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DEVELOPING TRANSFORMATIONAL, EXPOSITORY
SERMONS FOR THE POSTMODERN HEARER AT
HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL, LONDON, ONTARIO

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DEVELOPING TRANSFORMATIONAL, EXPOSITORY
SERMONS FOR THE POSTMODERN HEARER AT
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To God be the glory

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PREFACE

This project, and the entire D.Min process, has been an extreme blessing while stretching, testing, breaking, and remaking me through its various classes, reading requirements, and writing of papers. It is with deep gratitude I thank God for the blessing of being able to sit under the teaching and mentoring of Dr. Betts, Dr. Vogel, Dr. Cook, and Dr. York. The teaching of these professors was the highlight of my time at Southern, and I am thankful to these men for their significant skills, experience, and gifting combined with their humility and love for Christ, his word, and his church. A special thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Fuller, for his kind and encouraging words and his instruction in helping me get through writing chapters 2-5.

This project has been completed through the gracious and generous financial investment by our elder team and their on-going encouragement and prayers. I love you men and your wives and I am thankful for the blessing of doing life and ministry together with you. I would also like to express my love and gratefulness for the staff and people of Harvest London. God, in his grace, has used you to shape, craft, and mold my preaching gifts. I do not believe there is a better group of people to preach to nor serve alongside. A special thanks to all the postmoderns from our congregation who graciously helped me by completing many surveys and participating in focus groups. Your feedback has been an amazing gift from God and has been like oxygen to my soul.

Words are insufficient to express my gratitude and what is proper for my wife, Cindy, a constant and faithful partner in all to which God has called us. Your sacrifice for almost four decades, not only to me, our children, and grandchildren, but foremost to Christ and his church has been life-giving to me and a massive blessing to so many. I

love you and am beyond thankful for how God has used you in my life in so many ways. I know you have sacrificed much for the countless hours I needed to invest in this degree, so now it is time to get to all those things you wanted me to do, but held off asking so I would not be overloaded. Thank you as well for your prayers as these have carried me so often when I did not think I could finish.

To our five children and four more by marriage, and to our eleven grandchildren, although some of you did not have any first-hand connection to this project I have been laboring over for more than five years, you have been a key part of it. The time and energy I did not have for you due to the requirements to attend classes a long way from home, read 50-75 books, write 20 plus papers, including this one, with more than 200 hours devoted to it, have often taken me from time and devotion to you. I love you all and thank you for your sacrifice. One of my life's greatest blessing is to see you all walking with the Lord and I pray you press on faithfully giving yourself to our great God and his kingdom.

The Bible says to honor one's parents, and I wish to express my gratitude for my parents. Their constant encouragement since our first conversation about my sense of God's call out of business, into full-time ministry, through my M.Div studies in LA, and now to this degree, has been nothing but supportive, constantly encouraging, and prayerful. The same could be said for Cindy's parents, as I have been lifted up countless times in prayer for the tasks upon my shoulders by them as well, and for this I am blessed and grateful.

I would also like to thank Dr. Rick Reed, President of Heritage College and Seminary, for not only his friendship and partnership in ministry, but specifically for the gift of encouragement at a time when I had stalled out in completing this project. God used your wisdom, kind words, and life-giving encouragement to help me restart.

Finally, to my Executive Assistant, Karen Plantt, who came on in the last year of this long project. If I had hired you several years ago as my EA, I would have finished

this project on schedule! Thank you, Karen, for the countless hours you poured into editing my work, for your incredible expertise and skill, and especially for your encouragement to get the last chapters written and my paper submitted.

Norman Ross Millar

London, Ontario, Canada
May 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to improve my ability to prepare and deliver expository sermons that would have a Spirit-empowered, transformational impact on the younger, postmodern congregants at Harvest Bible Chapel, London, Ontario.

Goals

Three goals determined the effectiveness of this project. First, the preached word “works” (1 Thess 2:13)¹ in individual lives when it is delivered by Spirit-empowered preachers. This is not to say that the word, itself Spirit-empowered, does not work independent of a preacher; however, since the purpose of this project was to improve preaching, it was necessary at the outset to acknowledge both the relationship with and the responsibility to the word carried by the preacher when he endeavors to improve his work. Within this context, the first goal of the project was to document the biblical exhortation to preach as well as document how the Spirit personally and powerfully applies his truth to individuals through the vehicle of preaching. This goal addressed the question of how it is possible for a preacher to deliver the same sermon to a group of people and yet many of them experience it as a personal conversation between him and his congregants, resulting in real life transformation.

This goal was measured by the production of a preaching primer that outlined the findings in these areas. The effectiveness of this primer was determined by surveying ten pastors (see appendix 1). These pastors were asked to assess the exegesis and

¹ Unless otherwise stated, I will be quoting scripture from the English Standard Version.

application of each passage in chapter 2. This goal would be deemed successful if at least 90 percent of the evaluators indicated that the treatment of these passages was either sufficient or exemplary.

The second goal was to discover and document the effectiveness of the current preaching ministry at Harvest London in relation to the postmodern congregants. This goal was measured by surveying seventy-five congregants and conducting three focus groups after preaching a four-sermon series using the current approach and style of expository preaching at Harvest. This goal was deemed successful when a set of recommendations detailing changes and enhanced ways to increase the power and effectiveness of the preaching ministry were developed.

The third goal of the project was to adjust and grow the preaching ministry at Harvest London in the creation and delivery of life-transforming, Spirit-empowered sermons. A second four-sermon series was preached that sought to utilize the ideas and recommendations received in the first survey and focus groups as well as the insights from the preaching primer. This goal was measured by conducting surveys after each of the four new sermons and by conducting three focus groups at the conclusion of the four-sermon series. The surveys inquired into the respondent's personal experiences in hearing the preached word and any life-transformation they sensed God performing. The same seventy-five postmodern congregants who completed the first survey were asked to complete this second set of surveys. The same focus groups that were used in the first round of research were interviewed to discern and dig deeper into their experiences of how the preached word impacted them in addition to what growth they discerned in the preaching. This goal was deemed successful by measuring my growth in sermon delivery, as well as assessing the transformational impact of the sermons. The assessment focused on whether growth occurred in the power and effectiveness of the preached word.

Ministry Context

Harvest Bible Chapel was planted in 2000 by a group of 30 people. Initially, it was an independent church called SouthWest Community Church. In 2006, the elders discerned God's leading to transition SouthWest to become Harvest Bible Chapel, London, Ontario, which is associated with James MacDonald and currently about 90 other Harvest churches around the globe. Together, all the Harvest churches are actively seeking to plant new churches with a goal of 1,000 churches, as God provides. This association and orientation to church planting impacts all the church ministries, giving a strong sense of urgency and intentionality to the mission of glorifying God by the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

All Harvest churches agree to operate by the same model of ministry, embracing the same mission, four pillars, and ministry distinctives. As such, Harvest is highly committed to weekend services and small groups. Weekend services are the engine that drives the entire ministry. Every weekend service is planned to exalt Christ in passionate worship and put forth a life-transforming exhortation from God's word. Obviously, these things cannot happen apart from a supernatural working of God's Spirit. This model of ministry believes that the church gathers to be built up and disperses to be a witness to the world. The primary focus of preaching in the weekend services is this building up of the body, but because approximately ten to twenty guests attend weekly and many regulars are not saved, the gospel is consistently and passionately proclaimed.

Harvest London's ministry has been shaped through most of its history by renting. From the first Sunday in 2000 through to the fall of 2015, Harvest was a "church in a box." In other words, apart from offices being rented for the staff, the bulk of the ministry was conducted on Sundays in a rented high school auditorium, with all the required equipment being unpacked from boxes before the services and repacked and stored after. Renting placed significant importance on the weekend services (two duplicate services Sunday morning). Despite this limitation, God still graciously grew

the church to around 1,400 attendees each weekend. In the fall of 2015, God allowed Harvest to purchase an older church building, and therefore, the opportunities for mid-week ministry increased. However, with a permanent location, attendance jumped again, and the increased attendance numbers required three identical services each weekend, one Saturday evening at 5p.m. and two Sunday morning at 9a.m. and 11:15a.m. The priority and effort put into the weekend services continued as a primary focus of the ministry believing that discipleship happens best when worship and the word are prominent.

All Harvest churches have the same mission: to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matt 22:36-39). Seeking to embrace the mission, Harvest has adopted four pillars, which operate similar to core values. These four pillars are proclaiming the authority of God's word without apology (2 Tim 4:2), lifting high the name of Jesus through worship (John 4:24), believing firmly in the power of prayer (Eph 6:18), and sharing the good news of Jesus with boldness (Eph 6:19-20). Harvest is tenacious to pursue this one mission for God's glory so everything we do must line up with contributing to this mission.

Several key words would describe the model of ministry at Harvest: intentionality, urgency, simplicity, and clarity, but the most unifying and clarifying word in the Harvest churches would be the word "vertical." Our focus is directed toward ensuring our weekend services, children's ministry, youth ministry, small group ministry and all ministries are vertically oriented, seeking to see God's glory come down, his presence to be manifest, and his powerful working to transform lives. Whenever the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of all interacts with his creation, it is never business as usual, but rather a radical transformational impact.

One final characteristic of Harvest London, which is a blessing and a key consideration for this project, is the relative youthfulness of the church. Approximately half the group in the auditorium, which includes attendees in grade 6 and up, would still

be in school. This young congregation includes over 300 university and college students who attend regularly. The average age at Harvest London is estimated to be in the 30s. Harvest has not developed a model of ministry according to the common wisdom of this age in how to reach the postmodern generation, but rather remains committed to its four pillars. Yet, God continues to draw the younger generations in increasing numbers. It is believed that a key reason for this increase are the weekend services and the way God is working through the worship and the word.

Rationale

Churches in the city of London and the country of Canada appear to be abandoning the preaching ministry of the word of God as they strive to be more relevant to today's generation. One primary reason for this abandonment of preaching is a loss of belief in the power and effectiveness of preaching. Albert Mohler puts it this way: "The last few decades have been a period of wanton experimentation in many pulpits and preaching has often been redefined and reconceived as something other than the exposition and application of the biblical text."² U.S. and Canadian churches face the same drift and concern. At its core, this drift is closely tied to a widespread loss within Canadian churches in the belief of biblical inerrancy, authority, perspicuity, and the effectiveness of God's written word. However, because the word of God is literally Spirit-empowered, expository preaching must be valued as the preferred preaching approach, precisely for its inherent focus on the centrality of the text. This trust in and focus on the word of God should produce an effective and powerful impact in congregations that are exposed to a steady diet of this form of preaching.

Many pastors and churches, driven by a desire to be more effective in reaching the younger generation, have set aside the preaching ministry and moved toward more

²Albert Mohler, "The State of Preaching Today," accessed July 28, 2013, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2006/08/28/the-state-of-preaching-today/>.

collective activities such as conversations, artistic presentations, Question and Answer sessions, or felt-needs orientated talks.³ The expository teaching or lecture method has increasingly fallen out of favor among orators, educators, and preachers alike; in fact, a considerable amount of current research all but condemns the lecture as an outdated and limited instructional approach. The disdain for preaching is influenced by the proliferation of church growth material promoting solutions for Sunday services in a pragmatic pursuit of effectiveness.

Educational literature addressing the most effective means of communication rates the lecture as one of the most ineffective vehicles of knowledge transfer for the postmodern generation. Eric Mazur, a Harvard professor and proponent of Peer Instruction, states, “The traditional approach [lecture] to teaching reduces education to a transfer of information.”⁴ Teachers who desire to be effective do not work toward a simple transfer of information, but rather true learning. The common belief today in educational circles is that the lecture is the least effective means for this true learning to occur. This belief raises a methodological question many churches are wrestling with, namely, why would any church continue to make the lecture, a sermon, its primary means of teaching in a Sunday service? Changes in the pedagogical landscape in our culture combined with an apparent ineffectiveness in preaching to produce life transformation, coupled with a loss of belief in the inspiration and authority of God’s word has produced an increasing abandonment of preaching in Sunday morning services.

Many of the churches in the geographical area surrounding Harvest continue to abandon the preaching of God’s word. There is a great need to ensure that Harvest London, as one church in this culture, continues to grow in effectiveness in preaching the

³Robert Elkington, “A Model for the Growth of the Evangelical Churches in Canada,” accessed June 14, 2013, http://dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/5563/Elkington_RL.pdf?sequence=2.

⁴Eric Mazur, “Farewell Lecture,” *Science* 2 (January 2009): 50-51.

word. This project sets out to help ensure that this growth happens along with a desire to become more effective and powerful in speaking to the hearts and minds of all the congregants, but specifically to the postmodern generation, as they represent such a significant percentage of the church. Due to the lack of a permanent facility, mid-week ministries are very limited, increasing the need for effectiveness in the weekend worship services. Therefore, the focus of this project was on the preaching during the weekend services and their crucial role in discipling congregants.

In addition, the quickly growing demographic of the Harvest London congregation is primarily in the postmodern age category. Most church literature today states that the primary means to reach this generation is not through lecture-style sermons.⁵ Yet, Harvest London remains fully committed to this model and believes a project like this will help grow and mature the preaching, providing for increased effectiveness in reaching the new generation.

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this project.

Postmodern. This term represents the era after the modern era. It can be summarized as a worldview, which embraces relativist pluralism and rejects authority and meaning that reside in the word of God or in the leadership of the church. Esther Lightcap Meek defines postmoderns as having “no absolute truth, no metanarrative, no single grand story, no single way-things are.”⁶ The primary players in postmodernism would be the Mosaic Generation (born between 1984 and 2002).⁷ Any aged person could

⁵Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 152.

⁶Esther L. Meek, *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2013), 31.

⁷David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity . . . And Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 17.

be considered as postmodern, but, for the purposes of this project, the term “postmodern generation” was defined as those born between 1980 and 1997. The date range used has been adjusted from the dates of the Mosaic Generation for two reasons. First, those born later than 1997 were under 18 years of age and thus not suitable to provide feedback. Second, 1980 was chosen rather than 1984 to provide a larger base of participants and those in this range (1980-84) have still been raised with enough of a postmodern worldview to provide applicable feedback.

Spirit-filled expository sermons. This phrase refers to sermons that have three key distinctive factors. First, these sermons are expository.⁸ Second, these sermons are being written and delivered by a preacher who is gifted by God in preaching (Rom 12:7) and has worked hard at exegesis, sermon construction, application, and the delivery of the sermon. The idea of being “gifted” it is not related to one’s own personal ability, but rather speaks of the spiritual gift of preaching or teaching given and empowered by God as identified in Romans 12:7. It is not wrong to call a preacher “gifted,” but rather it recognizes, by grace, his gifting for God’s glory. Third, these sermons are delivered by a preacher who trusts in the power of the gospel (Rom 1:16-17), the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and the transformational, miraculous ability of God’s word (Heb 4:12).⁹

Teaching methods. There are a variety of ways to categorize and assess teaching methods, but for this project they will be grouped into five strategies: didactic direct instruction (lecture), indirect instruction (problem solving, guided inquiry), interactive instruction (small group discussions), experiential learning, and independent study.¹⁰

⁸My personal definition of “expository preaching” is the communication of biblical truth as meant by the original author to the original readers brought forward and applied to our current culture and audience. This truth is discerned and derived using a historical, grammatical, and literary study of the biblical text.

⁹Arturo G. Azurdia III, *Spirit Empowered Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 1998), 114-15.

¹⁰Merriam B. Sharan, Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner, *Learning in*

Limitations and Delimitations

A limitation of this project was the ability to assess true transformation that results from the preaching ministry. An individual's self-assessment of what God is doing in his life through the preaching was accepted as the basis for assessing if transformation took place and to what degree.

There were three delimitations of this project. First, the effectiveness and impact of discipleship was restricted to the weekend services. Small groups or some adult classes could have been examined as vehicles of discipleship, but the project was intentionally focused only on the weekend worship service.

Second, the survey group was limited to a subset of congregants who were in the 18-36 age group as it focuses on the postmodern generation. The size of this group was limited to seventy-five people. These restrictions were put in place to try to ensure that enough congregants participated in each survey to achieve a consistent sample size. The numbers were not too large, however, as this segment of the congregation were heavily involved in post-secondary education and had limited time and availability. A sample size of seventy-five meant that about 25 percent of the current attendees in this age group needed to participate. Three focus groups of approximately eight to ten people were selected from this survey group. By conducting three separate focus groups, this provided sufficient triangulation of the results.

Third, this project was limited to Harvest Bible Chapel, London. The findings will be released to the other Harvest churches, but they did not participate in the actual project.

Research Methodology

The first goal of this project was to analyze the explanation of Scripture

Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 79.

regarding expository preaching and how God commands and uses it to impact lives. The document produced in pursuit of this goal required some assessment to ensure it was biblically accurate and complete. The effectiveness of this primer was assessed by having ten pastors review the preaching primer and provide feedback. These pastors were selected from the Fellowship of Harvest Bible Chapels as well as several pastors outside the Fellowship, to get differing perspectives. They were asked to complete the survey found in appendix 1 as a means of assessing the completion and effectiveness of the primer. Ninety percent or higher of the evaluators affirming that the exegesis and application of the passages was sufficient or exemplary meant that this goal was reached.

The measurement of the second goal of the project required a survey to be completed by seventy-five postmodern congregants after the preaching of the first four-sermon series. The purpose of this survey was to understand their personal experiences as they interacted with the preached word and to receive their thoughts, ideas, and recommendations on how to improve and increase the impact and effectiveness of the preaching.

The selection of participants from Harvest London for both surveys conducted in association to the sermon series included the following:

1. a mixture of both long-term attendees (greater than two years) and newer attendees (less than two years);
2. primarily believers, but it was hoped that some unbelievers would be enlisted to be a part of the survey to understand their experience hearing the preached word; and
3. participants in the 18-36 age range.

The same group of participants was used for both sermon series surveys. The preferred method of securing feedback for the first sermon series survey was an online survey conducted through www.freeonlinesurveys.com and was conducted the week after the fourth sermon. This survey focused on their experience while listening to the sermon (see appendix 2). It also asked them for input, ideas, and suggestions to improve the

preaching of the word, with a specific focus on its personal impact and power to transform and change. This survey was analyzed by determining patterns in the responses and ranking these patterns to reveal the key recommendations to grow and improve the preaching ministry.

The second survey was conducted after each of the sermons in the second 4-week sermon series (see appendix 3). The same seventy-five congregants who provided feedback in the previous survey were asked to answer these surveys. There was one survey given to the congregants after each of the four sermons in this second series. The focus of this survey was to see if changes implemented based on the findings of the first survey increased the sense of God speaking personally and powerfully to individuals during a sermon. This survey was an online survey conducted through www.freeonlinesurveys.com and was mostly completed immediately following a weekend service, but was required to be completed by the Tuesday after the sermon was preached. Each week this survey was analyzed to find the most common responses to determine if growth was occurring based on the listeners' experiences. Adjustments in the next week's sermon were made with the goal of refining each sermon and continually applying the feedback throughout the sermon series.

All surveys used adhered to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's standards, including the required "Agreement to Participate" clause, and were approved by the Research Ethics Committee prior to use.

Following the first survey and the last survey of the second four-sermon series, three focus groups were conducted. Both sets of focus groups included the same participants, allowing for increased ability to measure growth and change between the first and second sets of focus groups. Each focus group had approximately eight to ten participants. These were conducted by a third-party, independent, experienced interviewer to probe further into the individual experiences of listeners. This mixed approach to gathering data allowed the combination of a wider audience's input

combined with an ability to dig deeper and clarify their answers to ensure pertinent and helpful data was collected.

A transcript of each set of focus groups was compiled without including the names of the participants by a third party. These transcripts were then analyzed for patterns and the most common experiences and recommendations. This analysis supplemented the findings of the surveys to produce a list of growth areas following the first sermon series. The results of the second sermon series were used to assess the success of this project in seeing development in the preaching ministry of Harvest London. All focus group events adhered to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's standards, including the required "Agreement to Participate" clause, and were approved by the Research Ethics Committee prior to use.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR
EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN A
POSTMODERN CULTURE

Does the word of God direct preachers and churches toward a particular sermon style? Does it dictate a specific sermon approach in a Sunday morning service? Is the preacher under a mandate from Scripture regarding the source and content of his sermon? Or, is the Sunday sermon an area of freedom left up to the imagination and creativity of the preacher? If a particular approach to preaching is mandated, is this approach powerful and able to affect transformation in the lives of postmodern listeners? Selected passages will be examined to answer these questions, seeking to develop a clear picture of God’s revelation in respect to sermon content, style, and effectiveness in Sunday sermons.

**Preach the Word:
1 Timothy 5:17-19 and 2 Timothy 3:10-17, 4:1-5**

The apostle Paul, writing at the end of his life (2 Tim 4:6) in what has been called his “last will and testament,”¹ charges his protégé Timothy to “preach the word” (v. 5). William Barclay, commenting on 2 Timothy 4:1-5, rightly emphasizes, “There can be few New Testament passages where the duties of the Christian teacher are more clearly set out than here.”² “Preach” is a command from Paul to Timothy—not a suggestion, not an option, but an imperative. Timothy must “proclaim it like a herald in

¹John MacArthur, *2 Timothy*, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), ix.

²William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 203-4.

the market-place.”³ The very tone of this imperative has a strong sense of urgency and authority. Paul does not seem to think that Timothy, as a pastor and preacher, has the right to pick the content of his sermons. Man’s wisdom, the latest church growth idea, nor personal opinion is to be preached, but rather the “word.” Paul puts forth a clarion call placed upon the life and practice of every minister and church to preach God’s revelation to God’s people.

Timothy is pastoring the church in Ephesus, an advanced city of great learning, progress, and pursuit of pleasure, not unlike many of the cities in North America in this decade. Paul did not counsel Timothy to hire a drama team from the theatres in Rome, contemporize the message with current entertainment ideas, nor use some of the latest techniques to motivate people as learned from the business experts in Alexandria. His counsel was not to try to make the message more palatable or applicable. His call was simple, urgent, and straight up: just preach the word. Apparently, Paul believed that the preached word was sufficient to affect that which God intended to do in the lives of the citizens of Ephesus: “Such is Paul’s charge to Timothy. He is to preach the word, and as he announces the God-given message he is to be urgent in his approach, relevant in his application, patient in his manner, and intelligent in his presentation.”⁴

This sense of urgency and this particularly narrow, Bible-only content, by Paul toward young Timothy is further emphasized by Paul’s reminder that his charge comes “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead” (4:1). “As Timothy discharges his duties as an evangelist, he does so in full sight of God and of Christ, who is the eschatological judge, and in recognition of Christ’s second coming and of the eschatological consummation of Christ’s kingdom.”⁵ This

³John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1973), 106.

⁴Ibid., 109.

⁵William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville:

understanding of being one under authority and accountable to God's assessment was never far from Paul's thinking as he sought to fulfill his ministry. In 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, he stated a similar exhortation in this way: "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." Preachers need to understand that they are called men under-shepherds (1 Pet 5:4), men under divine authority, fulfilling their stewardship as ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5:18-21). Therefore, their mandate and message are to be received and obeyed, not created, adjusted, enhanced, or constructed according to popular opinion.

Paul reminds Timothy that "the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching" (4:3). Timothy, as a preacher and pastor, needs to keep focused on the reality that a window of opportunity to proclaim the word to his congregation and city is a privilege that appears to have a limited season of opportunity. These very people, like all people, could easily reject the preaching of the word, for they will "not endure sound teaching," but rather will develop "itching ears" and will "accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions." Paul makes certain that Timothy understands what could come at any time; he emphasizes that these very people could "turn away from listening to the truth" and "wander off into myths" (4:3-4). The urgency accompanying the preaching of God's word must never be far from the preacher's mind.

So, the question every preacher must ask and answer is "Will I stay faithful to the clear command of God that his shepherds feed his sheep (John 21:17) on his word?" Scripture knows nothing of pastors being primarily identified as CEOs, lead learners, visionaries, innovation facilitators, or missional managers. Pastors are shepherds who lead and feed. Pastors are under a charge; they are called, gifted, and accountable to preach the word. In 1 Timothy 5:17, one sees the priority of this role in the life of the

Thomas Nelson, 2000), 571.

church because Paul encourages Timothy that elders or shepherds/pastors are to be remunerated financially so they can focus on this call: “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” Clearly, it was assumed that a pastor, or multiple pastors, in the church would devote themselves to preaching God’s word, teaching it as a regular function in church ministry. Philip Towner comments, “The ‘work’ (‘labor/ministry’) described in this way comes under the category of didactic activities. The first (activity) is literally ‘in [the] word’ (*en logō*), and in connection with the preceding description of this activity as ‘labor.’”⁶ God’s clear call is for pastors to make it a top priority to labor in their study and in the pulpit proclaiming God’s word to God’s people.

Timothy’s very life is a testimony to this commitment, to the word and how he himself was taught the word and disciplined through it. In 2 Timothy 3:10, Paul recalls how Timothy had “followed my teaching.” Timothy’s influence by the word goes even further back than that, as Paul says in verse 15: “And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” William Hendriksen observes, “Paul uses the expression ‘sacred writings’ in verse 15, but “all Scripture” in verse 16, for the simple reason that he wishes to draw a distinction between the Old Testament (verse 15) and *whatever* has a right to be called divinely inspired Scripture (verse 16). The latter comprises more than the former.”⁷ If the “sacred writings” or “Scripture” is “able to make you wise for salvation,” who would not want to use them regularly? This simple truth seems to have been lost in many a church in the postmodern era. Timothy is a great example for pastors of being raised in and on the Scripture and making it one’s focus in ministry life. The

⁶Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 362.

⁷William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957), 300.

word was central in Timothy's life. The word must be central in every minister's life and the life of the church. Paul reminds his readers of why this is so in Romans 10:17 when he states, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

Christ-followers are saved to love and worship the Living Word, Jesus. They are not to worship the written word, but they are to read it, study it, learn from it, and teach it because only through this word can they come to know the Living Word. Barclay sums up this truth so well when he writes, "It is perfectly true—as we have so often said—that Christianity is not founded on a printed book but on a living person. The fact remains that the only place in all the world where we get a first-hand account of that person and of his teaching is in the New Testament."⁸

The apostle Paul concludes the section of 2 Timothy 3:10-17 with a powerful reminder of why the word must be one's source for teaching and preaching: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). God wrote a book—the Bible, which is literally "God breathed." "It is therefore rightly termed 'the word of God,' for God spoke it. Indeed, as the prophets used to say, 'the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.'"⁹ This God-breathed book is unique and powerful, not only able to do the impossible, but also "profitable." Some seek to downplay this word "profitable" as merely being helpful, but Paul is making a rich affirmation of the blessing, benefit, and ability of God's word. No teaching of mere man can convict one of sin, bring them to broken repentance, and make them a new creature in Christ but the living active word of God. Jesus prayed in John 17:17, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." The word—Scripture, the sacred writings—are God's vehicle for truth, and his truth is a transforming truth: "If you abide

⁸Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, 200.

⁹Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 102.

in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32). God’s command, through Paul, to all pastors and preachers is clear: “preach the word,” and not just when convenient or easy, but rather “be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2 Tim 4:2), for it alone has the power to save and transform.

The Preached Word has a Miraculous Source: Hebrews 4:12-13

In pursuit of a powerful, transforming sermon, a preacher must have supernatural content. The previous section highlighted the command to “preach the word” (2 Tim 4:2). Why is the word so crucial in preaching? What is it about the Scriptures that demands that they be the source of content for the preacher? Hebrews 4:12-13 has some significant insight into this question and clarifies, for the preacher, some irrefutable truth affirming its place as the source for all sermons. The writer of Hebrews begins with a strong statement: “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12). The apostle Peter makes a similar statement: “since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Pet 1:23). God’s word is “living.” The Greek text is stronger than this English translation and implies: “The initial position of ‘*zwn*’ in the structure of the sentence is emphatic ‘living is the word.’”¹⁰ Living is the word of God! It is unique, unlike any other book known to mankind. Why would a preacher want to set aside a “living” book and use some other source that may be a lot of things, but is not and can never be “living”? Living conveys the idea that God’s word is “performative; it possess the power to effect its own utterance.”¹¹ No other source to

¹⁰William L. Lane, *Hebrews*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47a (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 94.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 103.

which a preacher could avail himself has the power and ability to bring about exactly what it calls for. God's word alone can penetrate, correct, rebuke, encourage, convict, strengthen, and sustain precisely because it is a living book. The Bible is more than simply black markings on white pages. Why? Because it is "God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16-17) and "inspired." "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21).

Not only does the Bible have life, but it is also "active," which means, "It speeds to fulfill the purpose for which it has been uttered."¹² The prophet Isaiah confirmed the active nature of God's word: "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" (Isa 55:11). The writer of Hebrews seeks to explain the miraculous nature of Holy Scripture even further when he adds that it is "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 3:12). The phrase "two-edged sword" strongly emphasizes the ability of the word as it is literally "sharper than the sharpest sword."¹³ It can cut and accomplish its designed work every time as this phrasing "emphasizes the penetrating force of the sword."¹⁴ This sword, with the emphasis on its cutting ability, could be rightly viewed as a finely sharpened surgeon's scalpel. This scalpel easily accomplishes its goal with minimal effort and yet has a profound transforming impact.

The unique ability of this knife is further highlighted by what appears to be the author's suggestion that this word of God, available to all, is able to do the impossible.

¹²F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 112.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 176.

He lists three couplets which are, at best, incredibly difficult to separate, if not outright impossible to divide. The “division of soul and of spirit.” These two are so very closely linked, and this statement reflects the Hebrew mindset of unity, oneness, or wholeness of a person versus the duality of the Greek mindset. Soul and spirit are inseparable because both are essential aspects or ways of looking at a person. “Of joints and of marrow” refers to bones and the fact that joints contain marrow, and marrow is present in joints. They are, in a sense, two highly interrelated elements of the same structure. The last couplet, “discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart,” delineates a distinction between one’s thoughts and one’s intentions. Both of these terms, one could argue, are simply ways to look at the same brain activity.

In each of these illustrations, the author presents the truth that God’s word pierces and separates that which is really impossible to separate. The “word of God probes the inmost recesses of our spiritual being and brings the subconscious motives to light.”¹⁵ There is no other book, work of art, drama, video, or blog which can do that. Preachers who desire transformation in the lives of their listeners must not abandon the most powerful tool available for lesser and inferior ones. Paul sums up his conviction on this truth when he writes, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).

God’s word is able to do, here and now, in any and every life, what God himself will do one day at the final judgment: “Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God” (1 Cor 4:5). The very source that preachers are commanded to preach from can affect in time and space what is vital for each person to know and set

¹⁵Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 113.

straight before the final judgment. If they die still in their sin and face the final judgment, all hope is lost (John 3:36; Rev 20:15). Their only possibility for forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation is if they hear, believe, and are transformed by the word of God here and now.

God's word alone is able to break one free from the self-deception of sin, opening blind eyes to see the truth about God, self, sin, and eternal life. The Bible speaks for God himself as one sees in the subtle yet fascinating change between Hebrews 4:12 and 4:13. Verse 12 speaks of the work and the effect of the "word of God," but verse 13 changes the subject from the word of God to God himself: "And no creature is hidden from *his* sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of *him* to whom we must give account" (emphasis added). There is such strong synergy between the word of God (his personal revelation) and the person of God as indicated in these verses. God himself examines, convicts, and transforms *through* his living and active word and nothing is hidden from his work: "We can conceal our inner being from" everyone, "and we can even deceive ourselves; but nothing escapes the scrutiny of God; before Him everything lies exposed and powerless."¹⁶ The word, and only the word of God, can do this for it is God's personal and all-powerful revelation. It is his means of saving and transforming through which he works.

The command from God is to preach the word, not to preach or share or talk about felt needs, current movies, social issues, or popular trends. Preach the word, for the word itself is utterly unique, powerful, and able to do the impossible. The Bible stands beyond comparison with all other sources a preacher could draw on. And yet so many preachers or pastors lay it aside in their pursuit of relevance, effectiveness, impact, and connection with their listeners. Now is the time for pastors and church leaders to repent of their lack of faith and trust in God's holy word and to once again pick it up, study it,

¹⁶Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 114.

dig God’s message out of it, and proclaim those messages with an urgency and confidence rightly befitting God’s supernatural book. A return to sold-out trust, confidence, and faith in God’s powerful, soul-transforming word is long overdue in North American churches.

**The Power for Transformation
When the Word Is Preached:
Romans 1:16-17; 10:13-17**

A supernatural power is required to bring about soul transformation. So how can this actually happen? How can a 2,000-year-old book powerfully transform the lives of modern, educated, informed, and technically advanced people? Paul and the other writers of the New Testament explain that God has put in place a supernatural process that preachers must, by faith, trust. This trust must go far beyond one’s confidence in himself, his own words, logic, wisdom, and speaking ability. This trust must be so strong that it will compel him to preach the word even if doing so will cost him everything.

Paul remained faithful to preaching God’s word even at great personal cost simply because he believed this was the only means to see God’s power at work in those he loved. Rather than abandon the preaching of the word, which had brought him immense pain and suffering, Paul commits to the continued preaching of God’s word. Paul is eager to preach the gospel in Rome (1:15) because he is not ashamed of the gospel (1:16a). The reason he is not ashamed is that it is the power of God that brings salvation (1:16b). The gospel is the saving power of God because the righteousness of God (i.e., his saving power) is being revealed in it by faith (1:17a).¹⁷ Since this is true, it should be every Christ-follower’s passion to make sure all people are exposed to God’s word. “The preaching of the word does not merely make salvation possible but *effects* salvation in

¹⁷Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 58-59.

those who are called” (emphasis added).¹⁸ No other process of transforming a sinner into a saint is possible apart from God’s word. Dramas cannot do this. Creative and trendy services cannot do this. Music, community meals, acts of kindness, social outreach, compassion for the poor, family fun days, nor any other idea thought up by church leaders can accomplish what only Scripture can do. Scripture alone can bring the spiritually dead to life, give birth from above, forgive sins, justify, sanctify, cleanse, restore hope, and grant eternal life. No wonder Paul is “not ashamed.” It is crucial that preachers and pastors remember the power of the word of God. As Morris reminds us, “The gospel is not advice to people, suggesting that they lift themselves. It is power. . . . The power of God is at work.”¹⁹

Change is not only difficult, but it is impossible when it comes to one’s own heart, past, eternal future, and relationship with our creator God. God’s word is the actual power for salvation, leading to true, lasting, eternal transformation. Paul “knows that this apparently weak and foolish message is really, in spite of all appearances, power, and not just one power over against others, but the supreme power—the almighty power of God Himself directed toward the salvation of men, God’s almighty saving power.”²⁰ The process of transformation must be fueled by a power and ability, which is more than able to accomplish and complete the task. Only the gospel, contained and explained in God’s word, is able to do this work. Therefore, to preach or teach in a Sunday service without God’s word being the source and content is to preach or teach without transformational power. People may be entertained, moved, encouraged or even corrected, but the end-goal of preaching is none of these. The end goal of every sermon is eternal soul-transformation. Without the written word of God undergirding, directing,

¹⁸Schreiner, *Romans*, 60.

¹⁹Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 67.

²⁰C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 1:87.

and being the content of every sermon, there is no chance of true transformation in the lives of the hearers.

Romans 10:13 has a wonderfully encouraging promise: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” This verse gives the preacher hope. Any and every person entering the doors of a church or hearing the words of a sermon on the street or in the marketplace can gloriously and miraculously be saved if the preacher is preaching from God’s word. God’s offer of salvation is given without reservation or constraint to all people of all races of all generations: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9). However, a rational person must then ask, “What does it mean to ‘call on the Lord,’ and how does this happen?” Romans 10:14-17 explains in detail this life-transforming process: “Paul wants to, needs to, and must explain how one can get to the point of calling on the name of the Lord and thus being saved. This process is a crucial issue for the church and every Christ-follower who longs to be obedient and useful in God’s kingdom and service.”²¹ This crucial understanding must inform and shape preachers and their preaching.

Verse 14 stipulates that in order to call on the Lord, one must first believe in him. And to believe in him one must first hear about him. This process is why the word must be preached for God’s revelation is the only source of truth about him. Specifically, in this passage, Paul’s focus is on the gospel. But the entire word of God can also be understood, in a larger sense, in terms of the gospel. Continuing with Paul’s logic, he asks the question, “How can one hear and understand the truth about salvation if no one tells them”, or as Paul says, “without someone preaching”? (10:14). Preaching the word is the God-ordained means for people to hear, believe, call, and be saved. Therefore,

²¹Colin Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, Pillar New Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 411.

preachers called to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), which every preacher is, cannot abandon the proclamation of the word of God.

Paul sums up this logical process he has been describing in verse 17: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” The preaching of the “word of Christ,” is crucial in the transformation process; in addition, it is commanded by God. “It is important to note what Paul says about the way faith is generated: ‘faith comes from hearing the message,’ that is, ‘the word of Christ,’ which in this context is the gospel of Christ. Faith, then, is generated through the preaching of the gospel.”²²

The power of God is present in the preaching of the word, making this activity one of, if not the most, important and powerful tasks a minister can participate in. How can a mere man, a pastor, help anyone attending a church service to embrace salvation or grow in sanctification? Gospel saving power is only possible as he opens, explains, and applies God’s word. Preaching is not simply a lecture, it is certainly not entertainment, nor is it merely conveying information. In the process of preaching the word, “Christ is present in the preachers; to hear them is to hear him”²³ (Luke 10:16). Nothing else in all of church life, work life, entertainment, or any other human activity can compare to the eternity-changing activity of preaching. Abandoning preaching of the word for human ideas and creativity, for supposed more relevant and palpable methods to interest the disinterested, is the epitome of foolishness and biblical unfaithfulness:

Paul is speaking of the derivative nature of the Christian gospel. It is not something that wise men have made up; it comes from hearing the message given by those sent from God. It comes “through the word of Christ” or “the word from Christ”. This is a vital truth for it locates the content of the preaching in what God has given, not in what the preacher has thought up.²⁴

²²Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 418.

²³Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 390.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 391.

The preached word can encourage, exhort, correct, rebuke, and give life. Nothing that happens in the life of a church can compare to the transforming power of the word being imparted to others. This transforming power can happen in small groups, one-on-one, or in a Sunday service, but it must happen because it is the core of God's call to his church.

**There Is No Alternative to Preaching the Word:
1 Corinthians 1:17-31; 2:1-16**

In the current era of the church, far too many preachers are abandoning the word. They have come to believe a two-fold lie. First, they have bought the lie that this old book is not effective enough to reach an enlightened, postmodern generation. Second, they have bought the lie that new and better methods have been discovered and proven. These misconceptions highlight the need to further clarify exactly what they are abandoning and the futility of what they are embracing in its place. First Corinthians 1:17-31 outlines the utter foolishness of man's ideas, man's wisdom, and man's plans over God's. Paul, one of the most highly educated men of his day, does not even hint that education, creativity, arts, or culturally relevant talks are the way to go. Rather, he clarifies, in a way that no one could miss, how utterly foolish and useless man's ways are in comparison to God's ways for the church and church ministry.

The core of this issue is a deep misunderstanding of not only the message, but also of the mode of preaching. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:17, "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power." How does one "empty the cross of its power"?

In short, the problem of preaching the gospel with wisdom and eloquence is that it represents a complete mismatch between the message and medium. The message consists of a despairing of self, a "nullifying of the things that are" (1:28b), a comprehensive exclusion of boasting in humans (1:29b), and a turning instead to Jesus Christ and to God (1:30-31). The medium of "wise and persuasive words" (2:4), on the other hand, exalts human brilliance and achievement. If the content of the message is not of human wisdom, neither is its presentation. Instead of

responding to God himself with “deep conviction” (1 Thess. 1:5), the hearers are in danger of superficially assenting to the persuasive power of the speaker’s eloquence (cf. 2:5).²⁵

This passage could not present a clearer challenge to church growth concepts in this day and age. The replacing of the preaching of God’s word with new and supposedly more relevant methods is the ultimate in foolishness. This exchange sets aside true soul-transforming power for entertainment, information, encouragement, and feeling better about oneself. Paul is clear: the faithful pastor must not abandon the preaching of God’s word, but instead, the ways of the world: “How does Paul’s preaching differ from the public speaking of the sophists? . . . It is not that he does not try to persuade, but he trusts in God’s power working through him and his message rather than trusting in his own powers of persuasion, knowing that *the message of the cross*, despite seeming foolish, has divine power that other messages lack.”²⁶

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18). Men and women are “perishing.” That word should cause God’s people to shudder, to recoil, to cry out to almighty God, “How can one stop this terrifying march of the lost into eternal hell?” “Only God’s intervention can change the state of those who are perishing.”²⁷ Churches can bring the best the world has to offer, the most qualified experts, or the greatest orators to its services in an attempt to be more effective, but if the church’s goal is spiritual transformation, the only real power comes from the “folly of what we preach.” Verse 30 demonstrates clearly that it is only the preaching of the word of God that results in people being given wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption from God.

²⁵Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 87.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 90.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 91.

In reference to Paul’s continued attack against human wisdom and man’s ideas in 1 Corinthians 2:1-16, Gordon Fee has a great warning that the way forward in church life, the way to reach the postmodern generation and affect a future for the church, “probably lies less in structures and more in our readiness to recapture Paul’s focus here—on the preaching of the cross as the great divine contradiction to our merely human ways of doing things.”²⁸ The call is to heed Paul’s words that the “lowly” and “despised things” are chosen by God to “nullify the things that are.” Sadly, many church leaders in this era are putting all their trust in the very things that can never “nullify the things that are.” The preacher needs to beware of being captivated by the foolishness of the world’s wisdom. “Had God consulted us for wisdom we could have given him a more workable plan, something that would attract the sign-seeker and the lover of wisdom. As it is, in his own wisdom he left us out of the consultation.”²⁹ The call is for the preacher to trust God’s promises and God’s word. This trust can seem difficult at times when pressed on by those of the world, calling God’s ways foolishness. However, the decision is truly one of “trust God and be saved by his wise folly, or keep up our pretensions and perish.”³⁰

Second Corinthians 2:11 reminds the reader, “No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” In other words, it takes revelation (the word) driven home and applied by the Spirit of God to reveal the truth about life, God, sin, salvation, heaven, etc. Ciampa and Rosner point out how this verse teaches “notions that we can find God through reason or intuition are cruel and misleading. No sentence in the Bible underscores more emphatically the necessity of divine revelation.”³¹

²⁸Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 66.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 77.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 231.

Preachers must embrace and trust in God’s word. They must proclaim it with urgency, affection, and confidence, for when they do, God’s Spirit will personally and powerfully apply his living and active word to the hearts and minds of each listener. Nothing else can affect the soul-transforming work of God as his Spirit drives the preached word home in each heart and mind. God promises to work powerfully in the life of listeners when the word is faithfully proclaimed with trust in the Holy Spirit to press it home in each heart.

**Examples of Jesus and His Disciples
Preaching the Word:
Luke 24:13-32; Acts 2:14-36**

A good question to ask in light of all that has been unpacked in this paper is, “How did Jesus and his disciples preach and teach?” Did their approach affirm what is being proposed, or contradict it? First, a brief examination of Jesus’ approach, but a warning is needed whenever one seeks to model his ministry after Jesus. The Bible tells us that Jesus, “needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man” (John 2:25). Jesus, as the God-man, had a unique ability as a preacher to know what others were thinking (Matt 9:4; 12:25; John 4:18; 6:64; 21:17; Acts 1:24). No other preacher has the unique ability and discernment that Christ had. Therefore, one cannot assume to follow all of his examples in evangelism nor in preaching. However, it is informative to see his belief in the power and ability of Scripture and to see how often he quoted the Old Testament as his source. In Luke 24:13-32, after his resurrection, when he is walking on the road to Emmaus, he begins to teach several disciples. Verse 27 reads, “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Howard Marshall comments on this passage, saying, “He searched *all* the Scriptures, but starting from (i.e. principally from) the law and the prophets.”³² What is interesting is to compare Luke’s account of Jesus’ act of “search[ing] all the Scriptures” with the disciples’ account of what Jesus was saying to them. They say in verse 32, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Jesus “opened” the Scriptures to them. This word “open” in verse 31 refers to the opening of one’s eyes, and, in verse 32, it means to open as in explaining something to someone.

What a great visual of Jesus opening God’s word to them and explaining it. Since they were walking on the road to Emmaus, it appears he did not physically open a copy of the Old Testament, yet he clearly opened God’s word from memory, showing, explaining, and applying it to himself, which resulted in the eyes of their hearts being opened. God’s word is powerful and able to touch, enlighten, encourage (as with these disciples), and transform hearts as it is opened and explained by the Lord’s shepherds.

Scripture also shows that the Apostles went out proclaiming God’s word as well, as one sees in Peter’s sermon in Acts 2. It appears that the first sermon, after the birth of the church, was preached on the streets of Jerusalem by Peter. Peter quotes from Joel 2:28-32 and explains and applies that passage to his listeners. Peter simply preached the word of God, allowing it to speak, convict, and do its transforming work of salvation. Peter knew the power did not belong to him or the other apostles. They had failed and fled in Jesus’ hour of need; they were weak and unable. However, as one sees lived out in the book of Acts, their trust is no longer in themselves, but in the power of God’s word, applied by God’s Spirit. Peter preaches a straightforward sermon from Scripture that God worked through to move some 3,000 souls to repent and believe. He opened the

³²I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1978), 897.

word, explained and applied the word, and then called for a response to the preached word, and God moved powerfully.

This preached word is the power of God, and it has the ability to affect what it calls for in the life of the hearer: “The power being offered here is not that of Peter’s homiletical ability to work the crowd up into an emotional frenzy or in the crowd’s sincere inner determination to get themselves right with God. The story of Peter’s Pentecost speech is told so that there is no doubt the power is that of the Spirit.”³³ This message of God’s power through his Spirit should also be instructional to preachers in the current era because Peter here addresses both religious Jews and pagan Gentiles on the streets of Jerusalem. This sermon by Peter is an evangelistic sermon, in the manner of street preaching. Peter rejects human wisdom, emotional stories, any element of the arts, as well as debate and a pursuit of human logic. He goes straight for the word, trusting in the word and the Spirit of God to do what only God can do. The focus of this sermon, this evangelistic street sermon, this first sermon after the birth of the church, is on Jesus, not on the listeners. It is seeking to proclaim him from his written word, trusting that this, as applied by his Spirit, has more than enough power to bring about a miraculous transformation in a very hostile crowd.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the preceding exegesis and analysis of these various passages, the content and methodology of preaching becomes very clear. The preacher and the church must continue to trust in the power and ability of the preached word. They must continue to trust that God will work in and through his word as it is proclaimed under the power and application of his Spirit.

³³W. A. Criswell, *Acts: An Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 1:36.

The word of God must be the source for every preacher and every sermon. The method of preaching is simple: it is a passionate plea issuing forth from the reading of God's word, explaining of the word, and exhorting of the word. God's power is at work in and through God's word and, as God's messengers of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-19), preachers must trust God's clearly prescribed means of reconciling the world to himself. Martyn Lloyd-Jones gives a stirring charge for every preacher, which must never be forgotten:

Man is there to deliver the message of God, a message from God to those people. . . . He has been sent, he is a commissioned person, and he is standing there as the mouthpiece of God and of Christ to address these people. In other words he is not there merely to talk to them, he is not there to entertain them. He is there—and I want to emphasize this—to do something to those people; he is there to produce results of various kinds, he is there to influence people. . . . He is there to deal with the whole person; and his preaching is meant to affect the whole person at the very center of life.³⁴

³⁴ Martin D. Lloyd-Jones, *Preachers and Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 53.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES WITH
EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN A
POSTMODERN CULTURE

Churches and preachers are abandoning the Sunday morning sermon in an attempt to be more relevant and to “reach” the postmodern generation. This abandonment is encouraged and promoted by modern advocates of the church growth movement. Leonard Sweet, for example, writes,

The church’s crisis is of EPIC proportions. It will take more than a Martha Stewart makeover or spiritual plastic surgery to make church vital to a postmodern culture. Unless churches can transition their cultures into more EPIC directions—Experiential, Participatory, Image-based, and Connected—they stand the real risk of becoming museum churches, nostalgic testimonies to a culture that is no more.¹

This exodus away from preaching God’s word in the Sunday service to elements that are participatory, image-based, and oriented to connect people is caused by a lack of trust in God’s word combined with an increased trust in human logic and creativity. This change involves an abandoning of the belief that God’s word is sufficient and able to do the impossible in the hearts and minds of listeners. It also includes an embracing of human wisdom as being far more effective and powerful than God’s holy word. Untold numbers of pastors and preachers are adjusting their focus in a Sunday morning service away from the preaching of the word. They have heard and believed the misconception that lectures, even when called “sermons,” cannot be effective in communicating truth to a postmodern generation. Their motive may be honorable—to

¹Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 30.

reach more people—but their method is an abandonment of the clear call of God’s word upon every under-shepherd.

Within the church in North America there is an urgent need for church leaders and preachers to have their confidence in, and commitment to, the word of God restored and strengthened. Two key concepts are necessary to help pastors and church leaders renew their confidence in the preaching of the word of God in weekend services. The first is a biblical understanding of the command and call to preach the word. This call was addressed in chapter 2. The second key concept is the task of creating a better understanding of what is commonly called a “lecture.” There needs to be an educated and balanced understanding of how a lecture, the expository preaching of God’s word, can and does meet and even exceed the essential elements of effective communication. Sermons do not need to be discarded for a Sunday service to be effective in reaching postmoderns. Preachers need to recommit to preach God’s word in weekend services.

Essential Elements of Communication and Teaching

It is crucial to begin with a basic understanding of the core elements of communication in relation to teaching and learning. After all, every sermon has a teacher as well as listeners who should be learners. Some key postmodern beliefs play directly into this issue of communication, so it is important to name these and understand how they impact preaching.

First, postmodern thinking postulates that truth is relative and the expertise and authority of a teacher is more a function of social or cultural constructs; it is therefore not binding. Claims of truth do not equate to the actual truth they propose. This new way of thinking has infiltrated churches and feeds into the abandonment of preaching. It can be summed up as follows:

Postmodernism enables a *questioning* of . . . objectivity and value-neutrality in the making of knowledge claims. This is not so much a matter of *rejection* but rather of recognizing that these are claims not truths, claims which are socially formed,

historically located cultural constructs, thus partial and specific to particular discourses and purposes.²

The transformation of truth as a factual reality into a claim that is socially formed rather than divinely received severely undermines preaching. It was first seen in its direct impact on educators, not simply in their content, but also in how they communicated that content. To stand up and lecture as one who knows to one who does not know is no longer an acceptable practice in postmodern thinking.

Second, postmoderns assert the autonomy of the self, a core belief that is widely embraced by the bulk of educators and teachers: “Autonomy is the government of the self by the self, a freedom from dependence, a situation where one is influenced and controlled only by a source from within oneself.”³ This influence by those outside of self is to be guarded against from dangerous others, “in the context of adult education are didactic teachers and transmitted bodies of formal knowledge.”⁴

Sadly, many church leaders and preachers have bought this lie and have therefore changed their model of ministry, especially their weekend service content. Postmoderns believes that all significant influence comes from within the individual and the hindrances to true growth, learning, and self-actualization, come from outside or from others, their beliefs, and thinking. The logical outcome of this belief is that all true learning must come from within, certainly not from a dangerous “other” who seeks to prevent autonomy, self-fulfillment, and growth. Postmoderns posit that the great danger to learning, growth, and fulfillment are the “others” who would seek to hoist their views, ideas, and opinions on the listener as binding truth to be blindly followed. This errant belief regarding how learning happens must be rejected by the preacher and the church.

²Robin Usher, Ian Bryant, and Rennie Johnston, *Adult Education and the Postmodern Challenge: Learning beyond the Limits* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 7.

³Ibid., 93.

⁴Ibid.

The postmoderns sense of what is dangerous and deadly to the self is in reality the only source of hope for the self.

These and other key postmodern beliefs have pressed upon education and communication such that the entire system of learning has been overhauled. Included in this change are new and diverse theories regarding how learning and comprehension is best accomplished. Five key theories addressing these changes are the behaviorist, the humanist, the cognitive, the social cognitive, and the constructivist theories.⁵ Of these five, the three main approaches receiving the most attention in universities, colleges, and classrooms are behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism.⁶

The Behavioral Model views the learner as basically passive, with the instructor designing a learning environment using positive and negative reinforcement to help the student gain understanding. In this approach, the lecture is regularly abandoned as the instructor seeks to create environments through which the learner will experience and grow.

The next approach is the Cognitive Model, which focuses more on how learners process, store, and retrieve information for later use. In this model, the teacher seeks to help students understand new information using authentic contexts that more closely mirror real life situations. This model requires less teaching and more coaching, providing tips and help as needed. A key aspect of this approach would best be described as being more apprenticeship oriented than classroom oriented, embracing the theory that by “observing others, people acquire knowledge, rules, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes.”⁷ A key for teachers in this model is to help learners discover their learning

⁵Sharan B. Merriam, Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 277-79.

⁶Barbara Mae Gayle et al., *Classroom Communication and Instructional Processes: Advances through Meta-Analysis* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 36.

⁷Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood*, 279.

style and then ensure that the majority of teaching lines up directly with each student's learning style. In other words, anything but a lecture is acceptable.

The third major approach is the Constructivist Model, which sees learning as an active process where students construct meaning, and thus how they sense and understand the world around them. This teaching approach, which is the most widely embraced model today, employs open-ended questions and extensive dialogue between students helping them construct their own meaning. Therefore, the teacher's role is to help customize the material to the student's knowledge and pursuit of discovering their own meaning. Again, the idea of a lecturer pushing his or her version of truth on the learner is completely rejected.

All of these new learning theories or models are based on a core change in some fundamentals about truth, the process of acquiring truth, and the value and role of authority. Gone are the days when people believed that authority, understanding, and meaning were held by the instructor and needed to be transferred to the student. However, "The real beauty of experiential education [like these new theories] is that it places trust in the learner to derive meaning from his or her experience."⁸ The educational system widely embraced in North America and beyond is oriented to these new approaches and seeks to create more interactive, student-centered, student-led, self-actualizing teaching environments.

A biblical understanding of the essential elements of teaching would be the imparting of new knowledge, and a gaining of understanding and insight, resulting in transformation and growth. The Bible has a particular view of how this happens that is in direct contrast to the approaches and beliefs widely held today. Postmodern beliefs regarding communication and learning have migrated from the classroom to the church

⁸Mark Miller, *Experiential Story Telling: (Re)Discovering Narrative to Communicate God's Message* (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan, 2003), 23.

and have therefore helped to foster a widespread abandonment of preaching in Sunday services. If one embraces the belief that students need to direct their own learning process, be more actively engaged in it, and find their own meaning from within, rather than having it foisted upon them from the outside, preaching would naturally be discarded.

The Lecture Style of Communication and Teaching

Tied to these issues is another issue regarding the effectiveness of the lecture form of communication. “Today’s students are accustomed to quick change and novelty in their environment and many find it difficult to concentrate on the same topic for long periods of time. They fidget, drift, or get into off-task conversations. This is particularly true if the teacher is doing most of the work such as lecturing.”⁹ Can the traditional lecture have any place in effective communication and education today? Lectures are still used in universities and colleges and many secondary classrooms, but their use is certainly on the decline and routinely denounced as a less than adequate means of effective communication. One author, commenting on lectures, wrote that “traditional lecturing suffers from a major defect: it is one-way communication in which the student is a passive participant—merely a listener. Students learn best when they take an active role: when they discuss what they are reading, practice what they are learning, and apply concepts and ideas.”¹⁰ Should the lecture be abandoned, not just from the classroom, but more importantly, from the pulpit? Is one-way communication, one to many, in any manner a desirable approach if true comprehension and transformation are the target?

⁹David A. Sousa, *How the Brain Learns: A Classroom Teacher's Guide* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2001), 92.

¹⁰Barbara Gross Davis, *Tools for Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 131.

Many seek to discard the lecture since in their minds it is one person standing in front of many others, giving their own opinion, ideas, values, beliefs, and only the information they think is pertinent and helpful. Others argue that a lecture does not allow for questions, clarification, or interaction of any sort. A lecture places the speaker in the only active role while the listener has his or her learning hindered by an extremely passive role. Since postmodernity believes that truth and meaning, as well as self-actualization, are only properly found within, one can see why they believe lectures hinder real growth and advancement.

A common critique against lecturing as an effective means of communication is called the Learning Pyramid, which lists the rate of retention of various communication approaches: lecture (5 percent retention rate), reading (10 percent), audio visual (20 percent), demonstration (30 percent), group discussion (50 percent), practice by doing (75 percent), and teaching others (90 percent). The problem is that this widely used pyramid demonstrating supposed effective teaching methods is not based on any scientific or scholarly research. It has been reproduced and referenced in books and on the internet as an accepted fact, but there is no accurate and trustworthy basis to its claims. It is true, however, that “studies [have shown] that active classes, so long as they are purposeful and well organized, are often the ones in which students learn the material most fully and usefully.”¹¹ So is a lecture still a valid and effective means of communication, specifically, should it still be used in the church in a weekend service?

The Abandonment of Preaching Based on a Misinformed Understanding of Lecture and Effective Communication

The current thinking permeating the postmodern dialogue among church leaders has been drastically influenced by educational writers and speakers. This truth

¹¹Alan Crawford et al., *Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom* (New York: The International Debate Education Association, 2005), 1.

has resulted in a belief that one cannot reach a postmodern generation with an authoritative message delivered by a perceived expert who pushes it upon a passive listener. This approach, it is believed, is violating the absolute ultimate of postmodernity, autonomy of self. Those things deemed truths coming from outside oneself will never lead to ultimate fulfillment, purpose, meaning, and growth. One of the fathers of this new way of learning in education, which has shaped the postmodern world and is a widely recognized expert, is Malcolm Knowles. Knowles writes, “The critical function of the teacher, therefore, is to create a rich environment from which students can extract learning and then to guide their interaction with it so as to maximize their learning from it.”¹² The idea of students extracting learning and interacting with the material is core to the new approaches in communication, teaching, and learning.

The result of these various issues and changes has led to a loss of confidence in the lecture. The infiltration of the minds and methods of church leaders by these new philosophies has resulted in vast numbers of churches jettisoning the sermon for more “effective” means of communication. There is a growing rejection of a perceived expert standing at the front of an auditorium conveying external knowledge (God’s word) to a room full of passive listeners. The replacing of these lecturers with guides to enable self-inquiry, self-actualization, and self-knowledge is a core adjustment happening in an untold number of churches. Those who are considered cutting-edge communicators are teachers who believe that “successful learning environments are more student centered, active, and contextually based to allow students to transfer knowledge to new problems, concepts and settings.”¹³

¹²Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (New York: Association Press, 1970), 51.

¹³Gayle et al., *Classroom Communication and Instructional Processes*, 36.

In a book entitled *Simply Strategic Growth: Attracting a Crowd to Your Church* the authors discuss the movement away from traditional preaching this way: “Today’s church may have to use a variety of communication tools to capture people’s attention. The methods will probably have to be visual, . . . They’ll probably have to be high-tech. . . . They may include drama and music to express emotion in addition to truth. . . . The teacher may have to tell stories and share personal examples—just as Jesus did.”¹⁴ To stand up and lecture is seen as old-school, ineffective, and powerless. These authors go on to postulate that if one wishes to be effective in weekend services, then changes must be made to the sermon: “We could hold tenaciously to our long services and long sermons, but while we cling to our methods, we’ll continue to turn people off. They just won’t sit for that long (sixty minute sermons). They won’t pay attention.”¹⁵

If churches do not completely do away with the weekend sermon, they typically reduce the length of the sermon or turn it into an experience using media, entertainment, and humor: “Experience is one of the primary languages of postmodern culture. . . . In the practice of ministry, however, it means nothing less than a complete reconstruction of how we communicate and educate.”¹⁶ Is this reconstruction the proper conclusion to the new way of thinking and being effective in reaching this postmodern world? Has the lecture or sermon truly run its course? Is it on its last legs? Does the weekend service need to be reconstructed? The problem with discarding the sermon is that the need to do this is based on faulty and errant assumptions and conclusions. Since some teachers bore listeners with a lecture, the conclusion is made that the lecture is the problem. Since some sermons are boring or too long, the conclusion is that the vehicle is

¹⁴Tim Stevens and Tony Morgan, *Simply Strategic Growth: Attracting a Crowd to Your Church* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2005), 25.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 170-71.

¹⁶Miller, *Experiential Story Telling*, 24.

the problem. Since some listeners walk away, wearied, unengaged, and not having learned anything, the sermon is blamed and then abandoned. Others twist and distort the truth to try to justify their call to abandon the preaching of the word. Mark Miller, for example, writes,

This shift from propositional to narrative preaching will be a challenge to those who believe our current preaching style was handed down from God himself. The reality is that propositional preaching was developed a few centuries ago to accommodate cultural and technological transitions at that time. Lecture style preaching made sense in an increasingly modern society. It presented facts to the “class” seated in the “classroom.” What was cutting edge ages ago, however, is making less sense all the time.¹⁷

Although, sadly, many in church history practiced various forms of preaching that were anything but expository in nature, some have always preached expository sermons. Chrysostom, for instance, “preached verse-by-verse and word-by-word expositions of many books of the Bible.”¹⁸ Preachers such as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, among others, also preached the word in an expository manner due to their strong belief in its transformational power.¹⁹ Expository preaching, or as Miller calls it “propositional preaching,” is not some new development from a few centuries ago to accommodate cultural and technological transitions.

What needs to be remembered in this entire discussion about the state, effectiveness, and need for preaching is that there are numerous factors at play that cause the lack of interest on the part of many churches for a lecture from the Bible. The preacher may not be gifted or perhaps simply did not work hard enough in his study. Perhaps the preacher is not preaching a properly-crafted expository sermon, with explanation, illustration, and application of God’s word. Another problem could be that

¹⁷Miller, *Experiential Story Telling*, 81.

¹⁸John MacArthur, Jr. and the Master’s Seminary faculty, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 44.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 48-49.

the preacher himself is simply bored by God's word. There are numerous possible problems; one must be careful not to disobey God's clear command to preach the word in the pursuit of so-called effectiveness with postmoderns.

Expository Preaching Flourishes as Effective Communication Despite Being a Lecture

So what is a reasoned and biblical response to critics who insist the sermon must be abandoned in the pragmatic pursuit of effectiveness with a postmodern generation? God's word, as mentioned in chapter 2, would argue strongly that preaching must stay as one of the primary callings and greatest weapons for gospel ministry. If one truly understands what the Bible says about preaching, including its source and power, then one should not lose confidence in the preached word. In addition, understanding how the expository sermon still meets and exceeds the requirements of good communication, even though it is technically a lecture, is crucial for the preacher to remain committed and faithful to his calling. In what follows, numerous truths are presented explaining how expository preaching flourishes as an effective form of communication despite being a one-way lecture.

The first truth is that an expository sermon has, as its source, a miraculous book. Every preacher should remind himself regularly about the supernatural content that he proclaims week after week. Preachers are called to preach the "living and active" (Heb 4:12) word of God (2 Tim 4:2). When a preacher's source is the most unique, powerful, and transforming book known to man, a sermon is never merely a lecture. The very words spoken, when the sermon is properly derived from the text, including analysis of the structure and grammar, have an inherent power.

The second truth is that each expository sermon has a miraculous agent of transformation actively involved when the word is preached. God's Holy Spirit convicts (John 16:8; 1 Thess 1:5), comes in power (Acts 1:8), anoints one for ministry (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38), reveals God's truths (1 Cor 2:10), speaks in and through humans (Matt

10:20), gives eternal life (Gal 6:8), reveals the mysteries of God (Eph 3:5), enables obedience to truth (1 Pet 1:22), bears witness to the truth (Rom 9:1), teaches (1 Cor 2:13; John 14:26), enables the preaching of the gospel (1 Pet 1:12), removes the veil that blinds lost people (2 Cor 3:16), brings the spiritually dead to life (Titus 3:5), and performs countless other activities.

A yielded and humble preacher, when he stands to proclaim a sermon culled directly from God's word, will typically experience the supernatural power of God's Spirit in and through his preaching. A lecture *only* empowered by the speaker's research, passion, and oratory skills is rightly questioned as inadequate and is far too feeble to do the work of soul-transformation. Scott Gibson describes these kinds of sermons this way: "Too much of current preaching resembles cotton candy that appeals to people's hungers but possesses no value as food."²⁰ However, a lecture, using God's living and active word as its source, delivered in the dependence and humble trust of God's Spirit, has an effectiveness that is nothing but supernatural: "The Holy Spirit can take God's perfect word and bring a message that challenges every listener present with the grace and the demand of the Gospel."²¹

God's plan for weekend services is for a pastor to stand in front of his congregants, Bible open, sermon notes laid out, and boldly proclaim "Thus saith the Lord." An expository sermon is not merely another lecture like those delivered in a classroom. This lecture has a source that none can fathom. And this lecture has an inherent power due to the agent of transformation who has promised to be present and working when God's word is proclaimed to God's people (Isa 55:11).

The final truth is that each expository sermon is really a miraculous

²⁰Scott M. Gibson, ed., *Preaching to a Shifting Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2004), 82.

²¹*Ibid.*, 139.

conversation between God and each listener when the word is opened and preached accurately under the power of God's Spirit. This lecture, this one man talking to many in a one-way form of communication, is actually a personal and powerful conversation between God and the listener. The act of preaching the word of God empowered by the Spirit of God is anything but just another lecture. This reality allows a single lecturer to do what would be impossible for a teacher to do in a classroom. It is impossible for a teacher to effectively communicate with any number of people at the same time while also taking into account their diversity of background, emotional state, interest, learning styles, understanding, objections, etc. Yet God can and does do this personally with each listener through his word and Spirit.

The Spirit knows every congregant better than they know themselves. The Spirit has the ability to speak to their hearts and minds. The Spirit knows all their activities, thoughts, dreams, intentions, words, and conversations. The Spirit takes God's word and applies it to the listeners' hearts and minds as He sees fit. The Spirit uses the word to break down walls, dismantle excuses, and drive his message home. The Spirit uses his inspired, authoritative, living and active word to do the impossible, turning a one-to-many lecture into a private and personal dialogue, a conversation between God and each individual, all at the same time. As James Daane writes, "The mystery of an event in which a human being speaks God's words and God thereby speaks his word through human words cannot be explained in human language without recourse to paradox. It is clear, [however], that both *what* Jesus says and *how* he says it point to the awesome mystery of the nature of [Christian] proclamation."²²

A high commitment to the faithful proclamation of God's word, weekend after weekend, in churches world-wide is the calling of every pastor. All other elements which

²²Quoted in Stephen Alford and David L. Alford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Company, 1998), 3.

may be added to a weekend service must be weighed against the Scripture commanded, God empowered, soul transforming activity of expositional preaching. The very thing the postmodern generation needs more than anything else from the church is God's truth, straight up, without apology or disclaimer, and proclaimed as the ultimate authority over their lives. This truth is to be presented by prepared, gifted, committed, godly pastors who are seeking to live out this very truth as they call others to do the same. Expository preaching is how to best reach the postmodern generation in a weekend service.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN A POSTMODERN CULTURE

The ministry research project consisted of an assessment of the exegesis of passages covered in chapter 2 as well as two 4-week sermon series which were topical in series design, yet expository in individual sermon creation. The elements of the project consisted of a survey of 10 preaching pastors, asking for their assessment of the passages selected and the specific exegesis of each passage. Another element of the project was a survey of 75 postmodern congregants upon completion of the final sermon in the first 4-week series, as well as 3 focus groups each consisting of approximately 10 postmoderns. The final elements of the project were in reference to the second 4-week series, which consisted of a survey of 75 congregants conducted after weeks 1, 2, and 4. In addition, after the fourth sermon, 3 final focus groups were conducted, each consisting of approximately 8 participants.

These surveys and focus groups were based on the project's three goals to: (1) document the biblical exhortation to preach; (2) discover and document the effectiveness of the current preaching ministry; and (3) adjust and grow the preaching ministry at Harvest London in the creation and delivery of life-transforming, Spirit-empowered sermons.

Scheduling of the Elements

Chapter 2 was sent the beginning of May 2016 to 12 preaching pastors. Ten agreed to review and provide feedback via a survey which was received by the beginning of June. The questions in the survey sought to discover if these respondents believe the

chapter covered the key passages regarding Scripture's call to preach. Secondly, the survey sought to discover if these ten preachers believed the exegesis presented in the chapter sufficiently unpacked and explained each passage in a manner staying faithful to the meaning of the original author. Accomplishment of the first goal of the project would be assumed complete if at least 90 percent of the preachers assessed the exegetical work as being sufficient or exemplary.

The next phase of the project involved enlisting a minimum of 75 postmoderns who attend Harvest London on a regular basis to provide feedback on two 4-week sermon series. A search of the Harvest London church database was conducted to find possible participants.

The Harvest London church database is populated through a process of collecting information from congregants. This information is collected through weekly registers, which are passed to every attendee in every service. This process provides numerous ways to help provide congregational care to a large and growing congregation spread over three services. It also allows the leadership to be aware of anyone who is consistently absent, and follow up. Current metrics would appear to support the belief that about 80 to 85 percent of those in attendance each week complete a register. Due to the presence of this attendance information in the database, a search was feasible to discern who in the postmodern generation had been attending since the beginning of the ministry season in September 2015. This information was extracted and then filtered. All who had made even one register entry since September and were in the 19–35 age range were selected. Then, those who had attended less than 60 percent of the weekend services between September 2015 and April 2016 were eliminated. No consideration was given to members versus adherents. Membership at Harvest is not aggressively encouraged, but is a part of the process of connecting people into discipleship. It was determined that membership status would have no bearing on the quality of feedback, since approximately 80 percent of congregants at Harvest are not members. This

selection process resulted in 231 possible participants who met the specified criteria.

An email invitation was sent to each possible participant, explaining the upcoming two sermon series, the purpose of conducting the surveys and focus groups, and a request if they would be willing to participate in the survey. This invitation was sent mid-April. Analysis was not conducted, at this point, to determine how long respondents have been Christians, how long they had been attending Harvest, or where they fell in the 19–35 postmodern age range. By the end of April, 54 percent of those asked to participate responded positively to the request, resulting in 124 participants. A further email was sent to each of these 124 participants, outlining the way the project would proceed, with a survey to be completed after the final sermon in the first 4-week sermon series, as well as three focus groups after that final sermon. It was also explained to them that in the final four-week sermon series, a survey would likely be conducted after each sermon, and three more focus groups after the final sermon.

An additional email was sent to a select group of these 124 survey participants asking for participation in the focus groups, which would be conducted at the conclusion of both sermon series. Fifty-four individuals were selected for this focus group invitation, from the overall group of 124, with a focus on seeking to obtain a range of participants based on age, gender, length of time attending Harvest, and length of time as a Christian. In selecting this subset, how likely individuals were to participate in a group setting was also considered. Of the 54 who were asked to also participate in a focus group, 24 responded positively, with an agreement to participate.

Survey of Chapter 2 Preaching Primer

The survey sent to 10 preaching pastors seeking their assessment contained chapter 1 (simply for context) and chapter 2 from this paper. An email was sent to these pastors asking them to go to a web page provided by a company called Formstack (www.formstack.com) in which the online survey had been created (this was the vehicle

for all online surveys utilized by this project). The pastors were asked to complete the survey (appendix 1). The first question of the survey asked if they thought this chapter dealt with the key texts which speak to the biblical call for preachers. Next, they were asked to assess the chapter's exegetical handling of each of the core passages covered by this paper: 1 Timothy 5:17-19; 2 Timothy 3:10-17, 4:1-5; Hebrews 4:12-13; Romans 1:16-17, 10:13-17; 1 Corinthians 1:17-31, 2:1-16; Luke 24:13-32 and Acts 2:14-36. For each of these passages, the pastors were asked to assess if the handling of the passage was sufficient or insufficient, in their professional opinion. If they responded that the passage was handled sufficiently, they were asked to provide any suggestions regarding how the handling of the passage could be improved. If insufficient, they were asked to describe their concerns. The final question on the survey was a general request for other comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding this presentation of the Bible's call for preaching.

Overview of Sermon Series with Accompanying Surveys and Focus Groups

During the month of May, the first four-sermon series was preached. After the final sermon on the weekend of May 28-29, the first survey was conducted as well as three focus groups on Sunday May 29. The participants were asked to complete the survey no later than Tuesday May 31. The three focus groups were conducted immediately upon the close of the second Sunday service (Harvest holds three identical services each weekend – one on Saturday evening, and two on Sunday morning).

Following the May 28-29 services, for the next two weekends, an associate pastor preached, allowing time to analyze the feedback and make plans to implement the findings in the second sermon series. The second 4-week sermon series was conducted beginning June 18-19, and ran through to July 9-10. A survey was completed after weeks 1, 2, and 4 in this series. Due to a lower than needed response rate for the second weekend, a decision was made to withdraw the survey for the third weekend. The

concern was that the repetitive nature of the surveys, combined with the arrival of the summer weeks may lead to a continuing decline in participation, and it was believed that the fourth week was more important to get feedback than the third week. Each week, the participants were requested to complete their surveys by the following Tuesday, allowing time to analyze the feedback prior to the next sermon. Following the final sermon, the weekend of July 9-10, three more focus groups were conducted immediately following the second Sunday service.

Synopsis of First Sermon Series

The elders at Harvest London had sensed, over the past ministry season, a need for more grace in the church fellowship and interaction of congregants. Therefore, it was determined that during the summer break in preaching through the book of Romans (a planned two-year schedule), a special focus should be given on grace, specifically the idea of John 1:17, that grace and truth come through Jesus Christ. The elders believed there was a need to remind the church that Christ's body should reflect his virtues of grace and truth. A special four-week series was designed around the theme of grace. The goal was that each sermon, although based on a different passage, would still be expository in nature as each was dug out and unpacked through proper exegesis of Scripture. The sermon series was given the title, Rediscovering Grace.

Sermon 1

The first sermon was an exposition of 1 Peter 4:8-11, entitled "Rediscovering Grace at Church." The focus from these verses was Peter's instruction about love, care, and service among the people or family of God and how gracious interaction in the church by his children brings glory to God. Application was focused on how these instructions from Peter must be characteristics of the local church, specifically at Harvest London. Peter teaches that the character and practice of the family of God must reflect the heart and character of the head of the family, the Lord Jesus. Each sermon in this

series had a video testimony (called a “God at Work” story), shown just prior to the start of the sermon, acting like an introduction to the sermon topic. In these God at Work stories, a different Harvest congregant shared his or her testimony each week, focusing on God’s grace related to the specific topic of the sermon. Week 1 was a testimony of a couple saved in their late forties of out Catholicism and how the grace flowing from the local church was used by God to grow and heal them.

Sermon 2

The second sermon was an exposition of selected portions of Ephesians 5-6. The title of this sermon was “Rediscovering Grace at Home.” The God at Work video testimony was by a man whose marriage was radically restored and reconciled after his unfaithfulness. The concept of mutual submission (vv. 5:1-2, 21) was given as the foundational principle of grace in the home. The focus then went to encouraging men to allow God’s grace to flow through them, from verses 5:25-32. Next, the idea of God’s grace flowing through women was presented from 5:33. Finally, God’s grace was presented as flowing through children, both younger children at home, and adult children who are out of the home, from 6:1-4.

Sermon 3

The third sermon was an exposition of John 7:53-8:11 entitled “Rediscovering Grace Personally.” The God at Work testimony was of a woman saved out of the sex industry and how God had forgiven and transformed her. This passage was explained as being questionable in regard to John’s authorship, but due to a belief that it accurately reflects an encounter with and the words of Jesus, it was taught expositionally. In this sermon, the heart of a legalist was highlighted as one who judges others and is devoid of love. This judgmental, uncaring, cold heart was contrasted with the heart of God as revealed in Jesus’ actions and words. What is clearly seen is a heart of grace toward those who sin and are repentant. The thrust of this sermon was to repent and fall upon

the grace, forgiveness, and love of God.

Sermon 4

The final sermon in this series was entitled “Rediscovering Grace One to Another,” from Matthew 18:21-35. The God at Work testimony was of recently married man whose parents had strongly opposed his marriage to a woman from a different race, yet God had resolved and healed this rift literally on their wedding day in an amazing act of grace. The story of Jesus instruction to Peter about forgiveness was examined, reminding us that interpersonal conflict is inevitable due to this sin-plagued world we live in, as well as sin still dwelling in our regenerated hearts. It was also taught that the story reveals how human wisdom falls far short of God’s divine plan of grace. God’s wisdom of how to treat one another, based on grace, was presented. Finally, the actual parable Jesus tells was taught, showing the extreme nature of kingdom grace and how each Christian is called to continually extend this forgiving grace to one another.

Survey after First Sermon Series

The first sermon series had just one survey at the conclusion of the four-week series, seeking feedback on how to improve the preaching, as well as to assess the experience of the listener. The focus on the listener experience was to gain a basic understanding of how a one-to-many lecture may actually feel more like a personal conversation God has with each individual, through an expository sermon. The survey was conducted online through Formstack. A reminder email to complete the survey after the sermon was sent to the 124 participants on Friday, May 27, including a link to the survey. Of the 124 potential participants, 99 responded by completing this first survey.

The first survey (see appendix 2) sought to gather some identifiers for each respondent. It required each participant to enter their name, email, and phone number as well as their age (split into three categories; 19–25, 26–31, 32–35), gender, length of time as a Christian, and length of time attending Harvest. The survey then required

participants to select a response to twenty multiple choice questions. With each selection, they also had the option to enter comments. The final question asked for any other insights, ideas, advice, or comments on the preaching in the first series. The twenty multiple choice questions focused on three main areas in the preaching: (1) the sense of a connection with the Holy Spirit and application of the content in their own personal experience, (2) their assessment of the preacher's effectiveness in the sermon wording, explanation, and application, and (3) the preacher's delivery including tone, movement, hand gestures, etc.

Focus Groups after First Sermon Series

The 24 volunteers for the first set of focus groups were split into 3 groups of 8. As soon as the final Sunday service ended, these participants were asked to make their way to a different area in the worship center where a focus group leader was waiting for them. A seasoned, gifted communicator was recruited for each focus group. These three facilitators were given some directions including preliminary questions to begin the discussion in each group. They were encouraged to adjust and ask additional or follow up questions, seeking to gather as much insight as possible. They were each made aware of the purpose and goals of this project. Each group had a recording device to record the discussion. They were asked to keep the focus groups to about 30 minutes each, allowing participants to leave church at close to their normal time. These were the initial questions provided to the facilitators:

1. What specifically would you say is Norm's greatest strength in his sermons?
2. What specifically – name one thing – should Norm change or add to his preaching to make it better?
3. How could he explain things better to help your understanding and acceptance of God's word?
4. Do you think people are engaged and learning from the sermons or do you see/know of a lot of people disconnected and/or bored?

5. How could Norm do a better job of illustrating or using stories or humor to help in understanding and application of the word?
6. Norm doesn't use a lot of introductions or conclusions – what could he do to improve on these parts of the sermons?

Synopsis of Second Sermon Series

The second 4-week special sermon series was decided, by the elders' team, to focus on several key areas flowing out of the series on grace which needed addressing at Harvest London. Topics were selected by the Senior Pastor and approved by the elders' team with four unique focus points, addressing four core concepts in the life and fellowship of the church. Each sermon had its own topic, yet each was written and preached as an expository sermon, seeking to allow the exegesis of the passage to drive the sermon. The sermon series was given the title, "The End Goal", with each week's topic being presented as one of God's goals for each congregant and for the church in general.

Sermon 1

The first sermon was an exposition of Luke 18:9-14 entitled "The End Goal: Pride or Humility?" The focus from this interaction of Jesus with his disciples was presented, highlighting God's goal of transforming one's heart, not simply producing external changes. The contrast of the saint and sinner in this parable was explained, showing how one had a haughty heart while the other had a humble heart. Therefore, one went away comforted, while the other was condemned.

Sermon 2

The second sermon unpacked 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14 and was titled "The End Goal: Giver or Taker?" The call of God, through Paul, was explained from verse 11 to be encouraging one another in the body of Christ, seeking to build up the Christians and thereby the church. This call is given to every member of the body. Verses 12-13

demonstrate that leaders are called to lead biblically, thus building up the body. The people are to respond biblically as seen in these verses, and this also builds up the body. Verse 14 was examined to see that all members of the family of God are to act biblically with one another, admonishing the idle, encouraging the fainthearted, helping the weak, and being patient with all.

Sermon 3

The third sermon in this series was a study of 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 entitled “The End Goal: Knowledge or Love?” This sermon explained the prominence of love as seen in verses 1-3, the perfection of love from verses 4-7, the permanence of love from verses 8-12, and the preeminence of love from verse 13. The application focused on the teaching that love is the highest commandment, but it must always flow out of and be connected to truth. Each Christ-follower must love God and others.

Sermon 4

The fourth sermon was an exposition of John 13:1-20; the foot washing example of Jesus in the upper room. This sermon was called “The End Goal: Servant or Leader?” Verses 1-3 were examined to see how Jesus knew what was about to happen to him and he knew exactly who he was, yet he was focused on offering grace, love, and service to his disciples. The amazing example of his humility in washing the disciples’ feet was explored, understanding Jesus’ call in verses 12-15 for his disciples to give of themselves to follow his example in loving, humble service to one another. The final portion of this passage was examined to see how this call is upon each disciple, even though trouble, suffering, trials, and persecution will come upon them. Blessed are those who follow his example and serve one another in humility.

Surveys in Second Sermon Series

The second sermon series was planned to have a survey completed after each

sermon. However, a decision was made prior to sermon 3 to skip the survey for that week. This decision was due to some concern around the level of participation. Sermon 1 was June 18-19, sermon 2 was June 25-26, and sermon 3 was July 2-3. This July weekend was a holiday weekend in Canada. This fact, combined with the declining number of participants each week, prompted the removal of survey 3. Sermon 1 had 79 completions. Sermon 2 had only 58 completions. The goal was 75, so it was determined that if all 4 surveys were requested, the final week may have the least number of respondents. The result of cancelling the survey for sermon 3 was that 66 completed the survey after the fourth sermon, which was a good number in light of the peak of summer vacations happening July 9-10. The first 2 surveys were the same in content, but the third survey (fourth weekend) was shortened and adjusted to focus on a few specific areas. Again, this was done in response to the feedback from the first set of surveys, as each week the responses were analyzed and adjustments were being made.

The focus of this second sermon series surveys was primarily to see if the listeners saw improvements in the preaching as a result of the first sermon series feedback. There was also a desire to survey and learn more about what the experience was for the listener in relation to how personal and powerful the sermon was in their lives. These surveys were done online through Formstack, allowing each participant to complete it either on their smartphone or computer. It was also determined that requiring the name, email and phone number was not helpful in any manner, so these fields were left optional in this second sermon series, with the hope that this may solicit more open feedback. A reminder email was sent each Friday prior to the weekend services, asking the 124 participants to complete the survey by the end of Tuesday following the weekend.

Each of the three surveys in this sermon series again required the participants to enter their age (split into three categories; 19-25, 26-31, 32-35), gender, length of time as a Christian, and length of time attending Harvest.

The survey from weeks 1 and 2 can be found in appendix 3. This survey included 21 questions. The final 3 questions were open-ended questions, asking for comments in the answer. Of the questions, 18 asked participants to select one option from a list of choices, and with each they could also add additional comments if they wished. The focus of these questions was on specifics with the delivery and act of preaching, as well as on their experience regarding how they sensed a connection with the preacher and the Holy Spirit during the preaching.

The survey used for week 4 can be found in appendix 4. The focus of this survey was specifically targeted to assess changes they saw in the preaching as well as if they experienced a lecture as a more personal conversation. The same demographic information was collected and the name, email, phone number was again left as optional. The survey was shortened to 10 questions. In 6 of the questions, participants were asked to select an option from a list and provide any comments to support or explain their answer. The remaining 4 questions were open-ended answers. These asked new questions about their thinking if they invited friends to the services as well as how their experience of listening to the sermon is different at Harvest then a previous church experience.

Focus Groups after Second Sermon Series

The 24 volunteers for the first set of focus groups were asked to participate again in the second focus group. However, due to vacations and schedule conflicts, some could not. Additional participants from the survey group were asked, and with the requirement that they attend the third service, along with problems with availability, the number able to participate was reduced to about 20. They were split into three groups again, and the skilled facilitators were once again asked to run these focus groups. The focus groups were scheduled for immediately following the second service on the Sunday, and were held in the worship center. Each lasted approximately thirty minutes,

and the sessions were recorded. The facilitators were given some directions including some preliminary questions to begin the discussion in each group, but they were encouraged to adjust and ask additional or follow up questions, seeking to gather as much insight as possible. These were the initial questions provided to the facilitators:

1. What improvements did you see in Norm's preaching in this four-week series vs. the last four-week series?
2. Describe what you experience when listening to Norm preach.
3. Sermons here at Harvest are one man speaking to hundreds in one-way communication, a lecture. Does listening to the sermons feel that way? If not, why?
4. If you were going to invite an unsaved friend or family member to this church, what concerns would you have specifically related to the sermon?
5. In Norm's preaching, what do you think has the biggest impact to help him and all of us be more effective in reaching your generation with the gospel, and discipling them in their faith?

CHAPTER 5

FINAL ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Introduction

This chapter presents an evaluation and assessment of the project. It will summarize the research data presented in chapter 4 and determine whether the project met its goals. It will also examine the project's methodology to assess strengths and weaknesses. A recommendation will also be made as to how this project should be approached differently if it were to be conducted a second time, with the knowledge that has been achieved as an outcome of this project. A theological and personal reflection regarding how this project has impacted me personally and our church will be included. There were strong convictions in place at the beginning of this project, and this chapter will explain why and how these convictions have been embraced with an increased conviction, based on the outcome of the work described within.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to improve my ability to prepare and deliver expository sermons that have a Spirit-empowered, transformational impact on the postmodern congregants at Harvest. In many ways, I believe this purpose was accomplished, although not as fully as I had hoped. On the positive side, I have seen an increased understanding of and conviction to the commands and mandates of Scripture upon my life as one called to preach. The sense of the divine mandate to be not just a man of the word, but increasingly to be a proclaimer of that word, has significantly deepened in my heart and mind. Since 1992, I have sensed a calling upon my life to

pastor God's people and preach God's word. This calling had a weight to it, but my research on chapter 2, specifically, strengthened this sense into a deep conviction for the remaining years of my life. Another positive outcome is the enhanced sense of God's faithfulness when his word is preached. The idea of "Spirit-empowered, transformational" preaching has taken new life in my mind.

Spurgeon, it is said, so desired the Spirit's power in his preaching that on each step up to his elevated pulpit he said to himself, "I believe in the power of the Holy Ghost."¹ Through my study for this paper, combined with the survey results, God has grown in my heart and soul a deeper and more certain faith and confidence in his promises regarding the preaching and effectiveness of his word. My belief in the power of God, his Spirit, and his word have deepened and solidified through the completion of this project. Not only have my convictions and confidence in God's word grown, but I believe my skills and ability to deliver a God-ordained, God-empowered sermon which will have transformational impact have grown. I do not take credit for this, but believe that with the enhancement of my faith in preaching, combined with some better skills and insights, God is more consistently moving in the preaching of his word at Harvest London.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Chapter 1 outlined the first goal of this project as, "to document the biblical exhortation to preach as well as document how the Spirit personally and powerfully applies his truth to individuals through the vehicle of preaching." All 100 percent (10 respondents) of the preachers surveyed to assess the biblical mandate of preaching in chapter 2 thought that the paper dealt with the key passages which speak to the call for preachers. Of these, 80 percent thought the exegesis and interpretation of the Timothy

¹Greg Heisler, *Spirit-led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 151.

and Hebrews passages was “exemplary.” A total of 70 percent thought the treatment of the Corinthian and Romans passages was exemplary and 60 percent thought the treatment of the Acts and Luke passages was exemplary. None of the preachers providing feedback thought the treatment of any of the passages was “insufficient.” This feedback was a strong affirmation that a solid case was built from the pertinent passages regarding the command by God to preach his word.

The second portion of this goal, “document how the Spirit personally and powerfully applies his truth to individuals through the vehicle of preaching” was also achieved. Some elements of this belief were covered in chapter 2 and therefore affirmed by those who gave feedback, however, a more complete dealing with this issue was included in chapter 3, which, although not a part of the preachers’ survey, was confirmed by the surveys of the postmoderns. It was interesting to see numerous results from the surveys of the postmoderns affirming that it is possible for a preacher to deliver one sermon to a large group of people and yet many of them experience the sermon as a very personal conversation from God. Expository preaching turns a one-to-many, one-way lecture into a personal conversation God has with individuals through his word and Spirit. Numerous comments from the surveys affirmed this reality such as “there were many times where it felt like you were talking directly to me,” “wow, can God tell me anything more directly!” “this sermon especially felt very personal,” “there for sure were times I was being called out in a supernatural way,” “each week, it's interesting to see how something usually stands out in relation to what's happening in my personal life,” “I felt the sermon was more like a conversation to me,” “not a lecture but more of a heart to heart conversation, that is grounded in God's word,” “Norm might be speaking, but it's like God knows exactly what situation I am going through, and points throughout the sermon felt like God was directly speaking to me,” “once again this week I was almost breathless with how perfectly the sermon spoke to several key topics relevant to my immediate life.”

One question asked on the final survey of the project was, “were there times where you felt that the preacher was speaking directly to you?” This question was seeking to discover if the actual experience of listening to a sermon supported the thesis of the first goal, that God speaks personally and powerfully through his word to each listener, even in what many perceive to be a lecture. The final survey found that 97 percent of the respondents replied in the affirmative responding either “at least once during the sermon,” or “numerous times during the sermon.” Asked another way, but pressing into the same inquiry, this survey found that 78 percent of respondents thought the sermon felt “like a conversation God was having with me through his word, it felt more personal than just a lecture.” Therefore, although the group of fellow preachers did not provide as specific of an assessment on whether an expository sermon seemed more like a personal conversation, the actual feedback, in overwhelming numbers, affirmed this was the case.

The second goal was to “discover and document the effectiveness of the current preaching ministry at Harvest London in relation to the postmodern congregants.” This goal was wonderfully achieved. The findings from pursuing this goal were a very encouraging surprise. The surveys and focus groups provided great feedback to paint a very clear picture of the effectiveness of the preaching ministry in our church, and specifically, related to my preaching. One of my associates preaches approximately 30 percent of the time in our weekend services, but these surveys and focus groups only responded to my preaching. As well, it should be stated that the surveys asked some specific demographic questions regarding gender, number of years attending Harvest, and the number of years each respondent has been a Christian. The results, when analyzed by any of these criteria, did not differ in any substantial manner, so the results will be discussed without any breakdown by these demographics.

In the first survey, conducted after the first 4-week sermon series, out of 119 participants, 114 felt they were engaged “consistently throughout the sermon” or had a

“significant connection with what was being taught.” When asked if the preaching was “interesting,” no one said “never,” 1 participant said “occasionally,” 23 said “more than half the time,” and 95 said “very consistently throughout all four sermons.” This sort of feedback was very affirming in relation to the engagement of our people with the way the preaching is done at Harvest.

Other questions, simply trying to discern certain aspects of the act of communication and the connection with people were also encouraging. A total of 99 percent of the participants believed that the preacher “unpacked, explained, and applied the text well,” and 99 percent also said the tone, inflection, and volume of the preacher were helpful to the listener. The results showed that 78 percent found the illustrations used to be helpful in their understanding, and 94 percent found the wording and language used was understandable, appropriate, and helpful. Another 99 percent found the flow of the sermon easy to follow. Finally, there was one very surprising result in the first survey, which sought to assess the current preaching, prior to any changes. A question was asked in regard to the length of the sermon. The typical sermon at Harvest would be approximately 50-60 minutes in length. We endeavor to have each sermon be 45 minutes in length, but I still struggle with keeping the sermon to that duration and normally run close to an hour. I fully expected, especially coming from the postmodern social media, gaming generation, that the feedback would confirm that the sermons were too long. However, only 8 participants said the sermon was “too long,” a surprising 98 said it was “about right,” and shockingly, 13 said it was “too short.” Therefore, 93 percent believed there was no issue at all with the length of sermons preached at Harvest prior to any changes.

However, a key question remains. Is the preaching “effective” and by this, the understanding is that “effective” does not simply mean interesting or engaging, but is it also transformational? Is God at work encouraging, convicting, building up, reproof, rebuking, etc. (2 Tim 3:15-17, 4:1-2). In other words, is the word, as preached at

Harvest, transformational in nature? Again, of the 119 respondents in the first sermon series survey, 104 replied that they “sensed God’s Holy Spirit” at work either in a “tangible” manner, or at least “frequently,” which represents 82 percent believing God was working through the sermon. This feedback does not directly confirm that the sermon was transformational, but combined with some of the comments from the survey and focus groups, it is apparent that God was and is changing lives through the preaching. Comments such as the following were received: “I cannot emphasize how entirely this message seemed to wrap up EVERYTHING in my immediate spiritual line of sight lately. Hallelujah!” “Another encouraging and convicting sermon that has helped me grow,” the “preaching has had a major impact on me, my family, and my growth as a believer,” “I have grown way closer to God since and have applied it to my everyday life and now read the Bible every day,” “the teaching is ultimately what brought me to Christ 2.5 years ago,” “the sermons are always applicable to my life and the Spirit works through you to make dramatic changes in my life and my walk with God,” “it has helped me to grow so much in my walk with Christ over the past 5 years at Harvest,” “Never have I grown in my faith more than when I started attending Harvest,” “the preaching has completely changed the way I look at God and the Bible and I am so, so grateful for that.”

Some other questions were asked on the survey after the first 4-week sermon series, specifically related to parts of the sermon such as introductions, conclusions, illustrations, the use of stories, etc. A total of 106 respondents, or 91 percent, believe the introductions worked well and did not need changing, and 82 percent felt the same way about the conclusions. Another 84 percent felt the use of stories was “about right” in the sermons, and 95 percent felt the use of humor in the sermons was “about right.” Respondents who found the use of illustrations helpful in their understanding was 78 percent, and, therefore, this would be an area where some improvement could be focused. Finally, 91 percent of the respondents believed the emphasis on the cross and the gospel

was included, applicable, and appropriate.

The third goal of the project was to “adjust and grow the preaching ministry at Harvest London in the creation and delivery of life-transforming, Spirit-empowered sermons.” To be honest, a struggle resulted after assessing the results of the first survey after the first four-sermon series. This struggle was in relation to what area to focus on making changes for the next four-sermon series. With such strong (and encouraging) results from the first survey, some discussion with other pastoral leaders and elders followed, seeking input and suggestions as to how to tackle the second sermon series and specifically, what to survey. There is a strong understanding of the crucial need to continue to learn and grow as a preacher, and in no way is there a belief of having arrived, but were the correct questions being asked and answered in the surveys to facilitate continued growth? Three surveys were conducted in the second 4-week sermon series, one after weeks one and two, and the third after the final week in the series. In this final survey, two questions were asked specifically seeking to assess if there was growth in my preaching between the first and second sermon series. The data collected from the surveys in the first sermon series was compared to the data from the surveys in the second sermon series using the chi-squared statistical analysis tool. None of the data was found to have enough evidence (no before/after questions showed a calculation of less than the accepted critical value of 0.05 probability level, and thus, the hypothesis could not be accepted) to conclude that the data showed any real significant difference between the two sets of surveys. Therefore, based on a statistical assessment only, one cannot determine the accomplishment of this final goal. I believe this is a result of the data returned from the first sermon series surveys being so overwhelmingly positive and affirming. In light of this, the data from the second sermon series surveys and focus groups will be presented to show the accomplishment of this goal, but any of the comparison questions between the first and second series will not be used as they showed no quantifiable changes. I believe the extremely positive feedback from the first sermon

series was what caused this lack of statistical proof with the comparison questions.

The first question was, “of all the times you have heard Norm preach, do you think these past four sermons have shown growth and improvement?” The responses (from 64 respondents) indicated that 7 believed the preaching “was about the same as previous sermons.” However, 46 felt there was “some improvement” and 11 said there was “significant improvement in this series over previous sermons.” This means 89 percent saw at least some improvement in my preaching, and so this would confirm that the third goal was realized.

The other question asked in this final survey was “Did you notice any improvements in Norm’s preaching in this four-week series versus previous sermons?” This second question is almost the same as the first, but these two questions were spread out in the survey, seeking to determine if they would yield the same or similar results as this was a core concern. To this question, 9 percent thought my preaching was better prior to this series, 20 percent thought it was about the same, and 71 percent thought my preaching had improved as compared to previous sermons. Therefore, one question resulted in an 89 percent affirmative response to improved preaching, whereas the other yielded a 71 percent improvement. An assessment of these results has not been able to discern why this difference occurred between the two questions. An average of the two would return an 80 percent affirmation of change and growth in the preaching and perhaps this average of the two is a more accurate representation than either of the two extremes.

Some of the comments provided by the respondents helped to reinforce this assertion that there was growth and improvement in the preaching through the application of things learned from the first sermon series. “I noticed the introduction was more attention-grabbing . . . and some take-home points at the end,” “I think the outline was easier to follow in this series,” “I really like the sum up at the end of the sermons,” “The biggest change would be the specific wrap up call to action at the end,” “I appreciated the

changes made on the feedback from the first focus group discussion, good improvement,” “I enjoy the increased practical application, or points to apply this to our lives,” “Some specific, Scripture-based applications were added,” “I’m actually shocked that in this series you achieved even further clarity than before,” “The application part of the sermons have been greatly improved,” “I would say overall that Norm seems to be improving with each new series.”

Strengths of the Project

I believe the strengths of this project lie specifically in two areas; the theological mandate for preaching, and an affirmation that God blesses and uses this model of preaching to reach postmoderns. Far too many pastors, preachers, and churches are abandoning the traditional sermon in weekend services to be relevant and connect with the next generation. They have bought into lies and misleading human wisdom and, although their heart and motive is good, they are abandoning the very call of God and the only means provided to see life transformation happen. This project presented a biblically solid case for the preaching of God’s word, not in a topical or proof texting manner, but firmly rooted in an approach which starts with the text and allows the text to design and shape the sermon. The belief that a biblically mandated approach to preaching is based on the principle that an inspired, inherent, authoritative text must be not only the source of every sermon, but the author’s logic and presentation must also shape and direct the structure of the sermon. An exegetical outline is how the preacher first shapes his sermon. This exegetical outline then is adjusted into a homiletical structure, staying true to the exegetical outline of the text, but changing the wording of the big idea and main points to be focused on the listener, using the language of today. In other words, this paper presents a case that a sermon begins by the preacher going back in time, geography, language, culture, etc. to find the inspired message of the text. Then, keeping the author’s emphasis and logic, the preacher brings that message, back over the

time, geography, language, culture, etc. and preaches the inspired and authoritative word passionately to his listeners.

The work done in chapter 2 builds a solid case that the approach to preaching as the primary focus of a weekend service is not open to change based on human wisdom, personal preference, or pragmatic issues like so called relevance or trying to interest the disinterested. When the source is the “living and active” (Heb 4:12) word, and when the sermon stays true to the word, not just in content, but also in structure, then the preacher can have confidence when he stands up to preach that he has power and authority in his sermon. Also, when that sermon is delivered by a man who has sought to abide with Christ, humble himself as a slave of Christ, has sought to be filled and controlled by the Spirit of God, and has prayerfully sought God’s anointing in the act of preaching, then he can be more confident that when he stands up to preach, he has power and authority in his sermon. It is not because of the man, but rather in spite of him. With a supernatural source and a supernatural power, the sermon is the most effective and powerful tool one can use to reach the postmodern or any generation in a weekend service.

Chapter 2 presented a solid case for this belief. I propose that what is needed, is a return to our confidence and faith in God, his word, and his promises. Paul so wonderfully stated this truth in 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 when he wrote, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” This gospel message is the great hope of the church. Nothing has changed the basic need and remedy for the human heart since Paul penned those words, and in our modern generation. I believe that what is needed is a revival of faith in preachers, pastors, and church leaders’ hearts. The writer of Hebrews said it well when he wrote, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). Preachers need an assurance of things they hope to happen in a service and a conviction of things not yet

seen (before they preach), and by faith stand up and boldly, without apology, passionately proclaim the word of God. God, therefore, has promised, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Cor 1:21).

The other strength in this project was the affirmation that God does indeed bless and use this model of preaching to reach postmoderns in weekend services as experienced by the ministry of Harvest Bible Chapel London. The overwhelmingly positive feedback in both sermon series was surprisingly and shockingly above and beyond what was expected. Based on the numbers of people coming to Harvest, there was a sense that God was doing something in the postmodern generation and through informal feedback there was a sense that it was a combination of worship and the word, yet the surveys confirmed these truths in a wonderful way. After twenty-four years of pastoral ministry, I would self-assess that God has gifted me as a general practitioner (GP). I am like a GP doctor – gifted and passionate about simply shepherding people. Some men are gifted and called to more specialty roles with unique gifts in preaching, leadership, evangelism, as authors, etc. I believe that, by God’s grace and only for his glory, I have been given spiritual gifts and a matching call as a GP pastor. I am able to do several tasks required by church leadership well, but do not feel I am a specialist in any given area. Yet in this reality, I personally believe that God has grown my gift of preaching over the last 24 years to have significant impact. I am hesitant to write this, as I fear my heart behind writing it may be misinterpreted. I am significantly aware of many of my shortcomings, weaknesses, struggles, and my inability screams at me daily. For the first 12 years of our church plant, when I was preaching weekly, it was a crushing experience for me. Without exaggeration, I would attest that there were hardly any weekends that did not find me wrecked with headaches, insecurities running rampant, and a self-critical spiraling down into a place of never wanting to preach again. Over the past three years, God has graciously been giving me release from these fleshly and often

sinful attitudes and struggles. However, preaching is still the most difficult task that I am called to participate in. I would much rather teach in a classroom, but I have come to believe that God is using the call to preach as the crucible in which he continues to wreck and remake me. I say all this to affirm that what God seems to graciously be doing through my preaching is overwhelming and such an obvious act of his gifting, working, and empowerment, and all for his glory.

This reality of my experience of preaching and awareness of my general and limited gifting combined with the feedback and responses from the surveys and focus groups has in a massive manner affirmed the thesis of this project. It is what I am praying God would allow me to help instill in the hearts, minds, and souls of many preachers before my last day is done. My heart yearns to help other men find the supernatural confidence and delight in God's word and his Spirit specifically in the act of preaching. Oh, that more preachers would spend the long hours in study and then walk into the pulpit with an unwavering confidence, hope, and faith in the biblical call to "preach the word!" This preached word is the only hope to reach the postmodern generation (or any generation). So much has been written, taught, promoted, and sold about how to reach the younger generations and yet so much of it is horizontal and powerless based on pragmatic human wisdom. By faith, we must be firmly rooted in a belief that God's word never returns void, but always accomplishes exactly what his sovereign plan directed (Isa 55:11).

The following comments are from the focus groups and surveys, and support the amazing and kind affirmation by God of not only my preaching, but of this model of preaching as the cornerstone of weekend services for reaching the postmodern generation.

1. The teaching at Harvest has always been very personal and challenging and biblically founded, which is why I love Harvest so much.
2. Keep doing what you're doing! I'm so blessed to be under such great teaching.

3. The preaching is my favorite thing about our church, without a doubt.
4. I have been blessed by Norm's preaching many, if not all, times I have heard him preach.
5. Norm's preaching never comes across as a lecture, but more like a conversation.
6. Keep following God's leading and letting the Spirit speak through you, Norm. I like the improvements you have made, but I loved listening to your sermons even before you started the past few series. God is using you powerfully in the lives of many, and I pray He will continue to do so. Your sermons are personal and powerful in my life.
7. I have copied numerous sermons from our church onto CDs and listen to them in my car almost every day during longer drives. I think they are really well balanced and have had a major role in changing my own heart over the past three years.
8. I think our preaching is by far the strongest aspect of our services.
9. I have heard many of Norm's sermons outside these eight in the study that I walked out feeling blown away, that they were the best and most impacting sermons I'd heard. So all I'd say is...keep yielding your heart to the Holy Spirit. It's not a formula that teaches people. God is and has been at work through you.
10. But I have to say...the anointing, God's call on and faithfulness in working through you has been consistent for the years I've experienced your preaching.
11. It's not 'about the messenger', but there is a working of the Holy Spirit through Norm as the messenger.
 [This sort of statement, although I appreciate the gracious and loving attitude toward me by the respondent, is an example of my thesis – when our source is the living, active word and our power is the Spirit of God, something supernatural happens making an average GP-type pastor something beyond as God works powerfully in the lives of the listeners].
12. The preaching was the number one reason I began coming to Harvest because I loved it so much when I visited. I find the sermons at Harvest interesting, engaging, convicting, moving, refreshing and life-changing. I used to think of sermons as the long, boring part of a service. Now that I attend Harvest, it is definitely a highlight of my week which I look forward to and can't imagine doing without.
13. I appreciate that when I come to Harvest, I can expect a sermon to be outlined by a Bible passage, that passage will be explained and I will have greater understanding of its intended meaning, and there will be exhortations to the church related to that passage. I look in my Bible the whole sermon where in previous churches I did not even bring one.

14. The sermons are Spirit-led and sound in Scripture.
15. The sermon was delivered in a way that as if I traveled in a time machine, and it is taking me back to Jesus' time and listening to the sermon as his disciples listening to him preaching.
16. Radically and completely. My husband and I love these weekly sermons that feed our souls like never before.
17. Harvest and the preaching and teaching here has made my faith more real than it has ever been before, due to the rawness and realness of the teaching.
18. Before Harvest, listening to a sermon was more so like listening to a lecture. At times it seemed distant to my situation. Now, going through the Bible, one verse at a time, has really helped me focus and try to understand the truth God has revealed through his word.

I would also like to provide a sample of the many comments provided in relation to our church people inviting their unsaved friends and family to church. Much of the disagreement with expository preaching is a pragmatic argument, that you cannot do this if you have any unsaved people attending your services or if you want your people to invite their unsaved friends and family to church. I believe these comments help disprove that errant and faith-lacking belief that sadly, by many pastors and preachers hold true. These comments are by postmoderns about reaching their unsaved postmodern friends. The question asked to solicit feedback in this area was, "If you are trying to invite unsaved friends or family to church, what would you tell them about the sermons before they come?"

1. I would say that they are pretty long, but interesting and can be understood by a very wide variety of people. I would encourage them to follow along in a Bible as doing this can help with understanding.
2. I would warn them that they will be challenged personally, and let them know that I am personally challenged each week myself. And explain why that is a good thing.
3. I probably wouldn't say much before if they were unsaved. I would just let the preacher do his thing and the Holy Spirit do his thing. And then I would talk to them afterwards.

4. If you would like to learn what the Bible says, that is what is preached.
5. Get ready for the sermon to hit at a very personal level.
6. That the truth is preached without apology. And that it's done in true love.
7. I usually don't tell them anything, I just pray that their hearts are opened and not offended. Again, this is a reflection of what their heart condition is, not the preaching. There have been many times that the sermons have generated good conversations between me and my unsaved family.
8. Get ready to have God talk to you personally. You'll need some Kleenex... Please be open to hear what God has to say to you as you are going to hear his word being preached today.
9. Nothing. I suspect that they may have comments/questions after. People need to hear the straight up truth.
10. I wouldn't feel the need to tell them anything. I've had many friends and family attend with me, and feel completely comfortable inviting anyone at any time.
11. [The sermons] are Bible based and life changing.
12. I would tell them that the sermon is for everyone, both saved and unsaved. There will be no judging, and that the teaching will be presented with both grace and truth.
13. I would tell them that the truth will be preached. It will be done with love, humility and grace, but you will hear the truth, like it or not.
14. [The sermons] are unapologetic, you'll hear the gospel.
15. Not much. Just that they need to hear it. The word of God needs no introduction!

Weaknesses of the Project

The first weakness of this project I discovered was related to our belief that true discipleship and transformation happens best in small groups. The weekend services are a part of what God is doing in transforming lives, but the true work of discipleship happens when approximately eight to twelve people gather to discuss how they apply the truth they have been taught from God's word, pray for one another, hold each other accountable, and practice the mutual ministry directed by Scripture using their God-given

spiritual gifts. Therefore, any attempt to measure true transformation through preaching, will be limited, since the only focus is what happens in weekend services.

Another weakness was highlighted in the feedback from the ten pastors who reviewed chapter 2 of this paper. Several of them pointed out a shortfall in my treatment of the Acts 2 and Luke 24 passages. One provided this comment about the Acts 2 passage, “Peter was quoting biblical texts to demonstrate that prophecy was being fulfilled before their very eyes. This does not in any way invalidate your point, but it is a unique event and the main point of the passage is not that he was preaching expositionally but that God was faithful to his promises.” This fact is something that I overlooked in my exegesis. This historical event was unique in redemptive history and not presented by Luke as a didactic passage on how to handle the word of God. Another preacher commented, “the messages given by Jesus and Peter are not necessarily Sunday morning expositions. Does that impact their usage in the context of this paper/project?” This insight is another good point, providing caution about the use of the Luke and Acts passages as examples in what we do in our weekend services. They do not say we should not do this, but they are not technically examples of weekend service preaching. The point I was trying to pull from these passages was the use of the Old Testament as the content of their teaching or preaching. I should have better clarified what I was saying in that chapter when dealing with these passages.

Another weakness I found was the dwindling number of postmoderns participating in the surveys. The first survey had 119 respondents, the last, 64 – almost half of those who started. This decline, I believe, was in part caused by the dates of when these surveys were conducted. Due to scheduling demands and limitations, the first sermon series was preached in May, and the survey was the last weekend of May. I required several weeks between the two sermon series to assess and analyze the results of the survey and focus groups and implement some changes in the second series. Therefore, the next sermon series did not start until June 18/19, and concluded (with the

final survey) the weekend of July 9/10. The reality is that our attendance typically drops around the third weekend of June due to summer vacations. We also have about 250 to 300 university and college students attending, with many of those coming from out of the city, but living in residence during the school year. Due to the time of year that I needed to conduct my surveys, I missed all those who were from out of the city but attending post-secondary school in our city and were a part of our church during the school year. I would have liked to have had about 175 respondents, which I could easily have done during the school year, but missed this with the late spring and early summer survey window. I think the consistency of the survey and focus group results leads one to believe that with even a smaller subset of respondents participating, the results are still accurate and informative.

One final weakness was that there was not a question on the survey to find out if the respondent was actually a believer or not. I was hoping to see if there were differences in some of the answers from the saved as compared to the unsaved. However, in the question where I asked “How long have you been a Christian?” I should have provided an option for “I am not a Christian” or something to that effect. Instead, I forced an answer of one of the following, “<1yr,” “2-5yrs,” “6-10yrs,” “11-20yrs,” “>20yrs.” Consequently, it is likely that some of the “<1yr” replies were not actually Christians.

What I Would Do Differently

If I were to do this project again, the first thing I would do is to schedule the first sermon series to run in October, as that is our month of highest attendance. I would have scheduled the four weeks around the university and college exam and reading weeks, to facilitate as large of a participation group as possible. I would also have scheduled the second sermon series beginning mid-January. I think a longer break between the two sermon series would help keep the number of respondents higher, as it

would have been several months since they did a survey or focus group. In addition, I think this may enable more objective feedback as they would likely have forgotten any answers they gave to the first sermon series survey.

Another thing I would do differently would be to dig more deeply into the Luke 24 and Acts 2 passages to deal more effectively with how these examples should be used by preachers today. I also would consider reorganizing chapter 2 to begin with Jesus' teaching in Luke 24, followed by the Acts 2 passage, the 1 Corinthians passages, the Romans passages, the 2 Timothy passages, and finally the Hebrews passage. In dealing with these passages in a chronological approach, it may build the case in a more substantial manner than I did with my original order, although I would not like to deal with the Hebrews passage last as I think it is instrumental in terms of source. I think reordering chapter 2 would help it better argue the thesis I was seeking to put forth and defend.

Theological Reflections

I have previously covered some of my thoughts on theological reflections, but I will attempt to clarify and summarize my thinking, theologically, as I have come to the end of this project. The first grace of God which has had a profound impact on my heart and mind through this project is an increased faith, trust, and confidence in God's promises and character. Having believed firmly in both the call of Scripture to preach the word, and having believed that this call is to be expressed through expository preaching, pulling God's message out of God's word, I have now had this belief confirmed in a surprisingly new manner. Prior to the commencement of this project, I believed this based on the command and call of Scripture and I believed this having seen God work through the preaching of other pastors whom I respect. However, I have now seen this biblical mandate proven in my own life and ministry. The feedback from the surveys, and more specifically from the six focus groups, has revealed to me in a very personal

and powerful manner how God, in his grace, has been using my preaching. The realization of Biblical instruction, commands, and principles bearing fruit in and through the application of my spiritual gifts is a wonderfully strengthening reality of my faith. In some ways, it feels like my faith has been a little more sight than just faith. This realization has strengthened my confidence in theology with respect to not just preaching and the inherency of the word of God, but also in all of Scripture. To see God's word living and active in the preaching at Harvest has been a joy over the 16 years since we planted this church, but never before like this having heard so abundantly of the ways and the depth of God's working through the preaching in many lives.

The second grace of God has been in his confirming the mix of divine and human in every sermon. Paul taught in Romans 10:13-14, "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?" This unique linking between the sovereign saving work of God, so often through the preached word by pastors is a divinely ordained miracle. God graciously allows the study, research, and exegesis combined with the personality, oratory skills, spiritual gifts, and presentation to be the conduit through which his saving call (Rom 8:28) is brought into a life. This truth makes preaching a unique privilege God gives to preachers. Speaking the word of God is actually a privilege given to all Christ-followers who are willing to open their mouths, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to lost people. However, preaching is a special and biblically ordained version of this. The miracle goes beyond the salvation of souls, for God also uses this human/divine endeavor called preaching to sanctify, correct, convict, rebuke, restore, exhort, train, and build up his people. This project has reminded me and brought clarity about both the miracle of new life in Christ and the miracle of growing in sanctification. Both of these come about weekly through the unique mixing of human study, research, and proclamation combined with sovereign saving and

sanctifying grace. Theologically, I understand what Scripture says about this mix of divine and human working in the call of preaching, but I find myself overwhelmed again by the mystery of why God would use one such as I in this act of grace.

Numerous other theological teachings and affirmations have been more deeply rooted in my heart, mind, and soul through this project. The following verses represent some of these core truths which God, in his grace, has driven deeper as convictions in my life. “Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor 4:1-2). A continual call of God for me and every preacher is to consistently “denounce disgraceful, underhanded ways,” which in our day-and-age, I would suggest involve any human, pragmatic, man-centered method and to weekly commit to an “open statement of the truth.” “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’” (Acts 2:37-38). We must stand firm on the power of the gospel and the entire word of God and because of this faith and trust we must boldly, without apology proclaim the simple message of repentance and salvation in the name of Jesus. “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (Jas 3:1). Finally, we must understand that our ultimate accountability is not to any congregation, elders team, denominational board, or congregation, but as under-shepherds we will give account to the Chief-Shepherd as those entrusted with the high and holy stewardship of his word and his sheep.

Personal Reflections

Throughout this chapter, I have touched on some insights, understandings, and encouragements which have personally touched my life through this entire degree program. I will expand on a few in this section.

The first lesson I believe God taught me through this project was more a reminder than a new lesson. It was the stark reality that I am but a cracked clay pot and God and his wonderful word is the source of all effectiveness, influence, meaning and transformation. “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us” (2 Cor 4:7). As I described earlier in this chapter, I have always had an immense struggle with preaching. Since my career in business and all through my life in ministry, I have loved leadership. I have loved teaching, since I discovered God’s gracious gift of teaching in the mid-1980’s. This responsibility of preaching has been a very different journey for me. I believe God has given me a spiritual gift in preaching, but it has been the crucible of my life as God has used it to crush, wreck, break, and ruin me far more than words would allow me to describe. It has been a private and personal wrecking in me which has been both horrific and wonderful. It has been horrific, in that I believe it has been a wrestling with God akin to the account of Jacob in Genesis 32, where God designed to break me and cause me to walk with a limp. I have come to realize the past few years, that this has been an amazing act of grace, as he has caused me such deep anguish of the soul during and primarily after preaching. I know this wrestling is not done, for my flesh is still so active and insidious in my life, yet God’s plan for my sanctification and usefulness has been a private, internal crushing developed through the very act of preaching.

Preaching has also been a wonderful experience, for I see God in this. I see his mercy and grace, his love and forbearance, his kindness and goodness. God has, in eternity past, determined that his sovereign plan for a very small part of his kingdom would allow me to be a conduit through which his grace would flow to people in London,

Ontario and beyond. When I hear a baptism story of someone I do not personally know, who testifies that God used one of my sermons to be the vehicle through which he brought them to salvation, words cannot convey the joy that floods my soul and the deep sense of gratitude that this chipped, cracked, frail clay pot could be used to bring the life-giving, eternity-producing water of salvation to a dead soul. When someone shares with me how God used one of my sermons to encourage them, to speak directly to them, to instruct and inform their heart and soul, the joy that overwhelms my heart with gratitude to God is indescribable. I know my own heart and my own struggles. I feel the greatest connection to Paul's words that "I am the worst (sinner) of them all" (1 Tim 1:15, NLT). Yet God in his grace allows me to be a part of the testimony of salvation and sanctification stories of many. This participation has been beyond wonderful and makes any of the years and years of horrific personal struggles with preaching more than worth it. This reality is why I still strongly feel the call of God to preach, knowing that he will continue to faithfully break me as he uses me in this calling. The testimony of Paul has become so real in all of this, "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10).

One final thought from a personal perspective is that I heard somewhere the idea that the more seriously the leadership of a church treats the preaching of the word, the more seriously the people in the church treat their faith. This connection has been something that I have personally had the privilege to witness over these last sixteen years, and through this project. God has grown our elder team and pastors to continue to commit themselves to the preaching and teaching ministry God has given us and as God has increased this commitment in my heart, we have seen a growing congregation respond in like manner. God attracts and God converts people in whom he places a heart and passion for his word. I believe this faithfulness is the promise to every church leader. As we seek to faithfully be men of his word, believing it, studying it, proclaiming it, and calling others to come under it, he will bring his sheep for he wants them fed richly from his nourishing word. Through the surveys and focus groups conducted, it has become

clear that God has been building in the lives of those who he has brought to our church a passion for his word. What has been encouraging to see is not that this ends with a sort of bibliolatry, but rather a passion and love for the God of the Bible and the Savior revealed in the Bible.

Conclusion

This project has been an interesting endeavor. It began very slowly, as it took over a year to get my proposal approved. There were numerous times in that year that I wanted to quit. Chapter 2 was a delight to research and write, and chapter 3, not so much. It was difficult as the area of education and teaching methodologies and learning styles is so broad and complex and ever-changing. The project component itself was difficult to schedule due to the many demands and a busy church schedule, as well as my own personal busy schedule. These demands, combined with the fact our Assistant Senior Pastor preaches about 15 to 18 times a year, interspersed throughout the ministry season, made this a difficult scheduling process. However, difficulties aside, the feedback from the surveys and focus groups has been overwhelmingly encouraging and this project has been a blessing in my life in many ways.

It is my hope that in some format this paper and project could be used to encourage men, especially younger men in ministry, and specifically in regard to their call to preach. I think too many have believed they cannot simply open God's word and begin with a "thus saith the Lord," but rather need to make the word acceptable to their listeners before it can be effective. I would pray that God would allow me to influence and encourage many men in their ministry to have faith and trust in God's clear command to preach the word and encourage them from our experience, that this is and can continue to be effective in reaching all people, especially the next generation.

I was thankful in all my classes at Southern that the men who teach preaching were committed to this core belief and are leading the way in training up countless men in pastoral ministry to have this confidence and hope in God's promises.

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY TESTING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND FAITHFULNESS TO GOD'S WORD OF THE PREACHING PRIMER

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to determine your experience while listening to the preached word of God. Also, the surveys will seek to understand any lasting impact the preached word has had in your understanding and walk with God. This research is being conducted by Norm Millar for purposes of project research toward a Doctor of Ministry degree. In this research, you will be asked to provide your personal feedback on Norm's preaching at Harvest London. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. By your completion of this on-line survey, you are giving your informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Survey on chapter 2, the preaching primer:

Name:

Email:

Please answer the following questions as accurately as you can. Thanks!

1. Do you think this paper dealt with key texts which speak to the biblical call for preachers? *(Please remember this paper is strictly limited as to how many pages it can be so each chapter has a limit as well, so this was never planned to be an exhaustive study, but rather a selective one.)*

yes / no

If no, please list other texts you think should be examined:

2. From your understanding of Scripture and keeping in mind the purpose and goal of this paper/chapter (as explained in the cover email), please assess this paper's treatment of each of the following passages of Scripture.

Please use the following scale to rate each passage's treatment.

- **Insufficient** = The exegesis in this paper does not adequately or accurately explain the original author's meaning.
- **Sufficient** = The exegesis in this paper adequately and accurately explains the original author's meaning.
- **Exemplary** = The exegesis in this paper is exceptional in its explanation of the original author's meaning.

1 Timothy 5:17-19, 2 Timothy 3:10-17, 4:1-5

Insufficient / Sufficient / Exemplary

If "Insufficient," please indicate your concern:

If "Sufficient" please suggest some ways the handling of these texts could be improved:

Hebrews 4:12-13

Insufficient / Sufficient / Exemplary

If "Insufficient," please indicate your concern:

If "Sufficient" please suggest some ways the handling of these texts could be improved:

Romans 1:16-17, 10:13-17

Insufficient / Sufficient / Exemplary

If "Insufficient," please indicate your concern:

If "Sufficient" please suggest some ways the handling of these texts could be improved:

1 Corinthians 1:17-31, 2:1-16

Insufficient / Sufficient / Exemplary

If "Insufficient," please indicate your concern:

If "Sufficient" please suggest some ways the handling of these texts could be improved:

Luke 24:13-32, Acts 2:14-36

Insufficient / Sufficient / Exemplary

If "Insufficient," please indicate your concern:

If "Sufficient" please suggest some ways the handling of these texts could be improved:

3. Other comments, suggestions, concerns:

APPENDIX 2

SURVEY AFTER FIRST SERMON SERIES

Agreement to Participate:

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to determine your experience while listening to the preached word of God. Also, the surveys will seek to understand any lasting impact the preached word has had in your understanding and walk with God. This research is being conducted by Norm Millar for purposes of project research toward a Doctor of Ministry degree. In this research, you will be asked to provide your personal feedback on Norm's preaching at Harvest London. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. By your completion of this on-line survey, you are giving your informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Survey #1 (After the first four-sermon series has been preached).

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Age: 19-25 / 26-31 / 32-36

Gender: Female / Male

How long have you attended Harvest London? <1yr / 2-4yrs / 5-7yrs / 8-10yrs / 11+yrs

How long have you been a Christian? <1yr / 2-5yrs / 6-10yrs / 11-20yrs / >20yrs

Please answer the following questions as accurately as you can in describing your experience listening to the recent four-sermon series by Norm Millar. Thanks!

#1 What sort of engagement did you feel with the sermons during the preaching?

1. No connection at all
2. I had some interest in the sermons
3. I was engaged consistently throughout the sermons
4. I sensed a significant connection with what was being taught in each of the sermons

Any helpful comments you could add for #1?

#2 The preaching was interesting.

1. Never
2. Occasionally
3. More than half the time
4. Very consistently throughout all four sermons

Any helpful comments you could add for #2?

#3 The flow of the sermons were easy to follow.

1. Seldom
2. Occasionally
3. More than half the time
4. Very consistently throughout all four sermons

Any helpful comments you could add for #3?

#4 The point of the messages and the overall content was:

1. Confusing and uncertain
2. Pretty clear at times, but often uncertain
3. Typically obvious and understandable
4. Always very clear and understandable

Any helpful comments you could add for #4?

#5 I sensed God's Holy Spirit:

1. Not at all during the sermons
2. Working, but only in a minor way
3. There was a tangible, supernatural power at work in the preaching
4. The Spirit was frequently at work powerfully in my life and I believe in the lives of others

Any helpful comments you could add for #5?

#6 How did these sermons apply to you and your life personally?

1. No real personal application in any of them
2. Some application to my life
3. occasionally I found at least a few application points in each sermon
4. God brought significant application to my life in each sermon

Any helpful comments you could add for #6?

#7 Regarding the wording/language of the sermons:

1. The words used were understandable, appropriate and helpful
2. The structure and content of the sermon could be improved by using an expanded vocabulary
3. The preacher needs to simplify the sermons by using more understandable language and terms
4. I found it difficult to understand what the preacher was saying

Any helpful comments you could add for #7?

#8 Regarding assumptions the preacher made about your Bible knowledge:

1. The preacher assumed I knew more than I do about the Bible and so some things he said were confusing.
2. The preacher should assume we know more than he did as he doesn't need to explain everything
3. I thought he had a good balance in his assumptions of what we already knew recognizing there is a lot of diversity in the room

Any helpful comments you could add for #8?

#9 The length of the sermons were:

1. Too short, I would like a little more preaching
2. About right
3. Too long, I think the sermons should be shorter

Any helpful comments you could add for #9? (If you selected 'Too long', what amount of time do you think the preacher should preach for?)

#10 The introduction to the sermons:

1. The current approach to sermon introductions works well for me
2. It typically took you too long to get into the actual sermon - I would shorten the introductions
3. I felt the introductions were typically too rushed or abrupt
4. I wasn't clear about where you were going with the introductions and how they fit with the sermons.

Any helpful comments you could add for #10?

#11 The conclusion of the sermons:

1. Needs to be more interesting and attention grabbing
2. Needs to more consistently wrap up the sermon and bring it to a better conclusion
3. The current approach to sermon conclusions works well for me

Any helpful comments you could add for #11?

#12 Regarding the use of stories during the preaching:

1. More stories would be very helpful in keeping interest and aiding understanding
2. The number of stories was about right
3. Less stories would enhance the preaching

Any helpful comments you could add for #12?

#13 Regarding the use of humor during the preaching:

1. More humor would be very helpful in keeping interest and aiding understanding
2. The amount of humor used was about right
3. Less humor would enhance the preaching

Any helpful comments you could add for #13?

#14 Regarding illustrations in the sermons:

1. I found the illustrations helpful in my understanding of what was being taught
2. The number of illustrations was sufficient, but the actual illustrations were not very helpful

3. More illustrations are needed throughout the sermons.
Any helpful comments you could add for #14?

#15 Regarding the cross and the gospel:

1. A little less talk about the cross and the gospel makes sense since most of us are already Christians
2. I think the current emphasis on the cross and the gospel is great
3. We need more focus on the cross and the gospel in our sermons

Any helpful comments you could add for #15?

#16 Regarding the apparent attitude of the preacher in his preaching:

1. I felt a good balance of urgency, compassion, and pastoral care.
2. I think he was a little harsh or demanding, a more positive and encouraging attitude would be helpful

Any helpful comments you could add for #16?

#17 The pacing of the delivery was about the right speed for me to listen and track with the preacher?

1. Yes it was fine
2. No, it needs to be slowed down
3. No, it needs to be a little quicker

Any helpful comments you could add for #17?

#18 The tone, volume, and inflection of the preacher was helpful to my listening and learning?

Yes / No

Any helpful comments you could add for #18?

#19 The physical movements (hand gestures, body posture, pacing, etc.) were:

1. Distracting
2. I don't recall them
3. Appropriate

Any helpful comments you could add for #19?

#20 The sermon unpacked, explained, and applied the text well?

1. Yes - I could see in the passage what the preacher was saying.
2. No - I did not see from the Bible where he got what he said

Any helpful comments you could add for #20?

#21 Please provide any other insights, ideas, advice, or comments which you think may help Norm grow as a preacher. Thanks.

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY AFTER FIRST TWO SERMONS IN THE SECOND SERMON SERIES

Agreement to Participate:

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to determine your experience while listening to the preached word of God. Also the surveys will seek to understand any lasting impact the preached word has had in your understanding and walk with God. This research is being conducted by Norm Millar for purposes of project research toward a Doctor of Ministry degree. In this research, you will be asked to provide your personal feedback on Norm's preaching at Harvest London. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. By your completion of this on-line survey, you are giving your informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Survey #2 (To be completed after EACH of the sermons in the second series).

Name (optional):

Email (optional):

Phone (optional):

Age: 19-25 / 26-31 / 32-36

Gender: Female / Male

How long have you attended Harvest London? <1yr / 2-4yrs / 5-7yrs / 8-10yrs / 11+yrs

How long have you been a Christian? <1yr / 2-5yrs / 6-10yrs / 11-20yrs / >20yrs

Please answer the following questions as accurately as you can in describing your experience listening to the recent sermon by Norm Millar. Thanks!

#1 Where there times where you felt that the preacher was speaking directly to you?

1. No I did not sense that at all.
2. At least once during the sermon the teaching felt very personal, like it was just for me.
3. Numerous times in this sermon I felt like it was just me he was preaching to.

Please provide any comments/stories/examples that may help clarify your experience in this:

#2 How pertinent did the content of this sermon feel to you?

1. There were times during the sermon where it seemed like the preacher knew my week and/or my struggles and seemed to be specifically talking to things going on in my heart and life.
2. This sermon was interesting and helpful, but some of it did not apply to my life.
3. This sermon did not really apply to my life or my situation.

Please provide any comments/stories/examples that may help clarify your experience in this:

#3 The preaching was interesting.

1. Never Occasionally
2. More than half the time
3. Very consistently throughout the sermon

Please provide any comments/stories/examples that may help clarify your experience in this:

#4 The flow of the sermon was easy to follow.

1. Seldom
2. Occasionally
3. More than half the time
4. Very consistently throughout the sermon

Please provide any comments/stories/examples that may help clarify your experience in this:

#5 The point of the message and the overall content was :

1. Confusing and uncertain
2. Pretty clear at times, but often uncertain
3. Typically obvious and understandable
4. Always very clear and understandable

Please provide any comments/stories/examples that may help clarify your experience in this:

#6. I sensed God's Holy Spirit:

1. Not at all during the sermon
2. Working, but in a minor way
3. There was a tangible, supernatural power in the preaching
4. The Spirit was frequently at work powerfully in my life and I believe in the lives of others.

Please provide any comments/stories/examples that may help explain or show how the Holy Spirit was working:

#7. What are your thoughts on this sermon as a typical lecture (one way communication, one to many)?

1. It felt like a lecture - I was just one of hundreds listening
2. It felt more like others sort of faded away and there was a personal nature to the teaching

3. This sermon felt very specific to me, like God was speaking through the word or his servant directly to me
4. It felt like God had a personal and transformational conversation directly with me during and through the sermon

Please provide any further thoughts or ideas you had which may further clarify the sense you had of a personal and powerful conversation happening through a lecture - God connecting directly with you.

#8 Regarding the wording/language of the sermon:

1. I found it difficult to understand what the preacher was saying
2. The words used were understandable, appropriate and helpful

Comments – any suggestions or ideas for improvement in terms of sermon wording?

#9 Did you notice any change in the introductions from Norm's normal practice?

1. I don't recall the introduction
2. Seemed about the same as usual to me
3. I thought the introduction had more energy and focus than usual
4. The introduction grabbed me and got me quickly interested in the sermon - keep doing this

Please provide any comments other comments about this sermon's introduction:

#10 Did you notice any change in the conclusion from Norm's normal practice?

1. I don't recall the conclusion
2. The conclusion seemed about the same as usual to me
3. The conclusion was better than usual and helped wrap up all that was taught

Comments – any suggestions or ideas about the use of conclusions in the sermons?

#11 Regarding the use of stories during the preaching:

1. More stories would be very helpful in keeping interest and aiding understanding
2. The number of stories was about right Less stories would enhance the preaching

Comments – any suggestions or ideas about the use of stories in the sermons?

#12 Regarding the use of humor during the preaching

1. More humor would be very helpful in keeping interest and aiding understanding
2. The amount of humor used was about right Less humor would enhance the preaching

Comments – any suggestions or ideas about the use of humor in the sermons?

#13 Regarding illustrations or object lessons in the sermons:

1. They were not enough AND the ones that were used were not helpful
2. The ones that were used were helpful, but I think more are needed
3. The number of them was appropriate, but better illustrations and/or object lessons are needed, they just weren't that good
4. I found the illustrations and/or object lessons very helpful in keeping my attention and helping me understand.

Comments – any suggestions or ideas for improvement in terms of illustrations and object lessons

#14 Regarding the gospel:

1. A little less talk about the cross and the gospel makes sense since most of us are already Christians
2. I think the current emphasis on the cross and the gospel is great We need more focus on the cross and the gospel in our sermons

Please provide comments that may help clarify your views on this:

#15 The pacing of the delivery was about the right speed for me to listen and track with the preacher?

1. Yes it was fine
2. No, it needs to be slowed down
3. No, it needs to be a little quicker

Any helpful comments you could add for #15?

#16 The tone, volume, and inflection of the preacher was helpful to my listening and learning?

Yes / No

Any helpful comments you could add for #16?

#17 The physical movements (hand gestures, body posture, pacing, etc.) were:

1. Distracting
2. I don't recall them
3. Appropriate

Any helpful comments you could add for #17?

#18 The sermon unpacked, explained, and applied the text well?

Yes / No

Any helpful comments you could add for #18?

#19 Please provide any other insights, ideas, advice, or comments which you think may help Norm grow as a preacher. Thanks.

#20 Any other comments, suggestions or ideas for improvement by the preacher specifically in relation to making this sermon more personal and powerful in the lives of the listeners

21. I believe that God's Holy Spirit moved the pastor to plan and preach this sermon because God wanted to make some change in my life, encourage me, or grow me spiritually. If this is true, please indicate what you sensed God change or growing or transforming. Thanks!

APPENDIX 4

SURVEY AFTER SERMON 4 IN THE SECOND SERMON SERIES

Agreement to Participate:

The research which you are about to participate in is designed to determine your experience while listening to the preached word of God. Also, the surveys will seek to understand any lasting impact the preached word has had in your understanding and walk with God. This project is being conducted by Norm Millar for research towards a Doctor of Ministry degree. In this research, you will be asked to provide your personal feedback on Norm's preaching at Harvest London. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. By your completion of this online survey, you are giving your informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Name (optional):

Email (optional):

Phone (optional):

Age: 19-25 / 26-31 / 32-36

Gender: Female / Male

How long have you attended Harvest London? <1yr / 2-4yrs / 5-7yrs / 8-10yrs / 11+yrs

How long have you been a Christian? <1yr / 2-5yrs / 6-10yrs / 11-20yrs / >20yrs

Please answer the following questions as accurately as you can in describing your experience listening to the recent sermon by Norm Millar. Thanks!

#1 Were there times where you felt that the preacher was speaking directly to you?

1. No I did not sense that at all.
2. At least once during the sermon the teaching felt very personal, like it was just for me.
3. Numerous times in this sermon I felt like it was just me he was preaching to.

If this was true for you, could you explain in more detail what exactly this felt like to you? Was it a personal encouragement you received, some conviction, some sense of God affirming He knows and cares, or something else?

#2. I sensed God's Holy Spirit:

1. Not at all during the sermon.

2. Working, but in a minor way.
3. There was a tangible, supernatural power in the preaching.
4. The Spirit was frequently at work powerfully in my life and I believe in the lives of others.

Please provide any comments/stories/examples that may help explain or show how the Holy Spirit was working:

#3. What are your thoughts on this sermon as a typical lecture (one-way communication, one-to-many)?

1. It felt like a normal sermon - I was just one of hundreds listening.
2. This sermon felt more like a conversation God was having with me through his word - it felt more personal than just a lecture.

Please provide any further thoughts or ideas to clarify the sense you had of a personal and powerful conversation happening through a lecture - God connecting directly with you.

#4. Did you notice any improvements in Norm's preaching in this four-week series vs. previous sermons?

1. His preaching seemed about the same in this series as in previous sermons.
2. I thought there were some changes and improvements in this series vs. previous sermons..
3. I thought the preaching was better prior to this four-week series.

Please provide specifics (if you can) about any changes in his preaching:

#5. Regarding illustrations and stories:

1. There were not enough AND the ones that were used were not helpful.
2. The ones that were used were helpful, but I think more are needed.
3. The number of them was appropriate, but better illustrations and/or stories are needed, they just weren't that good.
4. I found the illustrations and/or stories very helpful in keeping my attention and helping me understand.

Any suggestions or ideas for improvement in terms of illustrations and stories?

#6. What would you say is the biggest misconception your friends or family who don't come to Harvest would have about our services, specifically our preaching?

#7. If you attended a church before Harvest, how has your view or experience of listening to a sermon changed?

#8. If you are trying to invite unsaved friends or family to church, what would you tell them about the sermons before they come?

#9. Any other comments, suggestions, or ideas for improvement by Norm specifically in relation to making future sermons more personal and powerful in the lives of the listeners?

#10. Of all the times you have heard Norm preach, do you think these past four sermons have shown growth and improvement?

1. No, these are about the same as previous sermons.
2. Yes, there has been some improvement.
3. Yes, I have seen significant improvement in this series over previous sermons.

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ABSTRACT

TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN A POSTMODERN CULTURE AT HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL, LONDON, ONTARIO

Norman Ross Millar, D.Min
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Russell T. Fuller

This project sought to improve my ability to prepare and deliver expository sermons that have a Spirit-empowered transformational impact on the postmodern generation at Harvest Bible Chapel, London.

Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, and research methodology of the project.

Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological mandate for expository preaching in weekend services for all churches seeking to be faithful to the mission given to them by God.

Chapter 3 discusses the core elements of communication in relation to teaching and learning. Included is an examination of the current philosophies of teaching and learning and how these have influenced preaching in the church.

Chapter 4 describes the ministry project including each of the eight weeks of preaching, surveys, and focus groups.

Chapter 5 provides an evaluation of the purpose and goals of the project, including theological reflections, strengths and weaknesses of the project, and what I would do differently, should I do this project again.

VITA

Norman Ross Millar

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Diploma, Fanshawe College, London, Ontario, 1981

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