Baptists had developed in response to Presbyterianism. Taking notice of the key word ‘especially’, he averred that it ‘introduces a specification of particular persons belonging to the same general class.’ In other words, 1 Timothy 5:17 expresses a ‘personal distinction among those of the same official class and with respect to the discharge of duties which all might equally perform. Their exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:17, comparing it to the sum teaching of the New Testament, convinced Baptists that the office of ruling elder deprived the congregation of its rightful authority.” Shawn D. Wright, “Baptists and a Plurality of Elders,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel Books, 2014), 261-63.

<sup>49</sup>Phil A. Newton, *Elders in Congregational Life: Rediscovering the Biblical Model for Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005), 51.

Does Paul affirm two distinct offices within the eldership? Towner explains the difficulty in translating this adverb “μάλιστα”:

The uncertainty of the relationship stems from the connecting adverb, which means ‘especially, above all’ or ‘namely, I mean’. While the second sense would make for greater clarity, the former meaning seems preferable, particularly if the elders are understood to possess a variety of gifts: all faithful elders have ‘earned their pay’, but especially in the context of the battle with heresy, those equipped to preach and teach, who have persisted in teaching the apostolic faith, receive even more recognition.<sup>50</sup>

While Towner argues that the adverb “μάλιστα” should be understood as “especially,” he still does not argue forcibly for a clear delineation between “ruling elders” and “teaching elders” as two distinct offices within the eldership. Mounce offers three objections to viewing elders as two distinct groups or a subset. First of all, he argues that 1 Timothy 3:2 requires all overseers to be able to teach. He writes, “If elders here are the same group as the overseers in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, it seems unlikely that there was such a person as a nonteaching elder/overseer.”<sup>51</sup> Second, in light of the Ephesian problem of heresy, it seems somewhat “contradictory to speak of leaders who did not teach. More likely the leaders of the church were able and active in refuting error and encouraging the truth of the gospel.”<sup>52</sup> Third, Paul says that double honor was due to elders who were serving well, not just to a subgroup that taught. Mounce claims, “If ‘double honor’ was to be given to all elders serving well, in what way could double honor also have been given μάλιστα, ‘especially,’ to a subgroup who preached and taught?”<sup>53</sup> Stott also argues that 1 Timothy 3:2-5 clearly states that all elders must be able to teach and lead and he is not convinced of the distinction between “ruling elders” and “teaching elders.” He comments, “It may be, therefore, that the purpose of the adverb *especially (malista)* is not

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<sup>50</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 363.

<sup>51</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 307.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 307.

to distinguish preachers from rulers, but to identify them or give them a further description.”<sup>54</sup> Benjamin Merkle clarifies Paul’s usage of this word “μάλιστα”:

Those who teach well are precisely those who teach and preach (i.e., Paul is stating that the elders rule well *by* their teaching and preaching). This interpretation seems to fit the author’s stress on the importance of teaching. . . . Regardless of how this difficult verse is interpreted, it in no way demands one to see two offices involved. At most, the text indicates a distinction of function within one particular office.<sup>55</sup>

While “μάλιστα” may be somewhat difficult to translate, one must take Paul’s overall teaching concerning the roles and responsibilities of elders to affirm that the office should not be bifurcated into two categories—“ruling elders” and “teaching elders.” Instead Paul’s aim is to show how the spiritual gifting varies within the one group of elders who both lead and teach the flock.

The New Testament describes a plurality of elders to lead the church.<sup>56</sup> Mark Dever asserts, “Though a specific number of elders for a particular congregation is never mentioned, the New Testament regularly refers to ‘elders’ in the plural. . . . The picture in the New Testament is that there is normally within the local church a body of elders, not simply one elder.”<sup>57</sup> Strauch says, “The New Testament plainly witnesses to a consistent pattern of shared leadership. Therefore, leadership by a plurality of elders is a sound biblical practice.”<sup>58</sup> In addition, the senior or lead pastor holds a special calling to do the majority of expositional preaching. First Timothy 3:2 requires all elders to be able to

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<sup>54</sup>Stott, *The Message of First Timothy and Titus*, 136.

<sup>55</sup>Benjamin L. Merkle, "Hierarchy in the Church? Instruction from the Pastoral Epistles Concerning Elders and Overseers," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7, no. 3 (Fall 2003), accessed February 12, 2016, [http://www.sbps.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2010/07/sbjt\\_073\\_fall03\\_merkle.pdf](http://www.sbps.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2010/07/sbjt_073_fall03_merkle.pdf).

<sup>56</sup>Almost every time eldership is mentioned in the New Testament, it occurs in the plural form denoting a plurality of elders. In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. In Acts 20:17, Paul summons the elders of the Ephesian church. In Phil 1:1, Paul addresses the overseers in the Philippian church. In Titus 1:5, Paul charges Titus to appoint elders in every town. In Jas 5:14, a sick person is to call the elders of the church for prayer. In 1 Pet 5:1, Peter addresses the elders.

<sup>57</sup>Mark Dever, *A Display of God’s Glory: Basics of Church Structure* (Washington, DC: Nine Marks Ministries, 2001), 17-18.

<sup>58</sup>Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 37.

teach, but that does not mean that all the elders are especially gifted in expositional preaching week-by-week from the pulpit. All the elders exercise oversight, but the senior pastor has the unique position of leading through his preaching by communicating the theological and missiological vision of the church (see chapter 5 for a more detailed treatment of this subject). This thesis argues that the principal way a pastor leads is through an expository preaching ministry, but that does not mean his leadership is not undergirded and supported by a plurality of other elders who share in directing the affairs of the church. Newton clarifies,

Elders do not replace the need for a senior pastor who labors in the Word and gives leadership to the church. Instead, elders come alongside the senior pastor as fellow servants to the body, filling in the gaps in the pastor's weakness, holding up his arms as he preaches, sharing the burden for the multiplied pastoral needs in the church.<sup>59</sup>

Commenting on this passage Gene Getz asserts,

What Paul was saying to Timothy is that there will be those elders/overseers who will spend more time than others managing and shepherding the church and particularly in carrying out the major 'teaching functions', which involve encouraging, admonishing, instructing, correcting, training, preaching, and explaining. . . . A Bible teacher who spends a lot of his time studying and explaining the biblical text and yet is neglectful of his role as shepherd will lose contact with the sheep and can lead to an ivory-tower mentality.<sup>60</sup>

When Paul mentions elders or pastors who "rule well" or "lead diligently," what exactly does this mean in light of the shepherding metaphors used throughout the Bible? Can a pastor preach and teach and yet not lead well? Conversely, can he lead well without teaching and preaching? This thesis argues that pastors cannot successfully lead without the primacy of expository preaching. John Maxwell says, "You can be a good preacher and not a good leader but you cannot be a good leader without being a good preacher."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Newton, *Elders in Congregational Life*, 40.

<sup>60</sup>Gene A. Getz, *Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 133.

<sup>61</sup>John Maxwell, "Leading through Preaching: An Interview with John Maxwell," *Preaching*

## Paul's Definition of Leading Well

In 1 Timothy 5:17, Paul encourages the church to give double honor to those elders/pastors who lead well. The word “lead” (προΐστημι) serves as one of Paul’s favorite terms to denote pastoral leadership and contains two primary shades of meaning. First of all, the term connotes the idea of leading, presiding, or exercising oversight.<sup>62</sup> Secondly, the word can also mean that leaders should have a genuine concern or care by providing aid or help.<sup>63</sup> Mounce says this word “carries the double nuance of leading and serving—servant leadership.”<sup>64</sup> Etymologically, the word conveys the image of one “standing before or in front of” others. Pastors by virtue of their office and calling “stand before” the people as men of God endowed with God’s authority. They not only “stand before” the people literally in the pulpit week-to-week expositing God’s word, but they also “stand in front of” the people symbolically; in the sense that they serve as trailblazers leading the path in helping the church fulfill its mission. Leading well involves not only a consistent and faithful pulpit ministry, but also visionary leadership that inspires, motivates, and encourages the congregation to embrace the Great Commission. Strauch explains this word: “The idea conveyed here is that these elders exercise effective pastoral leadership. Such elders are natural leaders, visionaries, planners, organizers, and motivators. They are the kind of men who can get things done

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*Magazine Online*, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11563963>.

<sup>62</sup>Louw and Nida say, “In some languages it is difficult to distinguish readily between expressions for ‘leading’ and those which refer to ‘ruling’ or ‘governing,’ but it is important to try to distinguish clearly between these two different sets of interpersonal relations. In some languages, the concept of ‘leading’ can be expressed by ‘showing how to’ or ‘demonstrating how one ought to.’ In other languages it is possible to speak of ‘leading’ as simply ‘going ahead of,’ but too often such an expression may designate only ‘a scout’ who goes ahead to see whether things are safe.” *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “lead.”

<sup>63</sup>*The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* claims, “There is also the thought of standing or going before someone or something in protection: Out of this arises the sense ‘to assist,’ ‘to join with,’ more precisely defined as ‘to protect,’ ‘to represent,’ ‘to care for,’ ‘to help.’” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “lead.”

<sup>64</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 310.



and can effectively care for people.”<sup>65</sup>

This word προΐστημι means more than the pastor just being an example. Pastors not only lead by example but also serve as scouts who go ahead of the church to help chart the course for the future. This imagery conveys the idea that a pastor humbly leads the charge to help the church understand, embrace, and fulfill God’s mission. “Leading” as used in 1 Timothy 5:17 can be described this way: “The context shows that the reference is not merely to elders who rule well but especially to those who exercise a sincere cure of souls. The second half of the verse makes their diligence in pastoral care the criterion.”<sup>66</sup> Pastors lead by “curing souls” which means they seek to tenderly guide believers into maturity and obedience to Christ. Paul uses the modifier (καλῶς) or “well”<sup>67</sup> to describe the nature of this leadership, which assumes there exist negative examples of poor leadership. The goal of pastoral leadership lies in shepherding effectively for the glory of God and the greatest good of his people.

Paul uses this specific word for “leading” (προΐστημι) in three other places in the New Testament: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, and 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

**Romans 12:6-8.** Paul provides a list of spiritual gifts and specifically mentions the ability to lead with passion. Romans 12:6–8 reads, “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. . . . The one who leads, with zeal.” Here Paul combines the gift of leadership with passion and diligence. The word “zeal” (σπουδή) connotes an earnest desire and passion to lead with faithfulness and intensity.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 208.

<sup>66</sup>*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “rule.”

<sup>67</sup>Towner defines leading “well” in this context as “underlining proficiency, and given the context of heresy, faithfulness of service.” Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 362.

<sup>68</sup>Arndt, Danker, and Bauer defines this word as, “earnest commitment in discharge of an obligation or experience of a relationship, eagerness, earnestness, diligence, willingness.” W. Arndt, F. W. Danker and W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “zeal.” Louw and Nida define the word as,

In other words, pastoral leadership should not be perfunctory, listless, and uninspiring. Instead, pastors should lead with passionate enthusiasm along with a servant's heart committed to the spiritual maturity of the church. Robert Mounce says,

Leaders are to carry out their responsibility with diligence. Although leadership in the contemporary world is often seen as the fruit of ambition, persistence, and good fortune (cf. Matt 8:9), biblical leadership is essentially a service carried out for the benefit of others.<sup>69</sup>

In 1 Timothy 5:17, Paul denotes the importance for pastors to lead “well,” whereas here in Romans 12 he complements this idea by using the word “with zeal.” Combining these two elements today means that pastors lead their people effectively and do so with passion, godly ambition, and inspirational humility. Passionate and effective pastoral leadership is crucial for the church to fulfill its mission.

**1 Thessalonians 5:12.** Paul employs the same word for “leading” (προΐστημι) in 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 which reads, “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.” The term “who are over you” (προΐστημι) is the same word Paul uses in 1 Timothy 5:17 to describe leading. Gene Green states, “The term could be used to convey the meaning ‘to preside’ or ‘govern’. . . . The meaning to ‘protect’ was also quite common.”<sup>70</sup> Bruce defines the word in this way: “The verb ‘proistemi’ combines the idea of leading, protecting and caring for.”<sup>71</sup> Paul exhorts the Thessalonian church to respect and submit to the

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“to do something with intense effort and motivation.” (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “zeal.”

<sup>69</sup>Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 235.

<sup>70</sup>Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 249.

<sup>71</sup>F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 119.

pastors/elders who presided over and shepherded the congregation. Paul also mentions how these pastors led by admonishing or correcting doctrinal and moral error. Strikingly, almost every time Paul mentions the role of a pastor or elder, he invariably links effective leadership to a preaching and teaching ministry that aims to equip the saints for ministry or to confront doctrinal error. Commenting on this verse, G. K. Beale writes,

Elders are to be the doctrinal and ethical guardians of the church. . . . This position of authority is not to be performed in a dictatorial or sinful way, but the elders are over the rest of the believers in the Lord. Their authority can be exercised only in so far as the Lord has given them authority to act.<sup>72</sup>

This word carries the idea of supervising and showing concern for the spiritual growth of people. The usage of this word in 1 Thessalonians conveys this type of leadership:

“According to the context the task of the προϊστάμενοι is in large measure that of pastoral care, and the emphasis is not on their rank or authority but on their efforts for the eternal salvation of believers.”<sup>73</sup> Michael Martin says,

The ‘one who stands before you’ in Paul’s letters is both a leader and a caregiver. The one who leads also does so as an example to the church. *Proistmenous* must not be understood in a matter that distances the task of leadership from the ethos of the leader.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, leading well with humble passion, faithful diligence, and personal integrity draws the respect and esteem of the congregation and motivates them to follow a pastor’s leadership.

**1 Timothy 3:4-5.** In his credentials for the office of pastor, Paul uses the same Greek word to describe how a pastor’s effectiveness in leading his home should translate into leading the church. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 reads, “He must manage his own household

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<sup>72</sup> G. K. Beale, *1-2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 160.

<sup>73</sup> G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “lead.”

<sup>74</sup> D. Michael Martin, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 172-73.

well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” Here Paul uses two Greek words to describe leadership: “managing” (προϊστημι) which is the same word used in the passages above. Paul’s second term “caring” (ἐπιμελέομαι)<sup>75</sup> denotes the idea that a pastor gives careful attention to the needs of the flock by showing genuine concern. Why does Paul use the word “manage” or “lead” (προϊστημι) in reference to the pastor’s household, but then changes to another word “care for” (ἐπιμελέομαι) when discussing how a pastor shepherds the church? Towner explains this distinction: “The shift in the verb that expands the scope of ‘management’ which might be limited to a rather mechanical view of supervision, includes the more compassionate activity of ‘caring for.’”<sup>76</sup> Lea claims, “The term demands an effective exercise of authority bolstered by a character of integrity and sensitive compassion.”<sup>77</sup> Mounce echoes this idea: “The overseer’s managing is to be characterized by a sensitive caring, not a dictatorial exercise of authority or power.”<sup>78</sup> When Paul combines these two words, he fleshes out the scope of a pastor’s leadership. A pastor exercises godly oversight by leading effectively and passionately, but also shows genuine concern and care for the church with the tenderness and protection of a fatherly shepherd. Thomas Schreiner comments,

There is to be a compassion, a tenderness, a deep love that informs the leading of the church. . . . Just as a father may have to make tough and unpopular decisions, so overseers need to lead and guide the church even if the course taken is not always popular. Of course, such leadership must be grounded in the Scriptures, not the selfish will of the pastor.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>The only other use of this rare New Testament word appears in Luke 10:34-35 when the Good Samaritan brought the beaten man to the inn to “take care of him.” This significant parallel shows how pastors demonstrate concrete compassion for those in need.

<sup>76</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 256.

<sup>77</sup>Lea, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 112.

<sup>78</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 180.

<sup>79</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, “Overseeing and Serving the Church in the Pastoral and General Epistles,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 102.

Applying the grammatical-historical hermeneutic to Paul's usage of the word "leading" (προΐστημι) within its appropriate semantic domain clearly conveys the overall idea that a pastor stands before people in order to lead, guide, and care for them with godly zeal and humble passion.

### **Other Descriptions of Leading**

In addition to this key Pauline word (προΐστημι), the concept of a pastor exercising oversight, leading or caring for the church appears in three other foundational verses describing pastoral leadership: Acts 20:27-32 in Paul's farewell sermon to the Ephesian elders, in Hebrews 13:17, and in 1 Peter 5:1-5.

**Acts 20:27-32.** In Acts 20, Luke records the only sermon Paul preached specifically to believers, in particular the plurality of elders in Ephesus. Paul encouraged them to preach the whole counsel of God's word, to shepherd the church carefully, and demonstrated how an expository ministry builds up the church in maturity. Acts 20:27-28 reads, "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." Paul's sermon reflects many of his admonitions in the Pastoral Epistles. Bock says "The idea of an overseer was often associated with the idea of being a guardian and protector. . . . The elder is to protect, rule, and foster care. . . . Explanations about how to accomplish this are set forth in Paul's Pastoral Epistles."<sup>80</sup> In this passage, Paul uses three interchangeable terms to describe the office and function of a pastor. He initially addresses them as "elders" (πρεσβυτέρους) in Acts 20:17 who also serve as "overseers" (ἐπισκόπους) who are charged to "shepherd or care for" (ποιμαίνω) the church. Paul's usage of all three terms interchangeably gives strong evidence that the office of the

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<sup>80</sup>Bock, *Acts*, 629-30.

pastor-teacher (Eph 4:11) is synonymous to that of an elder/overseer. Ware claims,

The terms elders, overseers, pastors refer to one and the same office held by those with a richness and integrity of spiritual life and experience, oversight responsibility for the spiritual well-being of the church, and a watchful care for others that Christ has ordained as one of the greatest means for the growth and maturity of his people.<sup>81</sup>

From this text, three key issues emerge which relate to how pastors lead through expository preaching. First of all, the Holy Spirit specifically calls and empowers pastors. Paul says that the Holy Spirit had “made” or “appointed” (τιθημι) them as overseers, which contextually means that the Spirit sovereignly calls and supernaturally assigns elders to their ministry office. This concept of spiritual calling links back to Moses as well as the Old Testament prophets whom God specifically called to preach. In addition, the Father commissioned Jesus himself to preach as confirmed by the anointing of the Spirit in Luke 4. As a result, there is no such thing as a self-appointed pastor. The Holy Spirit sovereignly and supernaturally calls the pastor as an overseer. Charles Spurgeon warns young pastors, “It is a fearful calamity to a man to miss his calling, and to the church upon whom he imposes himself. . . . His mistake involves an affliction of the most grievous kind.”<sup>82</sup>

Second, Paul charges them to “keep watch” (προσέχω) over the flock through a shepherding ministry (ποιμαίνω). “Keeping watch” means that a pastor shows great concern over the spiritual well-being of his congregation and guards them from wolves who would come in and destroy them with false teachings and poisonous seeds of disunity. In addition to keeping diligent watch, a pastor also “shepherds” (ποιμαίνω). The noun form for “pastor” (ποιμήν) occurs solely in the Ephesians 4:11 passage, but here Paul uses the word as a verb—to “pastor” or “shepherd” (ποιμαίνω) the flock that is the church. Stott claims, “They are to be shepherds, meaning in general to tend a flock and in

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<sup>81</sup>Ware, “Putting it All Together,” 290.

<sup>82</sup>Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1954), 168.

particular to lead a flock to pasture and so feed it. This is the first duty of shepherds.”<sup>83</sup>

John MacArthur states, “A shepherd who fails to feed his flock will not have a flock for long. His sheep will wander off to other fields or die of starvation. Above all, God requires of His spiritual shepherds that they feed their flocks.”<sup>84</sup> Charles Jefferson contends,

When the minister goes into the pulpit, he is the shepherd in the act of feeding, and if every minister had born this in mind, many a sermon would have been other than it has been. The curse of the pulpit is the superstition that sermon is a work of art and not a piece of bread or meat.<sup>85</sup>

In fact, expository preaching reflects both an artistry that requires supernatural ability and gifting, but the pastor also serves a solid meal that feeds the sheep. Daniel Akin says,

It is a sin of the most serious sort to preach the Word of God in a boring and unattractive fashion. . . . Bad preaching will sap the life of a church. It will kill its spirit, dry up its fruit, and eventually empty it. If we dare to be honest, we must say that bad preaching is not true preaching.<sup>86</sup>

Pastors should not focus so much on the simple act of feeding through preaching to the exclusion of the homiletical skill and creativity required to craft effective expository sermons that engage hearers. In essence, the shepherd models the ministry of Jesus as the Chief Shepherd. Simon Kistemaker says,

The task of the overseer is to be a shepherd like Jesus Christ: oversight means loving care and concern, a responsibility willingly shouldered; it must never be used for personal aggrandizement. Its meaning is to be seen in Christ’s selfless service which was moved by concern for the salvation of men.<sup>87</sup>

Third, Paul emphasized how the systematic preaching and teaching of the

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<sup>83</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 326-27.

<sup>84</sup>John MacArthur, “What Is a Pastor to Be and Do?” in *Pastoral Ministry: How to Shepherd Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and the Master’s Seminary Faculty (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 23.

<sup>85</sup>Charles Jefferson, *The Minister as Shepherd: The Privileges and Responsibilities of Pastoral Leadership* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2006), 52.

<sup>86</sup>Daniel L. Akin, Bill Curtis, and Stephen Rummage, *Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2011), 4-5.

<sup>87</sup>Simon J. Kistemaker, *Acts, New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1990), 732.

Word of God over his three-year ministry in Ephesus built up the church in grace as evidenced in Acts 20:27, 31–32 which reads,

For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. . . . Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

In his expository sermons in Deuteronomy, Moses preached the whole counsel of God’s law. In addition, Jesus in Luke 24, showed his followers how the entirety of the Scriptures focused on him. Only a healthy diet of systematic expository preaching of the whole counsel of God’s Word will sustain and strengthen the church in fulfilling its mission. The steady weekly preaching of God’s “word of grace” through the entirety of the Bible exposes the church to God’s amazing salvation in the history of redemption. This kind of expository preaching edifies the church into maturity as one of the primary means of sanctifying believers and challenging them in obedience to the Great Commission. Regarding Paul’s claim that he did not shrink from preaching the whole counsel of God, Stott says, “How few preachers could advance the same claim! Most of us ride a few of our favourite hobby-horses to death. We pick and choose from the Scriptures, selecting doctrines we like and passing over those we dislike or find difficult.”<sup>88</sup>

**Hebrews 13:17.** The writer of Hebrews exhorts the church to submit to the godly leadership of their pastors/elders. Hebrews 13:17 reads, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” The key responsibility of a pastor emphasized here is “keeping watch” (ἀγρυπνέω) over souls. Peter O’Brien suggests,

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<sup>88</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), 25.



Leaders have a special God-given responsibility to do this. The verb ‘keep watch’ means ‘to go sleepless’, and from the literal meaning it takes on the sense of being alert and watchful. Godly leaders are diligent and tireless. They look after the lives of all in their care, but particularly those who are negligent or prone to spiritual laziness, or who fail to recognize the importance of fellowship with other believers.<sup>89</sup>

Again, the shepherd metaphor describes the overall function of a pastor who leads the flock by providing tireless, passionate and effective oversight. Bruce echoes this pastoral responsibility:

No wonder they lost sleep (this verb has the etymological sense of chasing away sleep) over this responsibility—for the ‘watching’ could well involve this as well as general vigilance—if some of their flock were in danger of straying beyond their control.<sup>90</sup>

The writer of Hebrews expresses the gravity and eternal consequences of pastoral leadership in that shepherds will stand before God on the Day of Judgment and give an account in how they cared for the souls entrusted to their care. Strauch says, “Spiritual leaders must always be keenly alert, conscientious, and diligent. Watchfulness demands tireless effort, self-discipline, and selfless concern for the safety of others.”<sup>91</sup> A congregation’s response to pastoral leadership does not rest in a blind obedience; instead, obedience to pastors must come in conformity to the Scriptures they faithfully preach and the godly lives they exemplify. James Means says,

The sense in which leaders are ‘over’ their followers is in their proclamation of scriptural truth. The obedience required of followers is an obedience to the Word when it is accurately and faithfully proclaimed by preacher-teachers. . . . ‘Rule’ is authoritative declaration and application of God’s Word (not personal opinion) to the activities of individuals and the church.<sup>92</sup>

As those who will give an account, pastors must remember that this authority is a derived authority in that it only comes from their faithfulness to the Scriptures and not in their

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<sup>89</sup>Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 529.

<sup>90</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 385.

<sup>91</sup>Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 270.

<sup>92</sup>James E. Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989), 48.

selfish agendas.

**1 Peter 5:2-3.** Peter admonishes elders or pastors to shepherd God’s flock with humility, wisdom, and Christ-like care. First Peter 5:2-3 reads,

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Two key words emerge from this passage: “shepherd” (ποιμαίνω) and “exercising oversight” (ἐπισκοπέω). Contextually, Peter uses these terms synonymously to refer to the one office of pastor/elder/overseer. As evidenced in Acts 20:17-28 above, Paul also combines these words as he exhorts the Ephesian elders (πρεσβύτεροι) to shepherd (ποιμαίνω) the people of God because they are overseers (ἐπίσκοπος). When one takes both Paul’s and Peter’s usage of these three Greek words in their immediate context of pastoral leadership, they all serve as synonyms for the office of the pastor-teacher outlined in Ephesians 4:11. Schreiner argues,

The most plausible way of reading the New Testament evidence is that the overseer and elder were indeed one office. In Acts 20:17 Paul summoned the elders (presbyteroi) of the Ephesian church, but in v. 28 they are identified as ‘overseers’ (episkopoi), demonstrating that two different terms are used for one office.<sup>93</sup>

In addition, both Peter here and Paul in Acts 20 charge the elders/overseers with the verb “to shepherd” (ποιμαίνω). MacArthur argues,

There are three New Testament terms used interchangeably to refer to these men: elder (presbuterion), bishop or overseer (episkopos), and pastor (poimen). Elder emphasizes the man’s spiritual maturity necessary for such ministry. Bishop or overseer, states the general responsibility of guardianship. Pastor is the word shepherd and expresses the priority duty of feeding or teaching the truth of God’s Word.<sup>94</sup>

Peter’s wording to “shepherd” (ποιμαίνω) the flock mirrors the command from Jesus

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<sup>93</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 234.

<sup>94</sup>John MacArthur, *1 Peter, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2004), 263.

according to John 21:16 where the Lord challenged Peter to feed or shepherd (ποιμαίνω) the sheep.

Peter's exhortation for pastors to shepherd borrows heavily from Old Testament imagery, which runs throughout the history of redemption. Moses was likened to a shepherd (Isa 63:11), David was a shepherd-king (2 Sam 5:2, 7:7), and Jesus himself was the Good and Chief Shepherd (John 10:11-18, 1 Pet 2:25, 5:4). Sometimes God himself is personified as a protective shepherd tending to his flock as evidenced in Isaiah 40:11: "He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." In the Old Testament, Yahweh accomplished this ministry through human agents, especially the priests and prophets, who led the people through a preaching and teaching ministry. God gave a harsh warning to abusive shepherds who failed in leading the people and who led them astray with false doctrine.<sup>95</sup>

Another aspect of pastoral ministry involves going after lost and straying sheep as well as mobilizing the church to embrace the Great Commission of seeking to make disciples of the nations. Ezekiel 34:4-5 presents a negative portrait of abusive and inept shepherding, where God rebukes the leaders of Israel:

The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts.

Imitating the shepherd-leadership of Jesus, pastors must strengthen the weak in their care. They must have compassion on the sick and broken. They must make it their ambition to seek earnestly after those who have strayed either through backsliding, difficult life

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<sup>95</sup>Jeremiah 23:1-4 states, "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD."

circumstances, or grievous rebellion. Pastors should also attempt to reach the lost sheep who have yet to trust in Christ for salvation. This portrait of negligent shepherding illustrates how sheep become decimated, abandoned, and scattered when pastors have not vigilantly kept watch over the souls of their congregation. Kostenberger says,

These are not passive shepherds who leave it all up to the sheep ('If it wants to come back, it knows where to find me'), nor lazy shepherds ('This terrain is too difficult, I'm going home'), nor shepherds prone to give up ('This is taking too long, I'm going back to the sheep who haven't strayed'). This example of the seeking shepherd stands against the practice of sitting back and simply hoping the backslidden and the lost will show up for Sunday services.<sup>96</sup>

Peter's use of this verb "shepherd" (ποιμαίνω) and Paul's usage in Acts 20 clearly describe the role of a pastor as that of a leader who exercises godly oversight by serving as an example to other believers. Peter Davids says, "Being an example fits well with the image of 'flock,' for ancient shepherds did not drive his sheep, but walked in front them and called them to follow."<sup>97</sup> Pastors are not "cattlemen" who prod and drive the sheep from behind; instead, they lead from out front through their preaching and their lifestyle. The congregation follows the leadership of pastors who humbly cast vision through an expository preaching ministry combined with gentle, yet effective, pastoral care. A pastor first and foremost is a shepherd; not a CEO, business administrator, or program director. A shepherd knows the sheep, cares for the sheep, loves the sheep, corrects the sheep, and leads the sheep. He does this not through pragmatic fads, the allure of a charismatic personality, or through slick man-centered techniques; but instead through a faithful expository preaching ministry. Clowney writes,

The elder presents the word of the Lord, not his own decree; he enforces the revealed will of the Lord, not his own wishes. For that reason, any undermining of the authority of Scriptures turns church government into spiritual tyranny. . . . The exercise of such authority is always service. It is ministerial, not imperial. The despised shepherd guarding his flock in the fields, not a pompous churchman, is the

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<sup>96</sup> Kostenberger, "Shepherds and Shepherding in the Gospels," 57.

<sup>97</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle to Peter*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 181.

model of pastoral oversight; indeed, the model is the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep.<sup>98</sup>

MacArthur states, “Shepherds are to become sufficiently involved in the lives of the flock that they establish a godly pattern for the people to follow. The most important aspect of spiritual leadership and the best test of its effectiveness is the power of an exemplary life.”<sup>99</sup> Strauch writes,

The shepherd imagery blends the ideas of authority and leadership with self-sacrifice, tenderness, wisdom, hard work, loving care, and constant watchfulness. Shepherding requires long hours of work and complete attention---the shepherd must always be with the sheep.<sup>100</sup>

Alex Montoya writes, “A church can call you to be a pastor because *pastor* is a title. The call does not make you a leader. *Leader* is not a title but a role. You only become a leader by functioning as one.”<sup>101</sup> Means asserts, “Church leaders must gain esteem not by bureaucratic superiority, but by excellence in spiritual direction. Only when leaders are recognized as godly shepherds will there be trust that is indispensable to God’s plan for the church.”<sup>102</sup> The first primary responsibility of a pastor lies in leading, shepherding, overseeing, and guarding the flock.

### **Laboring in Preaching and Teaching**

In addition to leading well as described in 1 Timothy 5:17, Paul provides the second major function of a pastor by admonishing the church to give double honor to pastors who “labor in preaching and teaching.” The combination of these two words (preaching and teaching) generally means “ministering the Word.” Interestingly, Paul

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<sup>98</sup>Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of First Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 203-204.

<sup>99</sup>MacArthur, *First Peter*, 267.

<sup>100</sup>Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 149.

<sup>101</sup>Alex D. Montoya, “Leading,” in *Pastoral Ministry: How to Shepherd Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and The Master’s Seminary Faculty (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 230.

<sup>102</sup>Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry*, 41.

describes this ministry as “hard work” or “labor” (κοπιάω) which can mean working to the point of exhaustion.<sup>103</sup> Stott asserts,

Expository preaching is a most exacting discipline. Perhaps that is why it is so rare. . . . We must spend time studying our text with painstaking thoroughness, meditating on it, wrestling with it, worrying at it as a dog with a bone, until it yields its meaning; and sometimes this process will be accompanied by toil and tears.<sup>104</sup>

The practice of expository preaching can sometimes lead the pastor to tears as he painstakingly wrestles with the sacred text in order to discover its meaning. After deciphering the Scripture’s meaning through the rigorous process of employing the historical-grammatical hermeneutic, the pastor must then decide how to preach in a manner that remains faithful to the text and also engages his congregation. This expository process sometimes proves exacting on the preacher and can lead to exhaustion after the preaching event. Adams says, “Good preaching demands hard work. . . . I am convinced that the basic reason for poor preaching is the failure to spend adequate time and energy in preparation.”<sup>105</sup> Sproul comments, “Though preachers differ in the expenditure of energy given in a sermon, it has been estimated that a half-hour address can use as much physical energy as eight hours of manual labor. . . . Dynamic preaching requires physical strength and stamina.”<sup>106</sup> Strauch claims,

The reason these elders work hard at teaching is because they are spiritually gifted to do so. They are driven to study the Scripture. . . . They are skilled at communicating divine truth, and there is a marked effectiveness to their teaching that bears consistent fruit.<sup>107</sup>

Paul uses two words to describe this labor in the ministry of the Word:

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<sup>103</sup>Louw and Nida define this word as “hard work, implying unusual exertion of energy and effort.” *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2013), s.v. “labor.”

<sup>104</sup>Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait*, 30-31.

<sup>105</sup>Jay Adams, “Good Preaching is Hard Work,” *The Journal of Pastoral Practice* 4, no. 2 (1980): 1.

<sup>106</sup>R. C. Sproul, “The Whole Man,” in *The Preacher and Preaching*, ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1986), 107-8.

<sup>107</sup>Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 209.

“preaching” or, more literally “the word” (λόγος), and “teaching” (διδασκαλία). While these words are very closely linked, a slight difference does exist between the two. Lea provides this clarification: “Preaching includes moral instruction that appeals to the will. Teaching makes an appeal to the intellect and informs listeners about the truths of the Christian faith.”<sup>108</sup> The primary distinction between preaching and teaching lies in their function. Preaching (λόγος) functions to proclaim the Word boldly in order to exhort people to respond with their hearts and wills in surrender to Christ. Teaching (διδασκαλία), on the other hand, focuses more on the intellect where information, doctrine, and training in theology remain the prime focus. Preaching reflects a more hortatory focus on challenging people to action, while teaching stresses a more didactic emphasis on making sure people are thoroughly trained in the Scriptures. A pastor constantly does both of these in an expository ministry. He at times preaches like a herald aiming for the will; and other times, he explains and teaches aiming for the mind. Most effective expository sermons combine these two elements together to inform, train, inspire, encourage, and challenge people to respond in obedience to God’s will.

The ministry of the Word involves more than just preaching from a pulpit to the gathered congregation on the Lord’s Day, as important as that is. Adam provides insight into the many facets of what the ministry of the Word looks like in the life of a pastor. He writes,

This included public teaching and preaching, the forming of the life of the congregation in conformity to the Bible, the training of others, private exhortations and encouragement, the production of Christian literature, and the evangelization of unbelievers. Those of us who are committed to preaching need to be committed to the wider ministry of the Word as well. We need to see preaching as part of that ministry of the Word. Otherwise we shall try to make preaching do what it cannot easily achieve.<sup>109</sup>

The ministry of the Word incorporates a comprehensive strategy of preaching and

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<sup>108</sup>Lea, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, 138.

<sup>109</sup>Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 74-75

teaching for the edification of the gathered church; but it also includes personal evangelism, training and equipping individual believers, counseling, public reading of Scriptures, small group discipleship, personal rebukes and exhortations as well as written communication using various forms of media. Adam argues for a ministry that is “pulpit-centered; but not pulpit-restricted.”<sup>110</sup>

In three other key places in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 4:11-16, 2 Tim 4:1-4, and Titus 1:9), Paul demonstrates this second principal function of how pastors minister the Word through expository preaching and teaching.

**1 Timothy 4:13.** In this passage, Paul gives a three-fold command for how pastors should minister the Word in the life of the church. First Timothy 4:13 reads, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.” Here Paul prescribes three elements that prove foundational to the life of Christian churches not only in Timothy’s time but in congregations for all time: (1) the public reading of Scripture, (2) preaching, and (3) teaching. Kent Hughes asserts, “This simple sentence is a landmark text in defining the major work of the pastor and the worship of the church.”<sup>111</sup> This model resembles the format or contents of the synagogue worship. In fact, Jesus modeled this type of ministry of the Word in his synagogue sermon in Luke 4, when he publicly read the Scripture and then preached an exposition of Isaiah. In addition, Paul employed this method when he entered the synagogues on his missionary journeys.

The public reading of the Scriptures (ἀνάγνωσις) stands as the first element of the ministry of the Word. Towner asserts that the public reading of Scripture was a practice, inherited from the temple and synagogue worship, or the public reading

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<sup>110</sup>Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 84.

<sup>111</sup>R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 115.



of the OT (Deut 31:11-12, Neh 8:7-8). . . . It was assumed, apparently, that the primary function of the public reading of Scripture was to lay the groundwork for the preaching and teaching to follow.<sup>112</sup>

Old asserts, “No doubt the practice of the synagogue was continued in the Church, and this passage from 1 Timothy is the strongest possible evidence for this. At the center of Christian preaching from the very beginning was this exposition of the public reading of Scripture.”<sup>113</sup> By reading the Scriptures first, the pastor sets the spiritual agenda and tone for the worship service encouraging the congregation to bow corporately under the authority of the Word that he will subsequently preach in the expository sermon. Hughes comments,

The overall effect of this regular reading of the Old and New Testaments at worship was twofold: 1) It emphasized the radical continuity between the Old and New Testaments 2) It meant that the authority of the preaching that followed was secondary to and derived from the reading of the Scriptures. It is an awesome thing when we reverently stand for the reading of God’s Word.<sup>114</sup>

Calvin comments, “It is proper to attend this order, that he places reading before doctrine and exhortation; for undoubtedly, the Scripture is the fountain of all wisdom, from which pastors must draw all that they place before their flock.”<sup>115</sup>

Second, Paul commands Timothy to engage in “exhortation” (παράκλησις) which most modern translations render as “preaching.” This term παράκλησις involves exhorting or encouraging the congregation through the systematic exposition of the Word.<sup>116</sup> Towner defines preaching as “the use of Scripture to bring instruction, to exhort, encourage, or console, and generally has in mind the implementing or changing of

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<sup>112</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 317.

<sup>113</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 246.

<sup>114</sup>Hughes and Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 116.

<sup>115</sup>Calvin, *1 and 2 Timothy*, 115.

<sup>116</sup>Knight links Paul’s method of preaching in the synagogue in Acts 13 with his command here to Timothy: “The following word, παράκλησις, by analogy with Acts 13:15, where the reading aloud of the OT is followed by a “word of exhortation” (λόγος παρακλήσεως), signifies that the reading here is a public reading.” Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 207.

behavior, on the basis of the Scripture's sense or intent."<sup>117</sup> Marshall claims this preaching is "probably the exposition of Scripture leading to commands and encouragements."<sup>118</sup> Expository preaching involves urging people to reorient their lives around the Spirit-intended meaning of the text. Thus, the text needs to be faithfully exegeted, explained, and applied.

Paul's third charge to Timothy involves teaching (*διδασκαλία*), which carries a slight difference in meaning from the concept of preaching. In general, preaching aims for the will, while teaching aims for the mind. Old comments,

Certainly one thing we get from this passage, especially when taken in context, is that early Christian preaching had a strong didactic flavor. Preachers were supposed to move the heart and will, but they were also supposed to teach. The two went hand in glove.<sup>119</sup>

Towner summarizes these three tasks (the public reading of the Scripture, preaching and teaching): "Taken together, the three activities serve to remind believers of their identity in the people of God and what behavior and behavioral changes that identity entails."<sup>120</sup> Expository preaching that includes not just explanation, but application, enables the congregation to be reminded that they are a display people who have been called to the mission of reaching the nations with the gospel. Stott says, "It was taken for granted from the beginning that Christian preaching would be expository preaching, that is, that all Christian instruction and exhortation would be drawn out of the passage which had been read."<sup>121</sup> Mounce claims,

Timothy is to immerse himself in the biblical text, to encourage people to follow the text, and to teach its doctrines. . . . The agenda Paul spells out for Timothy

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<sup>117</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 320-21.

<sup>118</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, International Critical Commentary (New York: T&T Clark International, 1999), 563.

<sup>119</sup>Old, *The Biblical Period*, 247.

<sup>120</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 321.

<sup>121</sup>John R. Stott, *Guard the Truth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 122.

emphasizes the centrality of the text for theological correctness and includes not just a basic reading but a fuller awareness of the text's meaning that is gained through study, reflection, and devotion.<sup>122</sup>

Expository preaching requires the pastor to immerse himself in the text so that he can faithfully and accurately lead the church to understand and obey its meaning. The regulated components of how pastors lead by ministering the Word include the public reading of the Scripture, followed by kerygmatic and hortatory preaching interspersed with expository and didactic teachings. Hughes asserts,

Biblical exposition was the apostolic norm. Therefore, any preaching that does not guide the listener through the Scriptures is an aberration from the apostolic practice. . . . This sounds the alarm in regard to the 'disexposition' that is issuing from so many evangelical pulpits today. The congregation hears the text read and waits in anticipation for its exposition—only to be disappointed when the text is never alluded to in the next thirty minutes. . . . Sometimes the text is so encrusted with stories and jokes that it is unseen and unheard. Others times it is distorted because it is preached through a therapeutic, political, or social lens.<sup>123</sup>

**2 Timothy 4:1-2.** Paul re-emphasizes the primacy of preaching in the life of the church in 2 Timothy 4:1-2:

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Paul uses the word “proclaim” (κηρυσσω) which the author of this thesis explained extensively in chapter 3 to describe the way in which Jesus preached. Preachers herald with authority by teaching and explaining the text. They continue the expositional model of Moses in Deuteronomy, the kerygmatic and didactic nature of Jesus' preaching in the Gospels as well as the early sermons in the book of Acts. MacArthur claims, “The God-ordained means to save, sanctify, and strengthen His church is preaching.”<sup>124</sup> Paul charges Timothy to preach “the Word,” which contextually links back to 2 Timothy 3:16

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<sup>122</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 260-61.

<sup>123</sup>Hughes and Chapell, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 116.

<sup>124</sup>MacArthur, “Preaching,” in *Pastoral Ministry: How to Shepherd Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and The Master's Seminary Faculty (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 204.

as the God-breathed written Scriptures.<sup>125</sup> Many times pastors may become tempted to rely on other means or sources besides the sufficiency of Scripture to motivate and lead the church to fulfill its mission. As such, he may preach personal opinion, trite stories, political speeches, motivational talks, or casual conversations, which unfortunately, serve as the main diet of many evangelical pulpits. Instead, the content of expository preaching must include the kerygmatic proclamation and didactic explanation of the sacred text of Scripture. Thomas Oden says,

There is no hint here that preaching is thought of primarily as self-expression or subjective experience or feeling-disclosure or autobiography or ‘telling one’s story’ so as to neglect Scripture. . . . The whole counsel of God is to be preached, without fanciful, idiosyncratic amendment or individualistic addition.<sup>126</sup>

A pastor-teacher does not simply serve as a care-taker who maintains a ministry. He does not function as a passive tour guide who dispenses tidbits of theological knowledge or self-help advice to keep the tourists (church members) happy. He does not lead as a domineering and self-sufficient CEO bowing to the altar of pragmatism to keep his shareholders (church members) comfortable so that they keep coming back. He does not cower in fear that if he does not tickle ears, fickle people will go elsewhere. He does not exhibit laziness by hurriedly downloading sermons from the internet on Saturday night in a panic because he has not labored over the sacred text.

Stott writes,

The higher our view of the Bible, the more painstaking and conscientious our study of it should be. If this book is indeed the word of God, then away with slovenly, slipshod exegesis! We have to make time to penetrate the text until it yields up its treasures. Only when we have ourselves absorbed its message, can we confidently share it with others.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Mounce asserts, “The anaphoric definite article identifies τὸν λόγον ‘the word,’ specifically as the Scriptures in 3:16-17 and strengthens the contrast with the heresy described in the following verses.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 572.

<sup>126</sup>Thomas Oden, *First and Second Timothy and Titus* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 135.

<sup>127</sup>John R. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 182.

Instead, a pastor leads as an exemplary shepherd by ministering the Word. He leads well with passion and zeal. He labors in expository preaching. His preaching is a means to equip and mature people. The pastor preaches with boldness and readiness. He makes prayer and the ministry of the Word his highest priority. The shepherd-leader is never haphazard, but always intentional. Dever claims,

To charge someone with the spiritual oversight of a church who doesn't in practice show a commitment to hear and teach God's Word is to hamper the growth of the church, in essence allowing it to grow only to the level of the pastor. The church will slowly be conformed to the pastor's mind rather than to God's mind.<sup>128</sup>

Andrew Purves asserts,

If we doubt the efficacy and truthfulness of the sermon as the one Word of God, and God's free and gracious address, what else is left us but the 'management' of religion and the construction of ministries that draw their appeal from somewhere other than the faithful preaching of the Word of God.<sup>129</sup>

This preaching does not have to be regulated simply to the Sunday pulpit but can be incorporated in all aspects of pastoral ministry. Lea says,

To 'preach' does not imply that an ordained minister is to stand behind a pulpit and expound Scripture. It called Timothy to a public heralding of the gospel message, whether done in a mass meeting or person-to-person.<sup>130</sup>

In his comprehensive expository leadership, a pastor practices a fully-orbed ministry of the Word that not only includes corporate worship, but also involves private counseling, small group discipleship, as well as marketplace evangelism and one-on-one witnessing encounters. As the chief leader, a pastor's comprehensive approach serves to mobilize, lead, and exemplify to the church the need to embrace their mission. No higher calling or privilege exists for the pastor than to proclaim the Word with boldness. Hughes comments, "What a massive charge this is. The call itself is an invitation to let God

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<sup>128</sup>Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 42.

<sup>129</sup>Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 159.

<sup>130</sup>Lea, *1,2 Timothy and Titus*, 243.

possess you—to live a life of profound dependence on him.”<sup>131</sup>

**Titus 1:9.** Paul writes the epistle to Titus in order to charge him to appoint elders on the island of Crete and, thereby, this letter clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of pastors/elders. Titus 1:9 reads, “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” This text identifies two key ways that a pastor ministers the Word. First of all, he must be able to give instruction/teach (παρακαλέω) which Towner describes as “encouragement and instruction with authoritative persuasion . . . that compels believers to implement the faith in all aspect of life.”<sup>132</sup> The second task is to “rebuke” or “refute” (ελεγχω) false teachers. Strauch says, “A man who doesn’t tenaciously adhere to orthodox, biblical doctrine doesn’t qualify to lead God’s household because he, himself is in error and unbelief, will mislead God’s people.”<sup>133</sup> Calvin writes, “A pastor needs two voices, one for gathering the sheep and the other for driving away wolves and thieves.”<sup>134</sup> A pastor must be able to teach “sound” (ὕγιαινω) doctrine in a way that leads the church to spiritual health. Adam comments on the usage of the word “sound” (ὕγιαινω):

In the pastorals, the word has more obvious pastoral implications. To be sound is to be healthy; healthy doctrine is doctrine which is not only true but also productive of godliness. Sound doctrine is healthy teaching; that is, it changes peoples’ lives.<sup>135</sup>

Christ has gifted the church with the office of the pastor-teacher and commissioned him to lead well by laboring in ministering the Word. Martyn Lloyd-Jones describes the overall role of the pastor:

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<sup>131</sup>Hughes and Chapell, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 246.

<sup>132</sup>Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 692.

<sup>133</sup>Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 236.

<sup>134</sup>Calvin, *Titus*, 296.

<sup>135</sup>Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 84.

The office of pastor is generally concerned about government and instruction and rule and direction. The shepherd shepherds his flock, keeps the sheep in order, directs them where to go and where to feed, brings them back to the fold, looks after their safety and guards them against enemies liable to attack them. . . . A pastor is a man who is given charge of souls. . . . He is the guardian, the custodian, the protector, organizer, the director, the ruler of the flock. As teacher, he gives instruction in doctrine, in truth.<sup>136</sup>

Jay Adams aptly describes these two primary functions of pastoral ministry: “Leading is bringing sheep together as a flock, or congregation, teaching and helping them to live, learn, love, and labor together for Jesus Christ. . . . It is the authoritative instruction and application of the Word of God to the individual and corporate activities of the sheep.”<sup>137</sup>

Calvin claims,

It is no light matter to be a representative of the Son of God, in discharging an office of such magnitude, the object of which is to erect and extend the kingdom of God, to procure the salvation of souls which the Lord himself hath purchased with his own blood, and to govern the church, which is God’s inheritance.<sup>138</sup>

Both the apostolic model in Acts as well as the Epistles demonstrate the importance for pastors to lead through expository preaching and teaching. In the overall scope of biblical theology stemming all the way back to Moses and his three expository sermons in Deuteronomy, God has called men to lead his people through preaching to fulfill their mission. Taking up the mantle of Moses, Jesus came as the Consummate Prophet who at times modeled the expository method of preaching from the Old Testament. The apostles followed in Jesus’ footsteps by preaching expositionally for the advancement of the gospel in reaching the nations. Paul modeled this expository practice when he preached in the synagogues in the book of Acts. In his Pastoral Epistles, Paul commanded pastors to minister the Word in the local church, which is the “pillar and buttress of truth” (1 Tim 3:15). In addition, Hebrews and I Peter also clarify the role and responsibility of pastors to lead through preaching. Therefore, a case can be made from

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<sup>136</sup>D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1-16* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), 193.

<sup>137</sup>Jay E. Adams, *Shepherding God’s Flock* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), 325.

<sup>138</sup>Calvin, *I and II Timothy*, 74.

the entirety of Scripture that the primary way pastors lead churches to fulfill their mission is through an expository preaching ministry modeled after Moses, Jesus, Peter, Stephen, Philip, Paul, and the epistolary injunctions. So in essence, God still commissions pastors today to lead by expository preaching. Ware says,

I think it is fair to say that there is nothing more central to an elder's calling, or of greater potential benefit for the people of God, or closer to the heart of God, and his desire for his people, than that elders take up their teaching and preaching responsibilities with earnestness, sobriety, faithfulness, diligence, and joy.<sup>139</sup>

### **The Need to Integrate Preaching with Leadership**

In order to more fully understand the dynamic of leading through expository preaching, some observations need to be provided in order to demonstrate how these two disciplines interact in the life of the church. What exactly comprises an expository preaching ministry in the life of the church? If one combines many of the elements present in the expository preaching of Moses (chap. 2), Jesus (chap. 3), the apostles' sermons in Acts as well as the Epistles, this definition comes more into focus. An expository ministry places a premium on the pastor as leader who shepherds his people by reading, explaining, and applying the biblical text in order for the church to fulfill its mission. He preaches the whole counsel of God's Word. The preacher lays bare the text for the people to hear the voice of God so that they can obey him. In addition, a pastor relies on the empowering of the Holy Spirit to embolden his preaching. His preaching is thoroughly propositional, christocentric, and ties everything to the gospel of grace. A pastor has an acute awareness of the particular needs of his congregation so that he can apply the Scriptures appropriately to their current situation. As a leader, he cares tenderly for the souls of the flock of whom he must give an account. Alistair Begg writes,

Our teaching function enables us to exercise constant leadership, a leadership of which people may be scarcely aware at times. If we expound and apply the Scriptures, we urge God's people, beginning with ourselves, to live lives worthy of

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<sup>139</sup>Ware, "Putting it All Together," 294.



God who has called us into His kingdom.<sup>140</sup>

Many books have been written on expository preaching and many more have been written on leadership; yet very few books actually address the integration of pastoral leadership with expository preaching. Quicke expresses disappointment with this reality:

Much of the extensive literature on church leadership has little or nothing good to say about preaching having a leadership role. . . . I am deeply concerned about the lack of explicit attention given to preaching's role in Christian leadership. Most writing on Christian leadership omits preaching, and most books on preaching leave out leadership.<sup>141</sup>

Seminaries also place a high emphasis (as they should) on expository preaching, but oftentimes fail to link preaching to effective pastoral leadership. Through their education, many pastors have been adequately trained to preach, but may not have been adequately trained in leading through their preaching. Secular business models of leadership may be helpful at times but cannot remain the primary model used by pastors to shepherd their flocks. Means asserts,

Leadership exists to guide the church to spiritual vitality, unity, and effective ministry. When the purposes of the church are not fulfilled, leadership must accept the primary responsibility. . . . Many persons who hold spiritual office are of high integrity, intellect, and devotion, but simply do not know how to function as leaders in the contemporary church. The crisis of leadership deficiency may well be one of the most pervasive and pernicious problems facing contemporary Christianity.<sup>142</sup>

John Tornfelt laments, "Unfortunately the differences between secular and Christian understandings of leadership are often marginal. . . . What is surprising is how little has been written about leadership's relationship to preaching."<sup>143</sup>

Can pastors just preach the text faithfully and be satisfied that they have

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<sup>140</sup>Derek Prime and Alistair Begg, *On Being a Pastor: Understanding our Calling and Work* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 224.

<sup>141</sup>Quicke provides an overview of ten of the most recent and popular books and articles on pastoral leadership that reveal a lack of emphasis on preaching. A sample of these includes Kennon Callahan's *Twelve Keys to an Affective Church*, Christian Scwarz' *Natural Church Development*, Henry Blackaby's *Spiritual Leadership*, Rick Warren's *Purpose-Driven Church*, an interview in *Leadership Magazine* with John Maxwell, and Andy Stanley's *Visioneering*, to name a few. Quicke, *360-Degree Leadership*, 28-30.

<sup>142</sup>Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry*, 17-18.

<sup>143</sup>John V. Tornfelt, "Preaching and Leading," *Evangelical Journal* 26, no. 1 (2008): 2.

discharged the duties of their ministry? Should they be concerned to lead strategically through their preaching? Can a pastor be a solid and faithful preacher, and still not lead his flock? Can a pastor truly lead his flock without the primacy of expository preaching? The overall argument in this thesis is that the most effective and primary way pastors lead the church is through expository preaching. So, preaching needs leadership and leadership desperately needs preaching. Albert Mohler says,

To lead with conviction is to seize the role of the teacher with energy, determination, and even excitement. . . . When the leader is most effective, teaching and leading become one force of energy. When that happens, expect nothing less than transformation.<sup>144</sup>

This type of expository and effective pastoral leadership is deeply spiritual. It requires the power of the Holy Spirit, a clear sense of calling, a firm belief in the authority and inerrancy of Scripture, and a desire to lead the church tirelessly as a caring shepherd. A pastor leads well to the point of exhaustion by preaching and teaching so that the church can successfully fulfill its mission. In essence, nothing can replace the primacy of the Holy Spirit and prayer for effective pastoral ministry. Quicke warns of making a sharp dichotomy between leadership and preaching:

Separation from preaching increases the dangers of leadership degenerating into humanistic advice, becoming devoid of the Holy Spirit, empty of spiritual understanding, and predisposed to puffed up pride. . . . Some leadership models do not require God to do anything. . . . Leadership principles, especially in the hands of highly motivational persuaders, can become the ultimate natural tools displacing any need to trust in God's presence and power.<sup>145</sup>

J. Oswald Sanders urges, "Under the Holy Spirit's control, natural gifts of leadership are sanctified and lifted to their highest power. . . . All real service is but the effluence of the Holy Spirit through yielded and filled lives."<sup>146</sup> Montoya claims,

Leadership is essential to the life and mission of the church. Without it the church

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<sup>144</sup>R. Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2012), 73.

<sup>145</sup>Quicke, *360 Degree Leadership*, 62.

<sup>146</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1967), 117-18.

flounders and staggers on a haphazard course on its pilgrimage to the better place. Without leadership the church is unable to fulfill its purpose of ministering effectively to those within and receiving those on the outside, nor can it render the glory to God that He deserves.<sup>147</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In order for the church to fulfill its mission, pastors must integrate expository preaching and shepherd-leadership. The scriptural role of the pastor-teacher demands nothing less than passionate, humble, godly, and effective leadership by means of a ministry that systematically exposes people to the whole counsel of God's Word. Means claims,

Every effective church has been built upon solid preaching and teaching by its spiritual leaders who have been students of the Word of God. Sizable churches can be built without solid biblical exposition, but spiritually potent and ministerially effective churches cannot.<sup>148</sup>

Pastors today stand in the ancient stream of God's shepherds (Moses, Jesus, and the apostles) who led by preaching and teaching. When pastors faithfully take up this mantle their churches can become equipped and matured in obedience to the Great Commission. As shepherds, pastors not only feed the sheep the unadulterated Word of God, but also lead the sheep to the green pastures and pure waters of their God-intended future. As sheep, believers may at times be hesitant, complacent, hurting, and distracted from obedience to the Great Commission. Instead of berating, prodding, and abusing these tentative sheep, pastors gently, yet boldly, hold out God's vision for their future every time they exposit the Scriptures. Andrew Davis poignantly summarizes this noble task of integrating leadership with expository preaching:

What the church needs in every generation are blood-bought, Spirit-anointed, biblically driven leaders who are not mere managers, but are compelled to apply the timeless truths of Scripture to a constantly changing world in constant rebellion against God. . . . A Christian leader is a change-agent, a fork in the road, a force for change, smelling salts in the nostrils of the semi-conscious, a sharpened scalpel in

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<sup>147</sup>Montoya, "Leading," 228.

<sup>148</sup>Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry*, 52.

the hands of the Great Physician.”<sup>149</sup>

As undershepherds who serve Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, pastors lead diligently, passionately, and lovingly, while they labor to the point of exhaustion in preaching tirelessly to their sheep. This dual ministry of leading and preaching serves as the primary way pastors motivate and encourage the church to fulfill its mission.

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<sup>149</sup>Andrew Davis, “Leading the Church in Today’s World: What It Means Practically to Shepherd God’s Flock,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 311-12.

CHAPTER 5  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEADING THROUGH  
EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN  
THE LOCAL CHURCH

**Introduction**

This thesis has sought to prove that one of the most effective ways a pastor leads his congregation to fulfill its mission is by means of an expository preaching ministry. The previous chapters have recounted how God motivated his people to fulfill their mission through the expository preaching and leadership of Moses in Deuteronomy, the example of Jesus' preaching and leadership in Luke, the early apostolic sermons in Acts, and the roles and responsibilities of pastors as outlined in the Epistles. Following this biblical model, the sovereign Lord still calls and commissions pastors today to shepherd the church by means of an expository ministry. This final chapter will provide three strategic goals for implementing the findings of this thesis for pastors who desire to lead the local church to experience spiritual health and vitality.

One may wonder which is intrinsically more important for the pastor—preaching or leading. Charles Jefferson says,

We sometimes hear it said of a minister: 'He is a good pastor, but he cannot preach.' The sentence is self-contradictory. No man can be a good pastor who cannot preach, any more than a man can be a good shepherd and still fail to feed his flock.<sup>1</sup>

Biblically, the case can be made that preaching serves as the primary task of a pastor. John Owen says, "The first and principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the Word."<sup>2</sup> James Bryant and Mac Brunson claim, "Regardless of where

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Jefferson, *The Minister as Shepherd* (Hong Kong: Living Books for All, 1980), 63-64.

<sup>2</sup>John Owen, *Works*, XVI:74, quoted in J. I. Packer in *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 283.

you are and the responsibilities you have, the greatest priority of your ministry should be to preach the Word of God. . . . When you preach the Word of God, it is like fire that sets people aflame.”<sup>3</sup> Effective pastoring means leading through preaching, and conversely, preaching through leading. Michael Quicke echoes this focus of integrating leading and preaching: “Instead of claiming that leadership is supremely important and that preaching supports it, let’s assert that preaching is supremely important and leadership flows out of it.”<sup>4</sup> The roles and responsibilities of a pastor-teacher (Eph 4:11-12) and Paul’s instruction in 1 Timothy 5:17 as referenced in chapter 4 demonstrate that, by its very definition, pastoring integrates leading with preaching. Quicke quotes an interview with Vic Gordon, who says,

Preaching is the most important leadership task of the pastor. Every Sunday as I preach I see it as an act of leadership—calling people to understand who God wants us to be and what he wants us to do. Every Sunday I am in the pulpit I am an advocate for God’s vision. I get more leadership punch in preaching than anything else I do.<sup>5</sup>

### **Three Strategic Goals of Leading through Expository Preaching**

Three strategic goals of an expository preaching ministry establish how a pastor can effectively lead the church to fulfill its mission. These include (1) leading their churches to live under the authority of the Word, (2) aiming for gospel transformation, and (3) utilizing the pulpit as the primary vehicle to communicate both a theological and missiological direction for the congregation. Quicke warns, “You can lead without preaching (Rom 12:8) but you cannot preach biblically without leading. . . . Effective church life and mission have always burgeoned when preaching has been powerful.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>James W. Bryant and Mac Brunson, *The New Guidebook for Pastors* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 36.

<sup>4</sup>Michael J. Quicke, *360 Degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 53.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 60.

The overall efficacy of a congregation in fulfilling its mission rises and falls on godly pastoral leadership combined with faithful expository preaching. Alex Montoya states,

An effective pastor is more than a theologian. He must also be an effective preacher, a communicator of the divine message. There is never a leader with a sizable following who does not communicate effectively. In fact, in our age of communication, articulation and communication are necessary for the survival in any organization. . . . It is unfortunate that some preachers cease to improve their preaching abilities. It is a trade and skill we must master at all cost.<sup>7</sup>

Quicke asserts, “God’s empowering of his Word through preacher/leaders communicates like nothing else. The sermon is easily the most powerful communication tool ever devised when God chooses to bless it.”<sup>8</sup> Jack Hayford says,

A pastor, by definition, is a shepherd who is not only feeding, but is also taking people somewhere. My goal in preaching is to help people capture God’s vision and align themselves with it. I never see my teaching as simply educational. It’s always prophetic, pointing forward, calling to advance. It’s leading them to stretch.<sup>9</sup>

The pastor as the shepherd of the flock leads the people forward, stretching them and calling them to embrace God’s mission, and he does this principally through expository preaching. Montoya claims,

An indispensable trait of effective leadership is their ability to inspire others in an almost unconscious manner. Good leaders inspire discouraged and demoralized people; they add new life to a dying organization. . . . It is not enough to be at the front of the pack; the leader must also inspire the pack to pick up the pace and do it with a willing and enthusiastic attitude.<sup>10</sup>

### **Living under the Authority of the Word**

The first strategic goal of leading through expository preaching is to shepherd the congregation to live under the authority of the Word to dictate the mission of the

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<sup>7</sup>Alex D. Montoya, “Leading,” in *Pastoral Ministry: How to Shepherd Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and The Master’s Seminary Faculty (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 236-37.

<sup>8</sup>Quicke, *360 Degree Leadership*, 157.

<sup>9</sup>Jack Hayford, “Preaching that Leads: Stretch your Congregation to Pursue God’s Purposes,” *Leadership Journal* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 68.

<sup>10</sup>Montoya, “Leading,” 238.

church. Chapter 2 demonstrated how Moses understood that his authority to preach came directly from God's Words delivered to his mouth (Exod 4:12). In addition, Jesus held the highest view of the Scripture's authority and preached in such a way that his hearers might submit to God's Word.<sup>11</sup> In the early sermons in Acts, the apostles carefully referenced the Old Testament and demonstrated obedience to the authority of Scripture. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul commands Timothy and Titus to preach the authoritative Word of God (2 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:9), not their own opinions. Throughout biblical history, these instrumental men of God bowed to the authority of God's Word and preached in such a way to lead their hearers to submit themselves under that same authority. As such, this same model becomes one of the primary tasks contemporary preachers need to employ in exercising sound pastoral leadership.

However, pastors today find themselves in a culture that disdains any outside authority dictating how to live or what to believe. Following the leadership of Moses, Jesus, and the apostles, pastors can confront this present condition in the evangelical church by expositing the Scriptures with authority. A lack of authoritative expository preaching inevitably leads to the congregation's lack of obedience and confusion about the mission of the church. Walt Kaiser asks,

Where has the prophetic note in preaching gone? Where is the sense of authority and mission previously associated with the biblical Word? One of the most depressing spectacles in the Church today is her lack of power. . . . At the heart of this problem is an impotent pulpit.<sup>12</sup>

An impotent pulpit reflects impotent leadership, which results in an impotent church.

John McArthur laments,

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<sup>11</sup>In Matt 5:17-19, Jesus adhered to the authority of the Scriptures by claiming that anyone who lessens the Old Testament law will be called least in heaven. In Matt 12:38-42 Jesus referred to the Jonah account as a literal and historical event. In Matt 19:4-5 Jesus defined marriage by quoting from the authority of Gen 2:24. In John 10:35-36, Jesus said that "Scripture cannot be broken" and then quoted from Ps 82 as authoritative Scripture.

<sup>12</sup>Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981), 20, 235-36.



Evangelical preaching ought to reflect our conviction that God's Word is infallible and inerrant. Too often it does not. In fact, there is a discernible trend in contemporary evangelicalism away from biblical preaching and a drift toward an experience-centered, pragmatic, topical approach in the pulpit.<sup>13</sup>

Unbiblical theology and practices may creep into the fabric of the church's ethos when congregations do not live under the authority of God's Word. For example, churches can elevate their sacred traditions above the clear teachings of Scripture. One wonders if unbiblical core values embedded in the life of a congregation could lead to toxicity and division. For example, the church in Corinth displayed an unhealthy fascination with their spiritual leaders causing Paul to address their divisions and factions. First Corinthians 3:1-4 reads,

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not being merely human?

Commenting on this passage, D. A. Carson writes,

Pragmatically, their love of pomp, prestige, rhetoric, social approval, publically lauded 'wisdom'—in short, their raw triumphalism—demonstrated that they had not reflected very deeply on the entailments of the gospel of the crucified Messiah.<sup>14</sup>

The ethos of "leader worship" had crept into the Corinthian church demonstrating that they had forgotten the centrality of the gospel as well as the authority of the Scriptures.

As their shepherd, Paul addressed these problems by appealing to their spiritual immaturity and their failure to live under the authority of the solid food of the Scriptures.

In relation to this text, MacArthur claims,

Sinful desire is like cancer. . . . It will corrupt morals, weaken personal relationships, produce doubt about God and His Word, destroy prayer, and provide fertile ground for heresy. . . . When a congregation develops loyalties around

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<sup>13</sup>John MacArthur, "The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy: Expository Preaching," in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur and The Master's Seminary Faculty (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2005), 17.

<sup>14</sup>D. A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 70.

individuals, it is a sure symptom of spiritual immaturity and trouble.<sup>15</sup> A church can be tempted to adopt man-centered pragmatic techniques instead of relying on biblical principles to foster church growth. This lack of authoritative expository leadership can also result in biblical illiteracy—or even more hazardous—an abandonment of trust in the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture. Eric Alexander asserts,

With the eroding of confidence in the authority of Scripture in our own generation, it is not at all surprising that there has been an evacuation of authority from the pulpit. The decline in preaching is almost inevitably a result of such an absence of the conviction concerning the authority of Scripture.<sup>16</sup>

Practically, when congregations devalue living under the authority of God’s Word, they may not have a clear understanding of the pastor’s role in shepherding the church to fulfill its mission. Faithful and consistent expository preaching allows the pastor to lead the congregation away from these pitfalls into a more robust obedience to Christ and his plan for the church to fulfill the Great Commission. Albert Mohler claims,

In all true expository preaching, there is a note of authority. That is because the preacher dares to speak on behalf of God. He stands in the pulpit as a steward of the mysteries of God, declaring the truth of God’s Word, proclaiming the power of that Word, and applying that Word to life.<sup>17</sup>

Shepherding the church to live under the authority of the Word requires the pastor to lead the charge in embracing and elevating the doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. The doctrine of the nature of Scripture must inform the definition and practice of expository preaching. *The Second Helvetic Confession* teaches, “The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. Wherefore when this Word of God is now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe that the very Word

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<sup>15</sup>John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 72-73.

<sup>16</sup>Eric J. Alexander, *What Is Biblical Preaching?* (Phillisburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 15.

<sup>17</sup>Albert Mohler, Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago: Moody Publisher, 2008), 71.

of God is proclaimed.”<sup>18</sup> Timothy Ward argues,

This doctrine of verbal plenary inspiration provides a great practical benefit for preachers. It gives the preacher an authoritative, meaningful content: a speech act with both propositional content and active purpose. It gives him something to say that is clearly not his own word, and at root not a word of purely human origin, because God has uttered it in advance of him. He can therefore be protected from being a false teacher in the pulpit.<sup>19</sup>

When pastors practice expository preaching that remains faithful to the written text, the Scripture inherently provides propositional truth (2 Tim 3:16-17) along with the living and active ability to penetrate the souls of the hearers (Heb 4:12). Peter Adam says,

Because they are words that God has spoken, they have all the power of God, the speaker, behind them and within them. Our role is not to make God’s words powerful through our speaking, but to help people recognize the power and significance of those words.<sup>20</sup>

The key for the preacher is to remain as faithful to the text as possible as he preaches expositionally (2 Tim 4:2) in order to unleash the Bible’s inherent authority and potency.

Isaiah 55:10-11 vividly explains the Scriptures’ authority and potency:

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

God has mandated to the church the highest responsibility of proclaiming the truth of God without compromise. Gregg Allison urges, “The church must proclaim—clearly, urgently, persuasively—the Word of God without confusion, without change, without compromise—as its first order of business.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Creeds of Christendom, “The Second Helvetic Confession,” accessed May 20, 2015, <http://www.creeds.net/helvetic/index.htm>.

<sup>19</sup>Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2009), 161.

<sup>20</sup>Peter Adam, *Speaking God’s Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1996), 55.

<sup>21</sup>Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 435.

Through his expository preaching, the pastor sets the pace for the church's commitment to the authority of the Scripture to form their life together as a fellowship. Mohler asserts,

Without a total commitment to the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the Bible, the church is left without its definite authority, lacking confidence in its ability to hear God's voice. Preachers will lack confidence in the authority and truthfulness of the very Word they are commissioned to preach and teach. This is not an issue of homiletical theory but a life-and-death question of whether the preacher has a distinctive and authoritative Word to preach to people desperately in need of direction and guidance.<sup>22</sup>

A robust belief in inerrancy influences the pastor's methodology to practice expository preaching as the primary means of declaring biblical truth. Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix claim, "A strong conviction about the inspiration of Scripture naturally will inform the way you preach. A high view of biblical inspiration and inerrancy demands that the primary approach to preaching be the exposition of Bible books."<sup>23</sup> A correct theology of the nature of Scripture impacts how a pastor actually leads God's people to respond to the totality of his Word. Expository preaching emerges as the natural and logical result of embracing the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. MacArthur argues,

Expository preaching is the declarative genre in which inerrancy finds its logical expression and the church has its life and power. Stated simply, inerrancy demands exposition as the only method of preaching that preserves the purity of Scripture.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to adhering to the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture, expository preaching consistently exposes people to God's authoritative voice in the text, and not the selfish whims or authority of the pastor. Faithfulness to the Scriptures demonstrates the inherent authority of the Bible, not the "pseudo-authority" of the pastor's opinions. Sidney Greidanus argues, "If preachers wish to preach with divine authority, they must submit themselves, their thoughts and opinions, to the Scriptures and echo the Word of

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<sup>22</sup>R. Albert Mohler, "When the Bible Speaks, God Speaks: The Classic Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy," in *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, ed. J. Merrick and Stephen M. Garrett (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 31.

<sup>23</sup>Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 53.

<sup>24</sup>MacArthur, "The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy," 18-19.

God. . . Thus preaching with authority is synonymous with true expository preaching.”<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, a pastor can lead the people successfully because they submit to God’s voice, not his own. Andrew Purves says,

Preaching is a theological act in the true sense: it is an act whereby God ‘speaks,’ for it is God’s address to the congregation, and not just a human reflective word concerning God. It is God’s personal and actual Word of address to the people gathered through the voice of the minister.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the pastor’s primary responsibility is to ensure that the people actually hear God’s voice, not his own voice; which is accomplished through expository preaching. J. I.

Packer says,

The preacher’s aim will be to stand under Scripture, not over it, and to allow it, so to speak, to talk through him, delivering what is not so much his message as its own. . . . Scripture itself must do all the talking, and the preacher’s task is simply to ‘set the Bible in motion.’<sup>27</sup>

When pastors lead by “setting the Bible in motion” the congregation becomes empowered to advance in embracing their mission because it sees this mission as God’s mandate, not the pastor’s personal agenda. John R. W. Stott says, “Here, then, is the preacher’s authority. It depends on the closeness of his adherence to the text he is handling, that is, on the accuracy with which he has understood it and on the forcefulness with which it has spoken to his own soul.”<sup>28</sup> Mark Dever writes,

Many pastors happily accept the authority of God’s Word and profess to believe in the inerrancy of the Bible; yet if they do not in practice regularly preach expositionally, I’m convinced that they will never preach more than they knew when they began the whole exercise.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 12-13.

<sup>26</sup>Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 157.

<sup>27</sup>J. I. Packer, “Preaching as Biblical Interpretation,” in *Inerrancy and Common Sense*, ed. Roger R. and J. Ramsey Michaels (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), 203.

<sup>28</sup>John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), 30.

<sup>29</sup>Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 41.

An adherence to the inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures impels the pastor to preach expositionally as his primary ministry methodology. Stephen Olford avers,

The Scripture itself is not only stated to be the authority for the truth, it is *shown*, or exposed, as the authority for the truth. The truth of God is proclaimed and explained on the basis of textual explanation. The preacher is concerned that the message accurately corresponds with what God has said in His Word.<sup>30</sup>

Leading through expository preaching means more than just adopting a wooden methodology. It also involves a holistic mind-set where the pastor consistently exposes people to God's authoritative voice in the text, so that over time, people obey God and fulfill his mission. Ryken contends,

Expository preaching is not so much a method as it is a mind-set. A minister who sees himself as an expositor knows that he is not the master of the Word, but its servant. He has no other ambition than to preach what the Scriptures actually teach. His aim is to be faithful to God's Word so that his people can hear God's voice.<sup>31</sup>

Pastors who faithfully and systematically expose their people to God's Word demonstrate the biblical basis for many of the values expressed, ministries adopted, and decisions made in the church. The rationale for the mission, vision, and values comes from the Scriptures' authority, not from personal opinion or preference. This type of expository leadership guards the church from relying on man-centered traditions and selfish agendas to establish the foundation for the church's identity and ministries. James Means warns,

Leaders can speak with absolute authority only when they declare the will of God revealed in Scripture, but there is a constant danger of leaders believing that the will of God is what they want the church to do. One of the temptations of leadership is self-deception, which entices leaders to substitute their personal desires for the will of God. The function of leadership is to model, teach, inspire, motivate, and guide the church in its corporate life, not to inflict its own will upon the congregation.<sup>32</sup>

Expository preaching that stresses the authority of Scripture also works in reverse by preventing the church from inflicting its own will upon the pastor.

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<sup>30</sup>Stephen Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 1998), 103.

<sup>31</sup>Philip Graham Ryken, *City on a Hill: Reclaiming the Biblical Pattern for the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 49.

<sup>32</sup>James E. Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989), 100.

Authoritative expository preaching helps create a culture where the congregation can also avoid self-deception. As a result, the church can become discerning about adopting unbiblical attitudes and practices. Quicke says,

When church leaders speak of ‘core values’ and ‘mission’ for congregational identity and purpose, they must relate them directly to scriptural authority and careful exegesis—nowhere else does God make it clearer what it means for preacher/leaders and people to belong together as God’s people.<sup>33</sup>

Packer contends, “The authentic authority of the pulpit is the authority, not of the preacher’s eloquence, experience, or expertise, but of God speaking in Scripture through what he says as he explains and applies his text.”<sup>34</sup> This explanation and application of Scripture frees a pastor to exercise authentic godly leadership because he does not have to perform, entertain, or rely upon his personality to motivate the congregation to obedience. He simply explains and applies the text as his authority. Tony Merida writes, “Preachers that try to be cutting-edge, or fill their sermons with endless stories, lose authority. The authority of the sermon is not the suggestions, stories, or observations of the preacher. Authority comes from God’s Word.”<sup>35</sup> David Bast asserts,

What we who preach need most of all is a commitment to the biblical text. . . . Let us study it until we can understand and preach what it says, instead of shrinking from it because it doesn’t say what we want it to say, or says more than we want it to say. Let us preach the text, not the idea that brought us to the text.<sup>36</sup>

The Word becomes what actually shapes and motivates the church to fulfill its mission when pastors affirm inerrancy and inspiration by preaching the authoritative Scripture with clarity and conviction. Carson says expository preaching

gives confidence to the preacher and authorizes the sermon. If you are faithful to the text, you are certain your message is God’s message. Regardless of what is going on

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<sup>33</sup>Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching*, 166.

<sup>34</sup>J. I. Packer, *Truth and Power: The Place of Scripture in the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1996), 164.

<sup>35</sup>Tony Merida, *Faithful Preaching: Declaring Scripture with Responsibility, Passion, and Authenticity* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2009), 11.

<sup>36</sup>David M. Bast, “Why Preach?” *The Reformed Review* 39.3 (Spring 1986): 174-75.

in the church—whether it is growing or whether people like you—you know you are proclaiming God’s truth. This is wonderfully freeing.<sup>37</sup>

Steven Lawson claims, “The sovereign rule of God in the lives of His people will be realized to the extent that His Word is proclaimed authoritatively and embraced willingly by those who hear it.”<sup>38</sup> Shepherd leadership aims at shaping and orienting God’s people to embrace his mission. Expository preaching enables the pastor to expose people to God’s Word, which will transform their thinking and provide a solid foundation for why the church exists and how it should fulfill its mission. John Piper asserts,

Our authority as preachers sent by God rises and falls with our manifest allegiance to the text of Scripture. I say manifest because there are so many preachers who say they are doing exposition when they do not ground their assertions explicitly—‘manifestly’—in the text.<sup>39</sup>

Expository preaching liberates the pastor to lead the church from the inherent authority of the Scriptures. In doing so he can boldly challenge, confront, and correct the deficiencies and sins in his flock. Instead of ignoring problems or abdicating his role as a shepherd, leading by expository preaching emboldens the pastor to address the true needs and weaknesses of his congregations with a sense of authority. Timothy Keller cautions,

Unless your understanding of the Bible—and your confidence in its inspiration and authority—are deep and comprehensive, you will not be able to do the hard work necessary to understand and present it convincingly. Your lack of conviction will show up in your public teaching, blunting its impact. Instead of proclaiming, warning, and inviting, you will be sharing, musing, and conjecturing.<sup>40</sup>

When a pastor leads his people through expository preaching to live under the authority of the Word, he becomes supernaturally empowered to proclaim like a herald, energized to teach like a sage, emboldened to plead like a father, and enabled to exhort like a shepherd. Wayne Grudem claims,

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<sup>37</sup>D. A. Carson, “Accept No Substitutes,” *Leadership Magazine*, Summer 1996, 88.

<sup>38</sup>Steven J. Lawson, *Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call for Expository Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 42.

<sup>39</sup>John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 44.

<sup>40</sup>Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 33.



Throughout the history of church the greatest preachers have been those who have recognized that they have no authority in themselves and have seen their task as being to explain the words of Scripture and apply them clearly to the lives of their hearers. Their preaching has drawn its power not from the proclamation of the their own Christian experiences or the experiences of others, nor from their own opinions, creative ideas, or rhetorical skills, but from God's powerful words. . . .<sup>41</sup> Only the written words of Scripture can give this kind of authority to preaching.

The pastor's spiritual leadership authority is not innate, but derives from the authority resident in the text of Scripture. His task becomes the consistent preaching of that text in order to expose his people to God's voice as a means to lead them to obedience in fulfilling their mission.

### **Preaching for Gospel Transformation**

The second strategic goal of leading through expository preaching is for the church to experience gospel transformation by responding in obedience—especially in fulfilling the mission. The goal in preaching is not merely for the church to acquire information, but to undergo authentic change. Moses' three expository sermons in Deuteronomy were aimed at transforming the Israelites to wholehearted obedience in fulfilling their mission as a “display people” in the Promised Land. Jesus' expository preaching in Luke 4 showed how he came to free sinners through the gospel. In Luke 24, Jesus commissioned his disciples to share the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit aiming for repentance in their hearers. The early apostolic sermons in Acts cut their listeners to the heart and moved them to repentance. One can argue the case that Moses' three discourses in Deuteronomy, Jesus' synagogue sermon in Luke 4, and those early apostolic messages in Acts all contain three vital elements of expository preaching: the presentation of a text, followed by the explanation of that text, along with exhortations to act upon the text. Bryan Chapell stresses,

These features are consistent enough to challenge today's preachers to consider whether their exposition of Scripture faithfully reflects these biblical elements: presentation of some aspect of the Word itself; explanation of what that portion of

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<sup>41</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 82.

the Word means; and exhortation to act on the basis of what the explanation reveals.<sup>42</sup>

In the same way, pastors today lead their people to embrace Christ's mission through faithful expository preaching that aims for authentic gospel transformation by exhorting them to act in response to the text.

Expository preaching by definition focuses on careful exegesis through proclaiming the authorial intent of the biblical text. However, behind every text, there also lies the Spirit-intended purpose for which that content was given. Jay Adams argues,

There are few deficiencies in preaching quite so disastrous in their effect as the all-too-frequently occurring failure to determine the telos (or purpose) of a preaching portion. . . . You must never preach on a passage until you are certain you understand why the Holy Spirit included that passage in the Bible.<sup>43</sup>

Expository preaching goes further than just understanding the text in its grammatical-historical context (see n. 74 in chap. 3 of this thesis). The preacher must determine the Holy Spirit's intended purpose, which almost always leads to application and transformation. Transformational preaching not only informs the hearers of the content of the text, but also aims for applying the text to motivate, convince, or persuade the congregation to respond in obedience. Chapell claims, "The application of an expository sermon is not complete until the pastor has disclosed the grace in the text that rightly stimulates the obedient response of believers."<sup>44</sup> Abraham Kuruvilla expands upon this approach arguing that preachers must determine the "world in front of the text." He asserts,

As far as preaching is concerned, the 'point' or thrust of a text is what the author was doing with what he was saying (the world in front of the text). In response, the people of God derive valid application from grasping that author's doing. Authors do things with what they say, and therefore interpreters of texts are obliged to discern what was being done with what was being said, if they are going to generate

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<sup>42</sup>Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 82.

<sup>43</sup>Jay Adams, *Preaching with Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 27.

<sup>44</sup>Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 209.

valid application.<sup>45</sup>

Pastors preach for transformation when they try to generate valid application from the *telos* or purpose of the text. Some biblical texts drive a person to tears in confession of sin, as other texts expose hidden transgressions like a dagger in the soul, while other texts comfort and console. Expository preaching does more than just explain a text's meaning; it also seeks to express the text's purpose and provide practical application, which invariably should lead to gospel transformation. If pastors only preach a text's meaning and never apply the text, the sermon will sound more like a boring lecture and fail to accomplish what the Spirit intended—authentic change. Ward claims,

Faithful biblical preaching must certainly include exegetical and doctrinal instruction, but it cannot be content with just these things. If it is, it is likely to seem dull and lifeless, lacking the power to move the emotions and the will. Properly faithful biblical preaching involves the preacher deliberately seeking to fashion every verbal aspect of his preaching in such a way that the Spirit may act through his words in the lives of his hearers, ministering the content of the Scripture in accordance with the purpose of Scripture.<sup>46</sup>

Leading through preaching requires preachers not only to proclaim faithfully the content of the text, but also to lead their people to respond in obedience to the authority of the Scripture and experience true gospel transformation. Andrew Davis says,

The word of God, preached with clarity, skill, and deep conviction, has the power to transform hearts and rearrange lives—power that can feel like an ‘electric shock.’ All leaders have the power to inspire people to sacrifice, shock people out of complacency and disengagement to full commitment.<sup>47</sup>

Adam quotes John Calvin who said, “Therefore doctrine of itself can profit nothing unless it be confirmed by exhortations and threats, unless there be spurs to prick men withal. . . . If teaching not be helped with exhortations it is cold and pierces not our

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<sup>45</sup>Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 51-52.

<sup>46</sup>Ward, *Words of Life*, 163.

<sup>47</sup>Andrew Davis, “Leading the Church in Today’s World: What It Means Practically to Shepherd God’s Flock,” in *Shepherding God’s Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 322.

hearts.”<sup>48</sup> Pastors not only teach but they also exhort, motivate, and inspire people to change. Expository preaching is not a lecture merely filling the mind with information, but instead is a message from the inspired text to challenge the heart and will toward gospel transformation. Chapell attests,

Biblical preaching moves from doctrinal exposition to life instruction. Such preaching exhorts as well as expounds because it recognizes that Scripture’s own goal is not merely to share information about God but it is to conform his people to the likeness of Christ. Preaching without application may serve the mind, but preaching with application requires service to Christ.<sup>49</sup>

This description represents the type of preaching Moses, Jesus, and the apostles practiced. In Deuteronomy, Moses read the text, explained the text, and applied the text with urgent warnings. In Luke 4, Jesus read from Isaiah, explained the Scripture, and then urged his hearers to respond in that very moment. In the early sermons in Acts, Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Paul read from the Old Testament, explained the implications of the text, and then called their hearers to respond with repentance and faith in Christ as Messiah. This consistent pattern in the expository sermons revealed in the Bible shows preaching that aims for more than just information, but also for gospel transformation. Quicke warns,

Too often as preachers, we believe our only job is to preach and teach the Bible, when our calling is really to transform lives and transform churches by such preaching. . . . I believe that preaching is God’s primary way of transforming individuals and communities because he empowers it.<sup>50</sup>

Pastors can lead their churches effectively when they wholeheartedly embrace the truth that God empowers expository preaching. When the pastor reads the text, explains the text, and then applies the text, the Holy Spirit honors this proclamation with either the regeneration of lost sinners or the progressive sanctification of the saints. Adam

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<sup>48</sup>Adam, *Speaking God’s Words*, 141-42.

<sup>49</sup>Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 45.

<sup>50</sup>Quicke, *360 Degree Leadership*, 16-17.

claims,

This belief in the effectiveness of Scripture is of course a foundation stone of preaching. If we believed that Scripture was true but powerless, we would regard Christian preachers as those who have themselves the great responsibility of making the truth of God effective in people's lives. . . . We are preaching not a dead word but a living Word; we are preaching not a word which is ineffective but a Word which is effective in the hand of God, for God's own good purposes. We can thus preach with confidence, faith, and expectation.<sup>51</sup>

Pastors at times may be tempted to minimize the potency of the preached Word. Instead of expecting God to transform lives through his Word, pastors can lose confidence in the Scripture's ability to impact hearers with lasting change. Craig Larson says,

God's full strength comes to bear when the Word of God is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. When our purpose is to reshape people into the image of Jesus Christ—not merely helping them feel better or providing inspiration—nothing has greater potency than biblical preaching.<sup>52</sup>

J. I. Packer gives a compelling description of preaching as more than just transferring information:

The purpose of preaching is not to stir people to action while bypassing their minds, so that they never see the reason God gives them for doing what the preacher requires of them (that is manipulation); nor is the purpose to stock people's minds with truth, no matter how vital and clear, which then lies fallow and does not become the seed-bed and source of changed lives (that is academicism). . . . The purpose of preaching is to inform, persuade, and call forth an appropriate response to God.<sup>53</sup>

Many preachers can become guilty of manipulating their hearers through bypassing their minds and focusing solely on emotionalism or sentimentality. On the other hand, preachers may lean toward academicism if the sermon functions as a lecture. This type of preaching may leave his hearers' minds filled with Bible trivia and stale facts, but in the end, there remains no gospel change. Genuine expository preaching moves beyond manipulative emotionalism and cold academicism by aiming for a

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<sup>51</sup>Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 91.

<sup>52</sup>Craig Brian Larson, "What Gives Preaching its Power?" *Leadership Magazine*, Spring 2004, 32.

<sup>53</sup>J. I. Packer, "Why Preach?" in *The Preacher and Preaching*, ed. Samuel T. Logan (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1986), 9.

transformation that lasts and brings forth consistent spiritual fruit. In other words, pastors must believe in the inherent potency of expository preaching as a means to lead the church to spiritual growth. Dever states,

It shouldn't surprise you to hear that sound, expositional preaching is often the fountainhead of growth in a church. Let a good expositional ministry be established and watch what happens. Forget what the experts say. Watch hungry people have their lives transformed as the living God speaks to them through the power of His Word.<sup>54</sup>

Understanding this goal requires pastors to labor at explaining the text clearly and applying the text to challenge their congregation to obedience. Leading through preaching means more than just faithful exposition, but it also involves poignant application whereby the pastor shepherds the congregation to fulfill their mission as a church. Darrell Johnson writes,

Expository preaching is the place, the venue, where the miracle of divine transformation takes place. For in expository preaching the preacher is participating with what the risen Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is doing in and through the text. He is engendering an encounter with the Lord of the text in which the Lord announces news, good news which causes a shift in worldview, calling for a new step of trusting obedience; enabling us to do it, to actually live in the new reality opened up to us by the opening of the text.<sup>55</sup>

Pastors become not only more effective preachers when they apply the text for transformation, but they also become more effective leaders who call their flock to respond in obedience to God's direction for their future. Hershael York exhorts, "We don't want to fill their heads; we want the proclamation of the Word to grip their souls and motivate them to conform to the will of God. Our approach to the Bible and preaching, therefore, has *application* as its ultimate goal."<sup>56</sup>

Packer quotes Charles Simeon who described this integration of preaching and

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<sup>54</sup>Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 54.

<sup>55</sup>Darrell W. Johnson, *The Glory of Preaching: Participating in God's Transformation of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2009), 75.

<sup>56</sup>Hershael York and Burt Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing Group, 2003), 11.

leading: “To preach is not easy—to carry his congregation on his shoulders as it were to heaven; to weep over them, pray for them, deliver truth with a weeping, praying heart.”<sup>57</sup> As shepherds who desire to lead their flocks to gospel transformation, pastors must see their burden in expository preaching to “carry their congregations on their shoulders” by not only explaining the text faithfully, but also by providing pertinent application that challenges them to obedience. In sum, the ultimate aim of an expository sermon is to explain the text accurately so that the people hear God’s voice, but more importantly, so that they can act upon it with repentance, faith, and obedience. *The Westminster Longer Catechism* provides a helpful explanation in *Question 160* of the responsibility of those who sit under expository preaching by asking,

What is required of those who hear the word preached? Answer: It is required that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation and prayer . . . receive the truth with faith, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate and hide it in their hearts and bring forth fruit of it in their lives.<sup>58</sup>

An expository preacher evidences impactful spiritual leadership when he sees the Word producing demonstrable fruit in the lives of his church family. Leading through expository preaching that aims for gospel transformation animates spiritually lethargic and disobedient congregations. David Gordon exclaims, “Show me a church where the preaching is good, and yet the church is still moribund. I’ve never seen such a church. The moribund churches I’ve seen have been malpreached to death.”<sup>59</sup> Quicke asserts,

The conviction that God’s power works through his words forges a transformational role for preaching/leading. . . . Speaking God’s words inexorably means

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<sup>57</sup>J. I. Packer, “Expository Preaching: Charles Simeon and Ourselves,” in *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching in Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, ed. Leland Ryken and Todd Wilson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 151.

<sup>58</sup>“The Westminster Larger Catechism” (1648), in *Thy Word is Still Truth: Essential Writings on the Doctrine of Scripture from the Reformation to Today*, ed. Peter A. Lillback and Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2013), 232.

<sup>59</sup>T. David Gordon, *Why Johnny Can’t Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009), 33.

transformational leadership. This power of God's Word in Scripture therefore sanctions preaching to be the primary means by which God shapes his people to his will.<sup>60</sup>

In order to preach in a way that combines faithful exposition with practical application requires the preacher not only to inform the church, but to call them passionately to respond. As evidenced in chapter 2, Moses' expository preaching in Deuteronomy exemplified a hortatory tone calling the Israelites to urgent and passionate obedience. In the same way, pastors who lead through their expository preaching exhort and motivate their hearers to respond with urgency. Vines and Shaddix claim, "We do not preach merely to hear ourselves talk or simply to convey information. We preach for a response. We are lawyers pleading our Lord's cause. We are calling for a verdict."<sup>61</sup> W. A. Criswell said, "Pastor, preach for a verdict and expect it. God will honor your faith with souls."<sup>62</sup>

Charles Simeon asked three questions of his sermons that provide an effective grid for pastors to utilize in assessing the transformational impact of their preaching: "Did it humble the sinner? Did it exalt the Savior? Did it promote holiness?"<sup>63</sup> The goal of leading through expository preaching is not just to inform the congregation so that their minds can be filled with biblical data. Instead, the goal comes in preaching in such a way that he faithfully exposes the text by revealing the glories of Christ and the gospel so that his hearers are moved to respond. Historically, this concept has been referred to as making the truth "real." Keller says,

Unless the truth is not only clear but also real to listeners, then people will still fail to obey it. Preaching cannot simply be accurate and sound. It must capture the listeners' interest and imaginations; it must be compelling and penetrate to their

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<sup>60</sup>Quicke, *360 Degree Leadership*, 47-48.

<sup>61</sup>Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 212.

<sup>62</sup>W. A. Criswell, *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1980), 41.

<sup>63</sup>Hugh Evan Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 62.



hearts. It is possible to merely assert and confront and feel we have been very ‘valiant for truth,’ but if you are dry or tedious, people will not repent and believe the right doctrine you present.<sup>64</sup>

The “realness” of the truth preached depends upon the nature or genre of the text expounded. Sometimes the response to the passage preached results in brokenness and repentance; other times the Scripture elicits heartfelt worship and awe; other times, the text produces renewed affections for Christ that motivate believers to obedience. Joseph Stowell argues,

Effective preaching is transformational preaching. Preachers and sermons can be funny, entertaining, enthralling, intriguing, intellectually stimulating, controversial, full of impressive theological and doctrinal footpaths, or authoritative. But if ultimately the outcome does not result in a changed life because of an encounter with truth, then it has not been what God intended preaching to be.<sup>65</sup>

Expository preaching centers upon promoting true life change because the church has been exposed to the Word through faithful preaching. The Holy Spirit has so worked in the hearts of the people that they demonstrate authentic gospel transformation. Robert Mounce argues, “A sermon may be true, interesting, and even vitally important, but unless something actually takes place, it is not preaching. True preaching is an event—an event that effectively communicates the power and redemptive activity of God.”<sup>66</sup>

Some homileticians, especially those in the Reformed tradition, argue that preachers should never do any application because the Holy Spirit will apply the text supernaturally to the hearer. Stott admits,

In my early days I used to think that my business was to expound and exegete the text; I’m afraid I left the application to the Holy Spirit. It is amazing how you can conceal your laziness with a little pious phraseology. The Holy Spirit certainly can and does apply the Word for the people. But it is wrong to deny our responsibility in the application of the Word. All great preachers understand this. They focus on the application of the text. This is what the Puritans called ‘preaching through to the heart.’ This is how my own preaching has changed. I have learned to add

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<sup>64</sup>Keller, *Preaching*, 157.

<sup>65</sup>Joseph M. Stowell, *Shepherding the Church: Effective Spiritual Leadership in a Changing Culture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 255.

<sup>66</sup>Robert H. Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1960), 155.

application to exposition.<sup>67</sup>

This approach to leaving the application to the Holy Spirit without the pastor taking personal responsibility lacks sufficient biblical evidence. Moses, as an expository preacher in Deuteronomy, called for a verdict from his audience and applied the Law to their current situation. Jesus, in his Nazareth sermon in Luke 4, urged his hearers to respond to him that very day and he used two illustrations from the Old Testament to drive home his point. In the Pentecost sermon in Acts 2, Peter looked his audience straight in the eye and urged them to repent. No pastor in and of himself can affect this transformation in the hearts of his people. Only the Holy Spirit can sovereignly accomplish this work through the preacher's faithful explanation and application of the text. Chandler, Patterson, and Geiger say,

The preacher should not feel as if he is carrying the burden of life change; he merely carries the burden of faithful exposition and the robust proclamation of the text at hand, trusting that God's Word will never return void (Isa 55:10-11). This is the wonder and weight of preaching.<sup>68</sup>

Pastors can initiate this transformation in the life of the church by preaching expository sermons that not only inform the mind, but aim for the heart and will as they desire to see the Holy Spirit accomplish authentic change in people's lives. Herrington, Bonem, and Furr state, "Leaders are not really in charge. Church leaders are followers of the living God who directs their lives through the Holy Spirit. They are, however, called to initiate transformation in the corporate life of the congregation where they serve."<sup>69</sup> Michael Fabarez contends,

We can no longer evaluate our sermons solely on the basis of theological and exegetical soundness. It isn't enough to drive home from church basking in self-congratulation because our outline was memorable, or because we were fluent or

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<sup>67</sup>John R. W. Stott, "Creating the Bridge: An Interview with John R. W. Stott," *Preaching Magazine* 4, no. 5, March-April 1989, 4-5.

<sup>68</sup>Matt Chandler, Josh Patterson, and Eric Geiger, *Creature of the Word: The Jesus-Centered Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2012), 123.

<sup>69</sup>Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 160-61.

articulate. . . . Instead, we must purpose to evaluate every sermon we preach in light of the biblical change it brings about in the lives of our congregants!<sup>70</sup>

Tim Chester says, “The measure of good preaching is not what people hear, but what people do as a result. It means that what counts is not so much good Bible teaching, as good Bible living.”<sup>71</sup> Wilbur Ellsworth says,

The preacher, while being committed to the accuracy of the biblical text, goes beyond the work of the teacher, for preaching has as its ultimate goal *redemptive penetration*. . . . Preaching God’s Word in the power of the Holy Spirit does more than merely connect with listeners. It penetrates the listener so that the soil of the heart is broken up and the seed of God’s true Word is planted deep in the life, so that the work of God may produce the fruit of grace.<sup>72</sup>

This integration of leadership with expository preaching that aims for gospel transformation will penetrate hearts and result in authentic lasting change and obedience to the mission.

### **Communicating a Theological and Missiological Direction**

Utilizing the pulpit as the primary vehicle to communicate a theological and missiological direction for the church stands as the third aim of leading through expository preaching. Whoever fills the pulpit on a regular basis serves as the *de facto* leader of the church, the chief mouthpiece for vision, the resident theologian, and the strategic missiologist who must actually lead the people through his preaching. Quicke notes,

No one is more visible, more spiritually empowered, with higher profile and quality corporate time to develop relationship along the missionary dialogue axis than the preacher/leader. A church’s mission and vision should be most clearly articulated in worship through preaching.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Michael Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002), 9-10.

<sup>71</sup>Tim Chester and Marcus Honeycutt, *Gospel Centered Preaching* (Surrey, UK: The Good Book Company, 2014), 20.

<sup>72</sup>Wilbur C. Ellsworth, “From Faith to Faith: What Makes Preaching So Vital for Reformation?” in *Reforming Pastoral Ministry: Challenges for Ministry in Postmodern Times*, ed. John Armstrong (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 115.

<sup>73</sup>Quicke, *360 Leadership*, 71.

Aubrey Malphurs agrees: “The congregation looks at the person behind the pulpit as the leader of the church whether or not it is true. Consequently, the sermon is a primary vehicle that the leadership uses to cast its beliefs and dreams.”<sup>74</sup>

Many leadership resources and experts argue for aptitude in communicating, but few actually promote expository preaching as the primary means to communicate a compelling vision for the direction of the church. In addition, the language and references concerning vision casting from popular resources on leadership have more to do with mysticism, managerial techniques, and personal opinion rather than deriving the vision from the authority of the Scriptures. A church’s mission and vision should be clearly revealed from the text of Scripture. By exposing his congregation to the whole counsel of God’s word through expository preaching, pastors become emboldened to lead the church to embrace its mission because this mission comes directly from the authority of the text. Quicke laments that much preaching in evangelicalism is “thin-blooded” whereby pastors never truly lead through their preaching. He asserts,

Pallid preaching leaves visions and strategic changes for others to talk about. . . . Sadly, communication and implementation of genuine vision can be left entirely to organizational announcements outside the pulpit as thin-blooded preaching steers clear of applying Scripture to a process of congregational transformation. . . . I believe that preaching brings the whole church under God to see his vision and hear his Word for his mission.<sup>75</sup>

Larry Osborn claims, “Preaching is perhaps the most important vision-casting tool a pastor has at his disposal. The values and principles taught from the pulpit eventually establish the DNA of a church.”<sup>76</sup> Osborn also argues that pastors should “drip vision and core values into every sermon they preach”<sup>77</sup> instead of attempting to cast the vision

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<sup>74</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 111.

<sup>75</sup>Quicke, *360 Degree Leadership*, 17, 38.

<sup>76</sup>Larry Osborn, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 164.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 164.

for the church only in an annual sermon. In essence, when pastors lead through expository preaching the end results should become a gospel-centered people who joyfully worship Jesus in obedience to the Great Commission as the very DNA and ethos of church life together. Ronald Allen states,

The heart of leadership is helping the community articulate its vision and organize and mobilize its life so as to enact that vision. . . . The sermon's most important leadership role is to help the congregation interpret the vision of the community and its patterns of organization from the perspective of the gospel.<sup>78</sup>

The theological direction for the church almost always comes from the pulpit. Pastors must see their preaching as more than just expositing the text with accuracy, but as a primary means to lead the people theologically. Through systematic expository preaching, pastors can help cure biblical illiteracy, confront false doctrines that may creep into the church, and establish the congregation's theological identity. A church's theological identity is vital to its future, but this identity must be communicated repeatedly so that the people of God can live in the reality of who they are in Christ. Church members may have a fairly good understanding of the church's doctrinal statement, but will probably never refer to it on a consistent basis. Through week-by-week exposition, the pastor can reinforce the church's core theological identity by showing how it derives its origin from particular texts. Communicating a theological vision for the church relates back to God's purpose for Israel in Exodus 19 to be a "display people" to the nations and the church's mission in 1 Peter 2:9 to proclaim his glories to the watching world. When a church understands its identity through solid theological training, it can accomplish its mission more effectively. William Hull says,

The primary task of the pulpit is to help the church execute the purposes for which it was established. The sermon beckons and propels the people of God toward the actualization of their reality here on earth. The task of the strategic leader is to guide the church to implement the unique Christian vision of God's tomorrow rather than to conform to earth's vision of its own expected future.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 91.

<sup>79</sup>William Hull, *Strategic Preaching: The Role of the Pulpit in Pastoral Leadership* (St. Louis:

Pastors who integrate leadership with expository preaching help the church discern God's preferred future and motivate them to obedience in fulfilling the mission.

In addition to communicating a theological vision for the church, leading through expository preaching can also help establish a missiological vision for the church. A theological vision helps clarify what the church believes and who they are as God's people (Exod 19:3-6; 1 Pet 2:9), whereas a missiological vision helps clarify what the church is actually supposed to do and how they interact with the world around them (Matt 28:19-20). John Tornfelt says,

A realistic vision for the future can be communicated through preaching. Prone to be comfortable and self-protective, people need continual reminders they are a people of mission who are responsible to engage the world with the gospel. . . . Vision is indispensable to leadership and there is no more appropriate place for a hoped-for future to be compellingly communicated than from the pulpit.<sup>80</sup>

Means contends, "Good effective spiritual leaders infuse others with an animating, quickening, and exalting spirit of enthusiasm for the person of Christ, growth in Christ, and the mission of the church."<sup>81</sup> While Exodus 19:3-6 and 1 Peter 2:9 describe the identity of God's people, the Great Commission describes the missiological mandate of the church to make disciples of all nations. Shepherds who desire to lead through expository preaching use the pulpit as their primary vehicle to clarify both the church's identity (theological vision) and their Great Commission mandate (missional vision). David Allen claims, "If the mission of the church is the evangelization of the lost and the equipping of the saved, then of all things the church does, preaching must be at the apex."<sup>82</sup> Michael Goheen asserts,

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Chalice Press, 2006), 126, 149.

<sup>80</sup>John V. Tornfelt, "Preaching and Leading: Mending a Fractured Relationship," *Evangelical Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 3.

<sup>81</sup>Means, *Leadership in Christian Ministry*, 65.

<sup>82</sup>David L. Allen, "Preaching for a Great Commission Resurgence," in *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in our Our Time*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Adam Greenway (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2010), 281.

Faithful preaching will always move from Christ to mission because there is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission. So the business of preaching is to bring listeners face-to-face with Jesus Christ and all his saving power to equip us for our comprehensive mission in the world.<sup>83</sup>

Communicating the missiological vision from the pulpit not only equips the church for mission, but energizes them to understand the global scope of God's agenda to glorify himself through the advancement of the gospel to the nations. David Horner comments on survey feedback from pastors whom he found cast a missiological vision through their preaching:

The effective missions churches surveyed followed a decisive pattern of biblical preaching that follows a systematic path toward consistent exposition of books of the Bible. That is good news for missions because God's Word is filled with His heart for the nations. By bringing missions into his pulpit ministry as a normal part of his preaching regimen, the pastor provides a model to be followed.<sup>84</sup>

Pastors should model communicating the missiological direction as a normal part of their expository preaching ministry. Keller encourages,

Missional churches must equip laypeople both for evangelistic witness and for public life and vocation. . . . In a missional church, all people need theological education to 'think Christianly' about everything and to act with Christian distinctiveness. . . . A missional church, if it is to have a missionary encounter with Western culture, will need to confront society's idols and especially address how modernity makes the happiness and self-actualization of the individual into an absolute.<sup>85</sup>

This equipping for evangelism and mission happens through the expository preaching of the whole counsel of God's Word which invariably tackles controversial issues and exposes people's deeply-held idols of the heart. Leading through expository preaching confronts both a deficient theology and a misunderstanding of the mission of the church. Carson laments,

In the West, we must repent of our endless fascination for leadership that smacks

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<sup>83</sup>Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Bible Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 206.

<sup>84</sup>David Horner, *When Missions Shapes the Mission: You and Your Church Can Reach the World* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2011), 160-61.

<sup>85</sup>Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 259-60, 271.

much more of either hierarchical models (I am the boss, what I say goes) or of democratic models (give people what they want; take another survey, conduct another poll, and scratch where they itch.) All valid Christian leadership must begin with this fundamental recognition: Christian leaders have been entrusted with the gospel . . . and all their service turns on making the gospel known and on encouraging the people of God, by word, example, and discipline, to live it out.<sup>86</sup>

God can powerfully use the integration of expository preaching and missional leadership to motivate his church to fulfill the Great Commission. Daniel Akin claims,

Any preaching that does not expect the living and powerful Word of God to produce results and usher in conversions is preaching that should be retired to the graveyard where it rightfully belongs. Bad preaching will sap the life of a church. It will kill its spirit, dry up its fruit, and eventually empty it. It is preaching that will torpedo a Great Commission Resurgence.<sup>87</sup>

This type of expository leadership that utilizes the pulpit to communicate both the theological and missiological direction for the church requires courageous faith. J. Oswald Sanders says, “Those who have most powerfully and permanently influenced their generation have been the ‘seers’—men who have seen more and farther than others—men of faith, for faith is vision.”<sup>88</sup>

Many pastors may view themselves simply as caretakers who administrate the affairs of the church, instead of strategic disciple-makers whose expository leadership sets the tone for the church and helps create a culture of mission. Pastoral leadership means more than just overseeing committees, making sure the church programs continue to run smoothly, or functioning like a chaplain that maintains the status quo. Instead, the pastor-teacher serves as a catalyst who leads dynamic change. Erwin Lutzer contends,

Committees are necessary. Even more important is vision and the ability to move the congregation toward the goals of the church. But when push comes to shove, it’s the ministry of the Word that gives us our greatest impact. A church can usually put up with weak administration if it has effective preaching.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry*, 96-97.

<sup>87</sup>Daniel L. Akin, “Axioms for a Great Commission Resurgence,” in *Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God’s Mandate in our Time*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Adam Greenway (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2010), 360.

<sup>88</sup>J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1967), 113-14.

<sup>89</sup>Erwin Lutzer, *Pastor to Pastor: Tackling the Problems of Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998), 104.



When pastors integrate effective administrative leadership along with powerful expository preaching, the church becomes positioned to experience spiritual health. Bill Hull argues, “If church leadership teams would devote as much time and energy to thinking through and implementing the Great Commission as they do to ‘housekeeping’ issues, the church would be vital and effective.”<sup>90</sup>

This strategy of leading the church to embrace the Great Commission’s mandate of making disciples should be consistently proclaimed from the pulpit. Hull says,

The disciple-making pastor declares his beliefs concerning discipleship from the pulpit. He proclaims the purpose and goals of the church. In order for disciple making to become the heart of the church, the pastor must teach it as such. He justifies his claims with solid biblical exposition.<sup>91</sup>

This encouragement through expository preaching places the pastor in a difficult spot because sometimes he must confront the complacency and disobedience of his people. Hull claims, “The pastor commits himself to motivating people to do what they don’t want so they can become what God wants them to be.”<sup>92</sup> Leading from the pulpit involves declaring the whole counsel of God’s Word, which at times may offend or challenge the flock. Dever asserts, “Leadership in the church also means equipping people with what they need for spiritual growth and ministry (Eph 4:11-13), and serving them in a way that cultivates a culture of servant leadership and emulates the ethos of the Savior (Mark 10:45; John 13:1-17).”<sup>93</sup>

Leadership that cultivates a gospel-centered culture in obedience to Jesus through ministering the Word can be exacting and difficult work at times. The temptation

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<sup>90</sup>Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor: Leading Others on the Journey of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 45.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 153.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 117.

<sup>93</sup>Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 94.

for many pastors may be to simply offer platitudes, psychological self-help, or trite bits of conventional wisdom when interacting with others; but that philosophy of ministry is not expository leadership. Chapter 4 provided an analysis of 1 Timothy 5:17 as the key text that combines leading with preaching: “Let the elders who rule well be worthy of double honor; especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” When pastors fully understand and practice the reality of this text, they can begin to see the culture and ethos of the church change in response to their leadership. Through this labor of leading well through expository preaching the pastor shepherds the flock to live under the authority of the Word. He desires to preach not only for information, but also for gospel transformation where his people are responding in obedience to the Great Commission. In addition, the pastor uses the pulpit as the primary vehicle to communicate the theological and missiological direction for the church. When a pastor incorporates these three strategic goals into his leadership paradigm, he truly follows in the footsteps of Moses, Jesus, the apostles, and Paul’s instructions in the Pastoral Epistles. The pastor embodies the dynamic impact of leading a church through expository preaching to fulfill its mission.

### **Conclusion**

Anemic churches exist primarily because of both anemic preaching and leadership. When pastors fail to lead the flock, the sheep wander, flounder, and eventually starve. In essence, a church will become empowered to fulfill its mission when it is motivated, encouraged, and led by a pastor who does so through an expository preaching ministry that exposes the people to the full counsel of God’s Word. Dever articulates the importance of leading through expository preaching:

A man may have a charismatic personality; he may be a gifted administrator and a silken orator; he may be armed with an impressive program; he may even have the people skills of a politician and the empathetic listening skills of a counselor; but he

will starve the sheep if he cannot feed the people of God on the Word of God. Programs and personalities are dispensable. But without food, sheep die. Feeding the flock is therefore the pastor's first priority.<sup>94</sup>

We live in an evangelical church culture that at times eschews the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures to set the agenda for the church. Some pastors and church leaders may be driven by pragmatism, marketing, and psychology to produce church growth. In addition, many churches lack gospel transformation through the power of the Holy Spirit. Pastors and their people are sometimes content to remain stagnant in their ruts of tradition and complacency instead of responding with urgency to the Great Commission. A pastor may simply preach sermons to fill his congregation's minds with Bible trivia but never aim for authentic transformation and obedience. The integration of shepherd leadership with expository preaching heightens the importance of using the pulpit as the primary vehicle to communicate a theological and missiological direction for the church.

The Body of Christ needs a Holy Spirit-anointed reformation where pastors take seriously their divine calling not simply to preach, but to preach expositionally; and not only to preach expositionally, but to lead their congregations effectively and strategically in order to fulfill their mission through that expository preaching. Congregations that experience dynamic shepherd leadership fueled by expository preaching become equipped and empowered to fulfill the Great Commission with joyful obedience. When pastors take up the mantle of integrating leadership with expository preaching as evidenced in Moses, Jesus, the apostles, and the Pastoral Epistles, they incorporate a biblical model that God has blessed in the past. Pastors should pray for God to continue blessing this type of leadership in their the churches with a shift away from biblical illiteracy, complacency, disobedience, and deadness, to congregations animated and sustained by the truth of the Word and the vitality of his Spirit.

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<sup>94</sup>Dever and Alexander, *The Deliberate Church*, 94.

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## ABSTRACT

### LEADING CHURCHES TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION THROUGH EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Sean David Cole, D.Min.  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Hershael York

This thesis asserts that the foundational way pastors lead believers to fulfill their mission as a church comes through an expository preaching ministry.

Chapter 2 establishes the priority of expository preaching in shaping and defining the mission of the church. This chapter examines the ministry of Moses in Deuteronomy as a method and model for the integration of shepherd leadership with expository preaching.

Chapter 3 illustrates the expository preaching ministry and spiritual leadership of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, especially Luke 4 and 24, in leading the New Covenant people of God to fulfill their mission.

Chapter 4 examines how many of the early sermons in Acts reveal that the apostles employed Jesus' preaching method. This chapter displays how the Epistles define the office and responsibilities of a pastor demonstrating the need to integrate leading with preaching.

Chapter 5 presents the implementation of leading through expository preaching in the local church.

## VITA

Sean David Cole

### EDUCATION

B.A., University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, 1994  
M.Div., Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004

### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Youth Pastor, First Baptist Church of Black Forest, Colorado Springs, Colorado,  
1998-2005

Lead Pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Sterling, Colorado, 2005-

### ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Adjunct Faculty, Colorado Christian University, Lakewood, Colorado, 2006.