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EQUIPPING MEN IN CHRIST-CENTERED EXPOSITORY
PREACHING IN THE RUSSELL CREEK ASSOCIATION
OF KENTUCKY BAPTISTS IN
GREENSBURG, KENTUCKY

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

In Partial Fulfillment
for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Blake Hill Jessie
May 2020

APPROVAL SHEET

EQUIPPING MEN IN CHRIST-CENTERED EXPOSITORY
PREACHING IN THE RUSSELL CREEK ASSOCIATION
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Blake Hill Jessie

Read and Approved by:

Brian J. Vickers (Faculty Supervisor)

Michael E. Pohlman

Date _____

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PREFACE

Thank you to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for eternal life and this time to grow in grace and knowledge of the truth (2 Pet 3:18). I would also like to express my love and deep appreciation to my bride, Emily, who has had to sacrifice much by handling four kiddos by herself to allow me this time. Your prayers, initial belief that this was even impossible, and constant encouragement to stay the course has compelled me to finish the race. I love you! All my love to River, Josiah, Judah, and Pavy for giving Dad quiet time to study and the grace in understanding that I couldn't always come and play. To Mom and my late father, thank you for living Joshua 24:15 and setting the course for me to follow. To my brothers, thanks for always pushing me so hard; you prepared me well for this challenging journey. To Bro. Todd, thank you for all of your prayers, persistent encouragement, and help along the way. Greensburg Baptist, thank you for affording me this opportunity to study, grow, and equip others. Your encouragement, kindness, and prayers have served to sustain me. To my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Vickers, thank you for stretching my understanding of what it means to preach Christ-centered expository sermons and all of your wisdom and advice along the way. Additionally, thank you to Dr. Pennington, Dr. Gurtner, Dr. Cook, and Dr. Williams for the opportunity to learn and be further conformed to the image of Christ under your leadership. To Mrs. Omanson and Dr. Corum, thank you for your tenacious effort to help me be a better writer. Finally, to Dave and David, it has been one of my greatest joys to get to know you and your families. I pray that this time has left us all better equipped to preach this gospel more faithfully, clearly, and worshipfully.

Blake Jessie

Greensburg, Kentucky

May 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Not growing up in a ministry household left me bewildered and overwhelmed by the call to preach the gospel and specifically as that relates to the practical implications of sermon preparation and delivery. As God continues to raise up and call other men to preach within the Russell Creek Association of Kentucky Baptists (RCAKB), many of these men, similar to myself when called, have little to no formal education in regard to preaching. Therefore, I felt compelled to set up an intentional pathway to equip these future pastors and seasoned ministers looking to refine their craft. The implications of this project are to impact those who have been called to preach and also to help these men to replicate this training with those that God will raise up in their own congregations.

Context

The context of this ministry project was the RCAKB in Greensburg, Kentucky.¹ The RCAKB consists of thirty Baptist churches where only 23 percent (7 out of 30) pastors have received any formal training.² Recognizing this deficiency in training, specifically as it relates to expository preaching, was the justification for this project.

The realization of the need to equip pastors first began as I was called to ministry during my final semester of college. With little Bible knowledge, I was quickly

¹ Five of the thirty churches are located in counties outside of Green County.

² This number is based upon conversations with the Associational Mission Strategist and other pastors. Formal training is defined as any accredited degree in religious education, as several of these men have degrees in other fields.

counseled by several men of God to pursue a Master of Divinity degree. However, my situation was different from many of those men in the RCAKB as they were called to preach while in other vocations. Moreover, they have families to support and may pastor churches that could not afford a full-time salary.³ In fact, in our association of thirty churches there are only three full-time pastors; thus, all the others serve bi-vocationally or are retired from other professions.⁴ Due to serving bi-vocationally, many of these men do not have the time to pursue formal theological education. Furthermore, lack of finances by churches to pay for religious education further contributes to the deficiency in training.

The obstacles to education that many of the pastors in the RCAKB face were reflected within the church I pastor, Greensburg Baptist. When this project idea began, six men had expressed a sense of God's calling or making known to them his desire for them to preach. Two of these were college students who were being trained for ministry, but the other four had other vocations.⁵ Those with other vocations faced unique challenges in having opportunities to prepare them to preach; thus, the idea was birthed for this project to train and equip these men. Yet, in a desire to further bequeath present and future pastors with an opportunity for training, this project was extended beyond our church to the RCAKB.

The RCAKB emphasizes commitment to the Word of God in their Constitution under the second point in the "Articles of Faith or Principles of Union." It

³ Green County is a rural community, where 33 percent of residents live below the poverty line. "Greensburg, Kentucky (KY) Poverty Rate Data Information about poor and low income residents," accessed November 17, 2017, <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Greensburg-Kentucky.html>.

⁴ What these men are able to do while balancing so many other demands is truly amazing and a testimony to the work of God's grace among our community.

⁵ During this project one of the four men who had another job has since been ordained by our local church and has gone on to preach in a nearby county. He also attended our eight-week seminar.

states, “We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Words of God and the only rules of faith and practice.”⁶ Given that the Bible functions as the only rules of faith and practice it is pivotal that the body of Christ represented in the RCAKB be well equipped by their pastors to not only understand their faith but to live it. Furthermore, the RCAKB defines their purpose as follows: “to consider the various interests of the Lord’s work committed to His churches in obeying the command to ‘preach the Gospel to every creature.’”⁷ Therefore, to fulfill this central purpose of preaching the Gospel to all people, it is vital that the pastors of the RCAKB be trained and equipped with faithful hermeneutics and homiletics. Otherwise, they may be inclined to the perilous pitfalls of many pastors who are given to teach what others want to hear or to twist a text to their own desired end.

The purpose of the RCAKB is in jeopardy when pastors fall into the trap of opening up a passage and then preaching on “Whatever Strikes Me.”⁸ Preaching on whatever strikes them in the moment is in direct opposition to a faithful hermeneutic of seeking after the author/authorial intent and further interpreting the passage in light of the surrounding context and the grand narrative of the Bible. Furthermore, an oft-reoccurring lament from pastors is that they feel ill equipped to preach because “they do not know enough.” Thus, the tendency is to try to mine out whatever they can from the text without giving thought to basic exegesis. Approaching the text this way, provides further evidence for the need for this project.

⁶ Minutes of the Russell Creek Association of Kentucky Baptists 2019, “Articles of Faith or Principles of Union,” Constitution (Greensburg, KY, 2019), 3.

⁷ Minutes of the Russell Creek Association of Kentucky Baptists 2019, “General Articles. Article II—Purpose,” Constitution (Greensburg, KY, 2019), 3.

⁸ Jonathan Pennington describes this philosophy: “Most readers— whether brand-new to the Gospels or lifelong readers— simply read the stories and take away from them whatever comes to mind, whatever stands out to them this time.” Jonathan T Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 171.

One potential hurdle that had to be overcome for this project to be effective related to the prejudice in some churches toward pastors pursuing or having any formal theological education. Consequently, there are times when pastors of these churches are counseled to not pursue any kind of formal theological education. Therefore, building relationships with these men and striving to debunk any preconceived notions that these men or their congregations hold helped to alleviate fears of theological education ruining the preacher.

Rationale

The RCAKB affirms the Bible as its authority and desires to preach the gospel to all people, but many pastors still lack foundational training in hermeneutics and homiletics to effectively accomplish this task. Therefore, a series of questions were asked to best answer how these pastors might be better equipped to preach. First, what is Christ-centered expository preaching? Next, why is Christ-centered expository preaching foundational to Biblical preaching? Finally, how can the RCAKB most effectively equip current pastors and those pursuing a calling to preach?

This project sought to answer the first question—"What is Christ-centered expository preaching?"—by seeking to understand Christ's words in Luke 24:25-27 that all Scripture points to him. If the Scriptures lack sufficiency, then any attempt to uncover a biblical definition of expository preaching is in vain. In striving to define expository preaching I examined how the biblical text sets forth a faithful hermeneutic and homiletic. Interaction with the biblical text and several of the primary views on expository preaching provided clarity to an often-ambiguous term. Furthermore, there was a need to connect all the biblical text to Christ and to keep him at the center of preaching. Moreover, in seeking to define expository preaching it will help current and prospective pastors of the RCAKB better understand their own sermon preparation and delivery.

In addressing the second question—“Why is Christ-centered expository preaching foundational to biblical preaching?”—the aim was to examine the preaching of Peter in Acts 2, Philip in Acts 8, and Paul in Acts 13, specifically, how each of these three messages utilizes a strong hermeneutic of OT passages to deliver a sermon in his current context. Furthermore, these messages strive to show how the words of the prophets ultimately point to Jesus being the Christ. With a sound hermeneutic that gives birth to a faithful homily, the preacher can confidently share with the congregation from God’s Word and in accordance with God’s truth. Moreover, expository preaching helps protect pastors from feelings of inadequacy as they have sought to faithfully communicate and from running to other preachers’ sermons to feel sufficient. Given the plethora of access to sermons online, a pastor can easily be tempted to mimic or to try and preach another pastor’s sermon.

The first two questions serve to provide the information for the development of the curriculum. However, in seeking to answer the third question—“How can the RCAKB most effectively equip them to preach?”—there was a shift to focus on the implementation of this material. The intent was not to be a mere exercise in increasing intellectual knowledge, but to strengthen these men to make disciples of Jesus Christ through the faithful preaching of the Word of God. The curriculum covered an eight-week period with the first two weeks focusing on what is preaching and the work of the Holy Spirit. This was followed by six weeks of focusing on how to faithfully prepare a Christ-centered expository sermon. In an attempt to facilitate discipleship, there were weekly breakout groups where pastors discuss biblical texts and how to faithfully exegete the passage.

In light of the various needs, this project sought to train the pastors of the RCAKB to become more confident in the sufficiency of the Word of God and better prepared to take the gospel to all people. Moreover, the intent of this project was to equip these pastors who will in turn equip their churches. This equipping will undoubtedly

include current and future teachers of the Word of God as this is in keeping with Paul's admonition to Timothy "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).⁹

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip active and potential preachers in Christ-centered expository preaching in the Russell Creek Association of Kentucky Baptists in Greensburg, Kentucky.

Goals

The following three goals were set to define the success of this project. Each goal served as a stepping stone to reflect the progression necessary to equip the pastors of the RCAKB to preach expository sermons.

1. The first goal was to assess the understanding of Christ-centered expository preaching among men who are actively preaching or feel called to preach in the RCAKB.
2. The second goal was to develop an 8-week curriculum that focuses on Christ-centered expository preaching for this group of the RCAKB.
3. The third goal was to implement the curriculum and equip these men to faithfully exegete and preach a passage of Scripture.

The success of these three goals was measured with a decisive research methodology.¹⁰ The following section explains the research methodology and instruments used in measuring the success of each goal.

⁹ All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

Research Methodology

The first goal of this project was to assess each participant's level of understanding concerning Christ-centered expository preaching. To acquire this focus group, an invitation was sent to each church in the association.¹¹ Prior to the first session, a Christ-Centered Expository Preaching Survey (CCEPS) was administered to all participants.¹² The pre-course assessment measured previous theological training, view of expository preaching, importance of the Spirit in preaching, utilization of Biblical theology in preaching, and confidence in introduction, conclusions, and applications. This goal was considered successfully met when 8 pastors or men who are seeking a calling to preach in the association, completed the CCEPS and results were analyzed to provide revelation about the current hermeneutic and homiletic practices of pastors in the RCAKB.

The second goal was to develop an 8-week curriculum that would educate preachers of the RCAKB on creating Christ-centered expository sermons. This curriculum was centered on establishing a foundation of: what is preaching, the need for holiness in the life of the preacher, the Spirit's work in preparation and preaching, investigating the text, discovering the big idea, components of the sermon, and seeking to preach Christ from all of Scripture. This goal was measured by an expert panel utilizing a questionnaire to evaluate the course material to ensure biblical faithfulness, teaching

¹¹ See appendix 1 for the letter. A flyer overviewing the classes and other pertinent material also accompanied each letter. See appendix 2 for the flyer.

¹² See appendix 3 for the pre-seminar survey. There are currently 30 churches in the RCAKB; thus, the hope was that approximately 25 percent of the churches would have representation (approximately eight men). Additionally, enrollment was also open to those seeking a potential calling to preach. Targeting those who have a potential calling to preach was done so that there was a more diverse group, despite not having representation from a quarter of the churches in the RCAKB.

methodology, scope, and applicability to sermon preparation and delivery.¹³

The third goal was to implement the curriculum and equip these men to faithfully exegete and preach a passage of Scripture. This goal was measured by re-administering the CCEPS at the conclusion of the course and was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre-and post-course scores.¹⁴

Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms will be used in the ministry project:

Christ-centered. Bryan Chapell's work provides a working definition:

The entire Bible is Christ-centered because his redemptive work in all of its incarnational, atoning, rising, interceding, and reigning dimensions is the capstone of all of God's revelation of his dealings with his people. Thus, no aspect of revelation can be thoroughly understood or explained in isolation from some aspect of Christ's redeeming work.¹⁵

Expository preaching. This project relies upon Haddon Robinson's definition of expository preaching:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the

¹³ See appendix 4 for the evaluation rubric. To be considered an expert they had to have a degree in theological education and at least seven years of ministry experience. The panel consisted of the Associational Mission Strategist of the RCAKB and two pastors from the association who met the above criteria.

¹⁴ See appendix 3 for the CCEPS post-seminar survey. Note that the post-survey included five additional items (items 27-31). Only those participants attending 87 percent of the sessions (6 out of 8) were considered as having finished the course. Participants who were unable to attend a particular session arranged to view a video of the recorded session.

¹⁵ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 276.

preacher, then through him to his hearers.¹⁶

Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics includes both the “grammatico-historical interpretation and the practical application of that interpretation in the pulpit.”¹⁷

Homiletics. The homily or sermon flows from a faithful hermeneutic and includes contextualizing the passage of Scripture, crafting the sermon, interaction with the audience, application, and evaluation.¹⁸

Three limitations applied to this project. First, because this project was conducted outside of the local church setting, fewer individuals might choose to participate. To overcome this limitation, a letter was mailed to every church and pastor in the RCAKB.¹⁹ Additionally, a follow-up email or text was sent to pastors for whom I had their contact information to inform them of the upcoming training. Secondly, there was a concern for accuracy of answers in the surveys as the pastors were responding about their knowledge and application of expository preaching. To combat this limitation, the respondents were informed that their answers would remain confidential. The third limiting factor of this study was the consistency of the participants’ attendance. Failure to attend all of the sessions would lead to a skewing of the results. Therefore, all sessions were videoed and made available for the participants to watch at their convenience if they had to miss a session.

¹⁶ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 5. Expository Preaching cannot be merely defined with the right set of words, but must be experienced to understand and taste what the definition truly means. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones captures well this intention when he states that “preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire.” David Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Kevin De Young, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 234.

¹⁷ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 611.

¹⁸ Gregg R. Allison, *The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 70.

¹⁹ See appendix 1.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, participants were required to be active pastors or men sensing a call to preach within the RCAKB.²⁰ Therefore, many other teachers and women in the church were not included.²¹ Secondly, the project was limited to a thirty-week time frame. This provided time to assess the pre-survey, develop curriculum, implement the 8-week course, and conduct the post-series survey. Finally, due to the brevity of this project, there was no follow-up of ongoing implementation of expositional preaching within their local church.

Conclusion

The glory of God compels preachers to share the gospel to all people and to do so effectively. Paul, when eyeing the brevity of his own life and ministry, compels Timothy to replicate his own pastoral training by equipping faithful men to preach the gospel (see 2 Tim 2:2). Therefore, based upon the scriptural impetus and my own lack of equipping, it was vital that the pastors and those seeking a calling to preach in the RCAKB be equipped to effectively preach and teach the Word of God. Chapter 2 of this project will provide the framework for the biblical and theological foundations of Christ-centered expository preaching.

²⁰ Two exceptions were made to this requirement. One of the men who has just begun to preach is a member of another Baptist denomination. Secondly, a good friend and Presbyterian pastor in the community was invited and came every week—he added much to our discussions.

²¹ Women were not included based upon Paul’s admonition in 1 Tim 2:11-14 that they are not permitted to teach or have authority over men. Grudem in his *Systematic Theology* comments on the subject by stating “it has been assumed through the history of the church, with very few exceptions, that only men could be pastors or function as elders within a church.” Wayne A. Grudem and Gregg Allison, *Systematic Theology/Historical Theology Bundle* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), loc. 25295, Kindle.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR CHRIST-CENTERED EXPOSITORY PREACHING

This chapter will focus on describing what constitutes Christ-centered expository preaching, beginning with an examination of Jesus' words in Luke 24:25-27 imploring the disciples to look to him in all of Scriptures.¹ Not until the reader comes to the book of Acts, however, is it evident exactly what Jesus meant. I will consider three texts from Acts based upon criteria² that demonstrates the apostles' preaching in Jerusalem (Acts 2:14-41), Judea/Samaria (Acts 8:26-40), and to the end of the earth (Acts 13:16-52) in fulfillment of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8. In addition to the location of their preaching, each of the three sermons will be examined to see how they preached in the power of the Holy Spirit focusing upon the person of Jesus and his resurrection in fulfillment of OT prophecies.

Luke 24:25-27

In Luke 24:25-27 Jesus' teaches the general principle of reading all of Scripture as pointing forward to him, but we do not see this sort of reading demonstrated until we come to Acts. John MacArthur comments that the Bible is the only place to understand God's purposes for humanity, time, and eternity; therefore, "the greatest service that can ever be rendered to anyone is to explain to them the meaning of

¹ See appendix 5 (Session 1.1), pp. 105-107, for further discussion on defining preaching.

² See table 1, pp. 18-21, for the selection grid and further explanation.

Scripture.”³ Following his resurrection, Jesus does this very thing, by spending time explaining the Scriptures to two disciples. Two of his followers travel the road to Emmaus without hope and yet the Author of Life shows up in their midst and begins dialoging with them. It is here in this moment that Jesus begins to share with them some of the most important words we have on the OT—all Scripture ultimately points to him—and how to rightly interpret the Scriptures.

Seeing Christ in the OT is not automatic. While Jesus provides a Christ-centered hermeneutic, the disciples struggle to understand. Jesus rebukes the disciples, indicating their foolishness and their being slow of heart to believe. Jesus expresses his disappointment with “O,” a rebuke of great emotion according to Darrell Bock.⁴ Jesus’ use of ἀνόητος “foolish” (ESV, NKJV, NASB) in Luke 24:25 displays the struggle they had to recognize his identity from what the prophets had spoken. Therefore, as Christ continues to speak, he provides clarity on what to look for in the OT as an interpretive guide to proclaiming Christ-centered messages.

All the prophets point to Christ as the Messiah. Jesus himself reveals this when he testifies that he is the fulfilment of “all that the prophets have spoken!” (Luke 24:25). Unfortunately, the reader is not provided perfect clarity on which prophets and how each verse points to him. This lack of clarity is similar to Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15 that Christ died for our sins “in accordance with the Scriptures” (v.3). Paul speaks of Jesus’ death as fulfillment of the Scriptures in a way to speak of the entire scope of the OT as pointing to him. This lack of clarity in Luke 24, according to Robert Stein, provides the impetus to look everywhere as “Jesus did not designate which prophets or

³ John MacArthur, *Luke 18-24, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 418-19.

⁴ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 1915.

where these prophets spoke of him. For Jesus and the Evangelists ‘all’ the prophets ‘everywhere’ spoke of him.”⁵ However, “everywhere” provides a great area to work and also a great opportunity to misuse or misinterpret the portrayal or connection to Christ. This again reinforces the necessity of coming to and learning from the Apostles’ preaching in Acts.

The word “all” (Luke 24:25) is instructive and provides a lens for how to view the OT in light of the NT. This expansive statement of “all” led Joseph Fitzmyer to conclude that these words provide “the model for much of later Christian global reading of the OT as *praeparatio evangelica* [preparation for the Gospel].”⁶ However, much division arises over the appropriation of this verse in Christ-centered preaching and therefore Jesus words in verses 26-27 serve to provide more direction. The division or lack of clarity is seen by Fitzmyer as arising from the fact that first-century Judaism had no expectation of a suffering Messiah, although many other scholars disagree.⁷ Moreover, Fitzmyer’s conclusion appears to be in direct contradiction to Jesus who instructs the disciples that the prophets had an expectation of suffering.⁸ This is shown in his words that “it was necessary that the Christ should suffer” (Luke 24:26). This necessity of suffering was not only observed by the prophets, but also testified in the other portions of the OT.

⁵ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary, vol. 24 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 612.

⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, The Anchor Bible Commentary, vols. 28-28a (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 1565.

⁷ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 1565-66. Also, I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter, England: Paternoster Press, 1978), 897.

⁸ Bock, *Luke*, 1916.

Truly, the Law, Prophets, and all Scriptures are pointing forward to Christ. Luke affirms this truth when highlighting Jesus' teaching of the two men on the road to Emmaus: "and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). The magnitude of Christ's words in this moment are revealed by his progression from Moses, to the Prophets, and finally to all the Scriptures. Bock highlights the importance of Luke's statement "all the Scriptures":

Jesus explains the things taught about the Christ from all the Scriptures. He teaches the OT in the new era. The comprehensiveness of the teachings is underlined in several ways: from "all" (πάντων) the prophets he explains "all" (πάσαις) the Scriptures, and Jesus starts from (ἀρξάμενος) Moses and goes to all the prophets This figure (called zeugma) describes the discussion's scope: he went through the entire Scripture, front to back.⁹

A holistic view of the Scriptures that points forward to Christ provides an essential foundation to Christ-centered expository preaching.

This holistic understanding raises a question. What does Luke mean by "all the Scripture"? John Nolland contends that Jesus went from Moses and the Prophets to the Writings that represent the other section of the Scriptures, specifically the Psalms, as he does in Luke 24:44.¹⁰ This view is difficult, according to Howard Marshall, due to syntax; thus, Jesus is likely generalizing all the OT Scriptures with a specific focus upon any Messianic passages.¹¹ Despite the ambiguity, Fitzmyer notes that Christ is the end of all the Scriptures and that the central tenet is "that from one end of the Hebrew Scriptures to the other they bear testimony about him and his fate."¹² This is both the challenge

⁹ Bock, *Luke*, 1917.

¹⁰ John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35C (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 1205.

¹¹ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 897.

¹² Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 1567.

(from one end to the other of the OT), and the excitement of realizing that Christ is continually revealed in the OT.

While it is impossible to be certain about which passages Jesus utilized, Peter in Acts 2:25-28 cites David's words from Psalm 16:8-11 and directly applies them to Christ. So whatever else Christ may have spoken, we have biblical evidence from his own lips in Luke 24:27 and from Peter's preaching that the Psalms were included in "all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). Nolland further notes that Luke 24:27 authenticates the conviction of early Christians that all of Scripture pointed to Christ and specifically how his life and ministry had unfolded.¹³ All Scripture pointing to Christ follows Jesus' instruction to his followers to use a Christ-centered hermeneutic, as they looked to the explicit prophecies about the Messiah and also understood him as the long-awaited fulfillment of God's plan of redemption. Therefore, everything from the Law and Prophets were pointing forward to Christ.¹⁴

Jesus' life and ministry, as revealed in the Gospels, act as the bridge that connects everything from the Law and Prophets to all that is proclaimed about Christ throughout the remainder of the NT. Alan Thompson notes how the opening verse of Luke's Gospel utilizes the divine passive stating that all that has been accomplished has been done by God and therefore Luke's Gospel and Acts serve to display the fulfillment of God's plan.¹⁵ Luke, moreover, closes his gospel with the declaration that everything

¹³ Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 1205.

¹⁴ Seeing all Scripture as pointing to Christ does not imply that every verse has Jesus hiding behind it in some mystical way that is awaiting our discovery. Nor should preachers take every OT text and, in an effort to find Christ, make the character a typology. The overarching theme is recognizing that Christ is both the continuation and fulfillment of the OT story as displayed in the NT text.

¹⁵ Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, 27 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 19.

must be fulfilled in the Law, Prophets, and Psalms (Luke 24:44). The climax of this fulfillment is in Jesus' death and resurrection. The primacy of this event leads Luke to begin the book of Acts with the call to take this gospel to Jerusalem and to the world (Acts 1:8). Therefore, while Acts is indeed a new work of God, it is at the same time also a work of God from of old, bringing to completion all that he has declared from the OT Scriptures.

The Selection Process of Acts 2:14-41, 8:26-40, and 13:16-52

One of the aims of this study was to utilize a selection process that provided clarity for why certain texts were considered in light of Luke 24:25-27. While it was plausible to return to the OT to examine a text that was cited by one of the NT writers or a specific text that was referenced as being fulfilled in Christ this was not the path to take. Specifically, because Acts allows a unique perspective from the preaching of the apostles to see most clearly what Jesus intended from his statement in Luke 24. Additionally, Jesus' directive to his disciples in Acts 1:8 served as a crucial starting point for interpreting the book and also for understanding what and why the disciples were preaching. Moreover, the texts that fit the directives rooted in Luke 24 and Acts 1:8 (and 1:22) to some extent serve as a buffer to keep this study from being a selection of sermons that would arrive at the author's intended proposition. Therefore, all of the sermons in Acts were screened in light of the demands placed upon the apostles and the following criteria were sought: (1) place, (2) preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, (3) mention of the person of Jesus, (4) his resurrection, and (5) specifically citing an OT text as being fulfilled in Christ.

It necessitates to ask what is the basis for these five criteria and do they have any scriptural merit? Thus, the reasoning for each of the five criteria will be explained. First, what was the place? Specifically, did each sermon fit Jesus' directive to witness about him in: (1) Jerusalem, (2) Judea and Samaria, (3) or to the end of the earth as

indicated in Acts 1:8?¹⁶ Next, an attempt was made to see if there was recorded evidence in the passage of the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the preacher. This was based upon Jesus' admonition that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon them (Acts 1:8). Therefore, it was vital to see if the preaching of the apostles was noted to be filled or affirmed in some way by the work of the Holy Spirit. The third criteria centered upon the person of Jesus in line with Christ's statement that their filling and preaching was directly connected to their being "my witness" (Acts 1:8). Thus, did the sermon strive, as Howard Marshall noted in regard to Peter's sermon in Acts 2, to primarily explain who the Lord is?¹⁷ In addition to the place, power, and person criteria, there was also an impetus for the sermon to draw attention to the resurrection of Jesus. Focusing on the resurrection was derived from Peter making it clear that their witnessing (Acts 1:8) is specifically in relation to being a "witness to his resurrection" (Acts 1:22). The final benchmark reflected upon Luke 24:25-27 in that the sermon must explicitly quote, instead of implying, an OT text to function as a valid example of preaching Christ-centered expository sermons from the OT.

The grid focused upon this five explicit criteria (place, power, person of Jesus, resurrection, and OT text referenced) to see what sermons from Acts need to be examined for how they demonstrate the apostles preaching Christ-centered sermons. After running each of the sermons through the criteria, three specific sermons were illuminated that met each of the standards.¹⁸ Those three sermons were Acts 2:14-41 (Peter); 8:26-40 (Philip);

¹⁶ Judea and Samaria were combined due to the brevity of this study and also the brief amount of attention this area receives in Acts.

¹⁷ I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 532.

¹⁸ Although all of the sermons in Acts were reviewed, for a sermon to make the grid, it had to include at least two of the criteria, in addition to the place where it was preached.

and 13:14-52 (Paul). The following is an explanation of how these three sermons were chosen.

The first place that a sermon needed to be preached from was Jerusalem. Peter's sermon in Acts 2 and Acts 3 met the place (Jerusalem) and also the majority of criteria as seen in table 1 below. However, in Acts 3 there was no specific mention of the Holy Spirit at work in the preacher; thus, Acts 2 was chosen. Additionally, Stephen's speech in Acts 7 was preached in Jerusalem and also met all of the criteria, but Acts 2 was preferred as it provided greater clarity in showing how Peter noted something about Christ and then specifically cited an OT passage to verify his claim.

Table 1. Acts selection grid: Jerusalem

| Acts Reference (Preacher) | Place | Power (HS at work in preacher) | Person of Jesus | Resurrection | OT Text Quoted |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 2:14-41 (Peter) | Jerusalem (2:1-5) | 1:4, 17, 18, 33 | 2:22-24, 31-32, 36, 38 | 2:23-24, 31-33 | 2:17-21 (Joel 2:28-32), 2:25-28 (Ps 16:8-11), 2:34-35 (Ps 110:1) |
| 3:11-26 (Peter) | Jerusalem | | 3:13-14, 16, 18, 22-25 | 3:15, 20-21, 26 | 2:22-24 (Deut 18:15, 18, 19) |
| 4:1-22 (Peter & John) | Jerusalem | 4:8 | 4:10-12 | 4:10 | -- |
| Acts 5:27-42 (apostles) | Jerusalem | 4:32 | 4:42 | 4:30-31 | -- |
| 7:1-60 (Stephen) | Jerusalem | 6:8, 10; 7:55 | 7:56, 59 | 7:56 | 7:37 (Deut 18:15) |
| 22:1-21 (Paul) | Jerusalem | -- | 22:8-10, 14, 16, 18 | 22:7-8 | -- |

Three sermons preached in the region of Judea/Samaria were analyzed, but only one was discovered to meet all five criteria. Peter’s sermon in Casearea met all of the qualifications, except quoting an OT text. Yet, it is significant to note that despite not quoting an OT text, Peter alludes to Jesus’ statement in Luke 24:25-27 as he states: “To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43). Peter pointed to the prophets but failed to quote a specific passage. Instead, Philip’s sermon to the Ethiopian eunuch met all five criteria and was the only sermon of the three to quote an OT passage. However, it must be noted that Luke does not record Philip specifically mentioning the resurrection (qualification number four). Yet, the citing of Isaiah 55:8 and speaking about the Messiah’s life being taken away from the earth was interpreted to speak about his resurrection as part of the “good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).¹⁹ Moreover; in Philip’s preaching in Samaria earlier in Acts 8, there is the connection of good news to the “kingdom of God” (Acts 8:12). Undoubtedly, there is no kingdom of God if there is no resurrection of Christ. In light of meeting these qualifications as seen in Table2 below, Philip’s sermon will be examined.

Table 2. Acts selection grid: Judea and Samaria

| Acts Reference (Preacher) | Place | Power (HS at work in preacher) | Person of Jesus | Resurrection | OT Text Quoted |
|---------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 8:26-40 (Phillip) | Judea | 8:26, 29, 36, 39 | 8:35 | 8:35 | 8:30, 32-33 (Isa 53:7, 8) |
| 9:19-22 (Saul/Paul) | Damascus | -- | 9:20, 22 | (implied 9:20, 22) | (implied 9:22) |

¹⁹ How Philip is pointing to the resurrection will be further discussed in the section on Acts 8:26-40.

Table 2. *continued*

| Acts Reference (Preacher) | Place | Power (HS at work in preacher) | Person of Jesus | Resurrection | OT Text Quoted |
|---------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 10:34-48 (Peter) | Caesarea | 10:44-47 | 10:36-39, 42-43 | 10:39-41 | ²⁰ |

By examining the selection grid, it is evident that there were a large number of sermons preached in Acts that could classify as “to the ends of the earth,” and this large number made it essential to scrutinize each sermon in regard to the criteria of this study. In light of that examination, it was Acts 13:14-52 which Paul preached in Antioch of Pisidia that qualified as (1) to the ends of the earth, (2) a work of the Holy Spirit, (3) a focus upon the person of Jesus, (4) the resurrection of Christ, (5) and several direct quotations of OT passages that were utilized to identify Jesus as the Messiah. Furthermore, by choosing Paul in Acts 13:14-52 this provided a third individual, in addition to Peter and Phillip, to examine his unique preaching style and application of Christ-centered preaching. While it was not one of the criteria to have a unique author for each section, it serves to provide a larger scope of how the Spirit consistently led different men to preach Christ from all of Scripture. Table 3 below shows how Paul’s sermon met each of these qualifications.

²⁰ Peter does not quote an OT text in Acts 10:43 but alludes to Jesus statement about all the prophets pointing to Christ (see Luke 24:25-27).

Table 3. Acts selection grid: To the ends of the earth

| Acts Reference (Preacher) | Place | Power (HS at work in preacher) | Person of Jesus | Resurrection | OT Text Quoted |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| 13:4-12 (Paul) | Salamis and Paphos | 13:2, 4, 9 | 13:5, 7, 12 | -- | -- |
| 13:14-52 (Paul) | Antioch in Pisidia (ends of earth) | 13:2, 4, 9, 52 | 13:23, 26-33, 44, 46, | 13:29-37 | 13:33 (Ps 2:7), 13:34 (Isa 55:3), 13:35 (Ps 16:10), 13:41 (Hab 1:5), 13:47 (Isa 49:6) |
| 17:1-5 (Paul) | Thessalonica | -- | 17:2-3 | 17:3 | -- |
| 17:16-34 (Paul) | Athens | -- | 17:18, 31 | 17:18, 31-32 | -- |
| 18:24-28 (Paul) | Ephesus | 18:25 ²¹ | 18:25 | -- | -- |
| 26:1-29 (Paul) | Caesarea | -- | 26:9, 15-18 | 26:6-8, 23 | 26:22-23 ²² |
| 28:23-28 (Paul) | Rome | -- | 28:23 | -- | 28:26-27 (Isa 6:9, 10) |

All three of the passages chosen in this study (Acts 2:14-41; 8:26-40; 13:14-52) quote OT passages that point directly to Christ. According to Nolland, this pointing to Christ indicates a specific hermeneutical approach that is affirmed by “exegesis of chosen

²¹The textual variant provides the possibility that this speaks of Paul being fervent in the Spirit.

²²Moses and prophets referenced, but no specific passage quoted.

texts that were seen to anticipate the shape of Jesus' career (and in particular his death and resurrection / exaltation)."²³ The intentional choosing of the text by the apostles, who themselves are filled with the Holy Spirit, provides a foundational model to better interpret Christ's words in Luke 24. Along this line, Bock affirms that looking to Acts is the only way forward to have clarity on what Jesus meant by all the OT Scriptures.²⁴ Therefore, it was pertinent to this study to briefly examine the apostles going and preaching in each of the three areas as they are empowered by the Spirit to preach Christ's death and resurrection in fulfillment of the OT.

Acts 2:14-41

The importance of preaching Christ from all of Scripture is first seen in Peter's sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2:14-41. Additionally, Peter demonstrated his obedience to Jesus' commission to preach the gospel in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Indeed, there is much division on how to proclaim Christ from all the Scripture, but the apostles' example must serve as the preacher's framework for how to best model this style of preaching. Primarily, because the apostles were first directed by Christ on the importance of recognizing that all of the OT pointed to him. Secondly, their preaching under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit provides the greatest clarity on how to best preach Christ-centered from all of Scripture.

Moreover, John Stott observes that there are nineteen distinct Christian speeches throughout the book and almost 25 percent of the book is devoted to preaching.²⁵ These statistics provide evidence of the importance of preaching, and also

²³ Nolland, *Luke*, 1205.

²⁴ Bock, *Luke*, 1916.

²⁵ John Stott, *The Spirit the Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1990), 69.

the Spirit's desire to leave us with distinct examples of how the apostles preached Christ-centered sermons undergirded by the OT Scriptures. Luke did not create the Testimonies of his own accord, according to F. F. Bruce, but was simply relaying the apostolic method of regularly appealing to the OT Scriptures in their preaching.²⁶ Peter utilizes this method of appealing to the OT as he quotes from the Prophets and the Psalms.

Peter seeks to demonstrate how Joel had proclaimed the Messianic Age that has now been fulfilled as Christ pours out the Spirit. In Acts 2:17 Peter, citing Joel 2:28, states, "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." There is a variation between the LXX where Joel begins with "afterwards" (μετα ταυτα) pointing to future events, and here Peter begins with "in the last days" (ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις). David Peterson states the unfolding events signify "part of God's final act of redemption."²⁷ Understanding how the unfolding events fit in God's plan of redemption is vital to recognizing what Peter is doing in carrying out Christ's directive from Luke 24. Namely, that Acts 2 is not the start of God's story but the continuation of what God has been doing in and through Israel. Therefore, it is fundamental that the OT be appealed to in preaching to reveal God's faithfulness and to help the reader understand Christ is the fulfillment of everything that had been pointing to him. Later in Peter's speech, he will identify Jesus as the one exalted to the Father's right hand and who is now pouring out the Spirit (Acts 2:33). Thus, Peter connects Jesus to the one who is now bringing about the "last days" as prophesied by Joel.

Additionally, Peter employs Joel 2:32 to show that Jesus' resurrection identifies him as Lord. Peter states that Jesus fulfilled Joel's words as he proclaims

²⁶ F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd rev. and enl. ed. (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 37.

²⁷ David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 141.

“everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). While the original audience would have most likely believed that “the Lord” referred to the God of Israel, Peter now ascribes that title to Jesus. John Polhill comments that Acts 2:21 is the most important verse for Peter, as the context bears witness that Jesus is Lord and everything that follows points in the same direction.²⁸ Indeed, all that follows includes a brief summation of the life and ministry of Christ that speaks of his “mighty works and wonders and signs” (Acts 2:22). These mighty works, wonders, and signs serve to affirm his deity and Peter notes that this was God the Father at work in and through the Son (Acts 2:22). This culminates in God raising Jesus from the dead to display that he is the Lord of Joel’s prophecy that can bring salvation.

It must be noted that while the context bears witness to the reality that Jesus is Lord, it is not specifically stated in Acts 2:21-24. This clarity comes in Acts 2:38 when Peter responds to their question about salvation and demands they be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Here Peter builds upon Joel’s words by utilizing the connecting word “for” to link calling on Jesus name to the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus death and resurrection have brought to pass the fulfillment of Joel’s words and thus the imperative to call upon Christ for salvation.

Here in Acts 2 and throughout the book, the apostles utilize the OT to verify the deity and salvation that is available in Christ alone. Peterson comments on these repeated references to the name of Jesus and to salvation (3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30; 5:28, 40) noting that Joel 2:32 “appears to have had a profound influence on early Christian preaching.”²⁹ It is here on the day of Pentecost that Peter, by proving Jesus is

²⁸ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 110.

²⁹ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 144.

the Messiah from the OT, is modeling the importance of Christ-centered preaching. Peter has accomplished this by taking the words of Joel and applying them to Christ, setting forth a framework for proclamation of the gospel that looks to all Scripture as pointing to Christ.

Next, Peter turns to David's words in Psalm 16:8-11 as speaking of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Peter proclaims in Acts 2:25-28:

For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

Since David had died and not returned, it is apparent that he could not have intended to be speaking about himself as his own tomb testifies (Acts 2:29). Leading Peter to proclaim that David "foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up . . ." (Acts 2:31-32). Interestingly, when Peter quotes Psalm 16:10, in Acts 2:27 the future active indicative of *εγκαταλειπω* (will not abandon) is utilized. However, when he cites it again in Acts 2:31, he now employs the aorist passive indicative of *εγκαταλειπω* (was not abandoned) indicating that God fulfilled in Christ what he had promised through the mouth of David. Consequently, it is Jesus' death and resurrection that fulfills David's prophecy in Psalm 16.

While David is the recipient in Psalm 16:10, the text does not end with him but points forward to a greater one who was raised from the dead. Peter now declares that Jesus is this individual as he states that David "foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ" (Acts 2:31). Bock notes that a syllogism is utilized as the OT declared that the Messiah will rise from the dead and God raised Jesus; therefore, Jesus must be the

Messiah.³⁰ Jesus' being the Messiah is the mystery that is hidden in the OT and Peter by the power of the Holy Spirit is revealing this recognition to his audience.

Peter's trifold utilization of the Scripture, the resurrection, and Christ leads to an exalted Christology that verifies God has fulfilled his promise (Acts 2:32).³¹ To further this Christology, Peter demonstrates how Joel had prophesied that the Holy Spirit would come in Joel 2:28-32 and now states that the resurrected Jesus is in a position of authority to pour out the Spirit (Acts 2:33). Bock notes that this authority to pour out the Spirit is "Christology of the highest level, tightly associating Jesus with God's unique glory."³² Throughout this section of Peter's sermon, Jesus is exalted, as Peter utilizes Psalm 16 to show how Christ is the Holy One that was to come. Interestingly, there is a change from the title "Holy One" in Acts 2:27 to "his flesh" in Acts 2:31. The title "your holy one" (τὸν ὅσιόν σου), according to Peterson, "was taken by the earliest Christians to be another way of referring to the messianic Son of David and is a key to understanding Peter's use of this text."³³ Truly, the holy one's flesh did not decay, but was raised up in fulfillment of the Scripture.

In Acts 2:34-35, Peter cites Psalm 110:1 as his third example of how Christ is the fulfillment of all the Scriptures. In Mark 12:35-37 Jesus says, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.' David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?" Jesus himself is utilizing a Christ-centered perspective to interpret the Scriptures and highlight the deity of the coming

³⁰ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) 130.

³¹ Bock, *Acts*, 129.

³² Bock, *Acts*, 134.

³³ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 149.

Messiah. Therefore, it logically follows that Peter would do the same and in fact does so by citing the same passage (Ps 110:1) here in Acts 2:34-35. Ajith Fernando comments how Peter is following the exegetical precedent set by Jesus in Mark 12:35-37 interpreting Psalm 110 and Psalm 16 as a messianic psalm.³⁴ Jesus' own exegesis of the OT has prepared Peter to look to all of the Scriptures as pointing to Christ.

Peter's preaching of Psalm 110:1 serves to verify the truth that he has just shared about Christ being exalted to the right hand of God and pouring out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). This fulfillment is seen as he begins Acts 2:34 with the word "for" showing that the exaltation to the right hand of the Father serves to fulfill the words of Psalm 110:1. Thus, the Scriptures serve to authenticate Christ and Christ serves to authenticate the Scripture. Christ's fulfillment of Psalm 110:1 is revealed by the fact that David did not ascend into heaven and therefore must be speaking of his messianic descendent. As Polhill rightly points out, the outpouring of the Spirit verifies the ascent of Christ as David had predicted; thus, Jesus is the Messiah.³⁵

Widely read as a Messianic Psalm in Second-Temple literature, Psalm 110, together with Joel 2 and Psalm 16, demonstrates that Scripture cannot be understood apart from a Christ-centered interpretation. Throughout his sermon, Peter persistently strives to prove that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that the OT had been pointing toward. This framework provides a Christ-centered hermeneutic of the OT that affords each passage the opportunity to be understood from a perspective larger than its current setting.³⁶ In light of this, it is vital for ministers of the gospel to continually preach Christ

³⁴ Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 103.

³⁵ Polhill, *Acts*, 115.

³⁶ See chap. 3 of this project for clarity on "how to" effectively follow the apostles' example from a practical standpoint.

from all of Scripture.

Acts 8:26-40

The overarching theme of Acts (proclaim the gospel), rooted in Jesus' words in Acts 1:8, further unfolds as the reader comes to chapter 8. Here Philip proclaimed Christ from all of Scripture on the road to Gaza as seen in Acts 8:26-40. This proclamation is in obedience to and fulfillment of Jesus' command to preach the gospel in Judea and Samaria (Acts 1:8). Moreover, the Spirit who was to empower their witnessing is the one guiding and directing Philip (Acts 8:29) to make his way to the chariot where Luke unfolds the account of preaching Christ from the OT.

To see Christ from the OT requires guidance and interpretation. Along this line, C. K. Barrett notes that “the OT is not self-explanatory . . . the OT needs Christological interpretation.”³⁷ The need for interpretation is made clear as Philip approaches the chariot and hears the Ethiopian eunuch reading from the prophet Isaiah and Philip asks him, “Do you understand what you are reading?” (Acts 8:30). It is essential that we should put more emphasis on the word “do,” according to Barrett, and he notes the familiar contrast in Judaism between reading and understanding.³⁸ Here through the words of the eunuch, the reader is reminded of the need for someone to interpret the Scriptures, specifically from a Christological perspective as he asks Philip, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” (Acts 8:31). Bock notes that the word *ὁδηγέω* (*hodēgeō*, guide) “refers in everyday usage to someone guiding someone to another place, such as guiding a blind person, the guidance Moses or God gave the Jews, or being

³⁷ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, vol. 34 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 428.

³⁸ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 428.

led into wisdom.”³⁹ The need for guidance is two-fold in the life of the Eunuch: (1) he needs Philip’s guidance, and (2) he needs the Spirit’s guidance to lead him into all truth (John 16:13). Moreover, it is the work of the Spirit to guide not only the hearer, the Ethiopian, but also the preacher (Philip, see Acts 8:29) to rightly divide the word of truth.

In the following verses, Philip takes what the eunuch is reading, the Servant Song of Isaiah, and applies it directly to Christ. Luke does not directly identify the passage that the Ethiopian was reading, but merely that it was “Isaiah the prophet” (Acts 8:30). The specific words of the prophet that he was reading come from Isaiah 53:7-8: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth” (Acts 8:32-33). While the reader may desire more verses from this section, there unfortunately remains some ambiguity on all that was being read. Barrett and Peterson both contend that on a long slow journey more than six passages from this section would have been read and this is likely a summary of a longer passage.⁴⁰ Furthermore, this view is strengthened by the fact that Luke appears to insinuate that they examined other surrounding verses: “beginning with this Scripture” (Acts 8:35). Barrett notes two significant implications if more verses are to be implied, namely (1) the whole of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is under examination and (2) that Luke intends the words quoted to adequately summarize the Song, though having no reference to vicarious suffering.⁴¹ Despite the clarity on the verses from Isaiah, the small snippet prepares the reader to see Jesus as the suffering servant of Isaiah.

³⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 342.

⁴⁰ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 429. Also Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 295.

⁴¹ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 429.

As the text unfolds it becomes clear that Philip is helping the Ethiopian learn to read Scripture backwards through a Christological lens. It is here that Philip begins to provide clarity on Jesus' instruction that all Scripture pointed to him. Barrett notes Philip's advantage over the eunuch, as he is able to begin with Jesus and understand that the OT bears witness to him rather than trying to begin with the OT and unearth Christ from it.⁴² This perspective is one of the primary reasons why it is more beneficial to look to the Book of Acts for how to rightly interpret Christ's words in Luke 24, rather than returning to the OT. Commenting on this connection, Peterson states: "Jesus is the key to unlock the meaning of the OT (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47) and passages such as the one being read by the Ethiopian cannot be satisfactorily understood apart from their fulfillment in him."⁴³ Therefore, it is in reading Scripture backwards through a Christological lens that the reader or preacher more accurately sees Jesus and understands him as the fulfillment of the OT text.

Paramount to interpreting this passage is to unpack the eunuch's question: "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" (Acts 8:34). Fortunately, the reader is not left in doubt as Luke notes that Philip "beginning with this Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Interpreting these verses Christologically is not a new interpretation of this passage as Matthew 8:17 and John 12:38 apply Isaiah 53 to Jesus' healing ministry and Luke 22:37 declares Isaiah 53 to be fulfilled through the sufferings of Christ.⁴⁴ Thus; given the previous gospel writer's precedent and Christ teaching that all the Scriptures point to him, there is convincing proof that Philip is correct in affirming that the words of Isaiah also

⁴² Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 428.

⁴³ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 294.

⁴⁴ Fernando, *Acts*, 284.

point to Christ. Moreover, Philip notes that these Scriptures are the “good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35). This prophecy is good news, because Jesus fulfills the OT by bringing these words to completion.⁴⁵

While commentators, along with Philip, affirm that these passages are to be rightly applied to Christ, what do they indeed reveal?⁴⁶ In regards to the identity of Isaiah’s suffering servant, John Polhill comments on Philip’s usage in Acts 8:32-33:

The picture of the slaughtered lamb evokes the image of Jesus’ crucifixion, the lamb before his shearers, that of Jesus’ silence before his accusers. The deprivation of justice reminds one of the false accusations of blasphemy leveled at Christ and the equivocation of Pilate.⁴⁷

While the previous verses from Isaiah provide some allusion to Jesus’ death, there still remains a question of anything about his resurrection. Thus, it is vital to understand what is implied by stating that the life of this suffering servant is “taken away” ἀἴρω (Acts 8:33) from the earth. Barrett observes that there is too much ambiguity to be certain and that he could be referring simply to his death, or possibly to his ascension.⁴⁸ While there is a lack of clarity, it seems plausible that Philip, who began with this Scripture and preached Jesus, would have connected it to God’s later vindication of his servant. Bock highlights this irony of Jesus’ unjust death as it appeared that all was lost or taken away, but indeed it “resulted in everything being gained.”⁴⁹ Moreover, all has been gained for the life to come, but this is only realized through the resurrection of Christ. Thus, in light of the fact that these verses imply “good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35), it would seem

⁴⁵ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 431.

⁴⁶ Bock notes that the form is that of the LXX and the sense follows closely to the MT, but the differences are not crucial, because the issue centers upon the identity of the figure and not the details. Bock, *Acts*, 343.

⁴⁷ Polhill, *Acts*, 225.

⁴⁸ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 431.

⁴⁹ Bock, *Acts*, 344.

likely that the taking away speaks of the resurrection of Christ.

All of this leaves Peterson with the conclusion that “there is no one else in history, apart from Jesus of Nazareth, to whom these words can truly be applied.”⁵⁰ Similar to Peter in Acts 2, Philip has taken an OT passage and began to preach by directly applying it to Jesus. Additionally, Fitzmyer purports that to interpret this Isaiah passage Christologically has been the ancient practice among Christians as seen in Romans 10:16; John 12:38; 1 Peter 2:21-25.⁵¹ Utilizing OT passages to preach Christ has been fulfilled in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and finally to the ends of the earth as in Acts 13.

Acts 13:16-52

Paul, in Acts 13:16-52, proclaims Christ from the OT in Antioch of Pisidia in obedience to Jesus’ command to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. Thompson, commenting on Paul’s speech in Antioch, notes that “God has directed Israel’s history and that current events in Acts are a continuation of these histories.”⁵² This vantage point helps to better understand why the OT Scriptures are being utilized and how they demonstrate Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised. Although Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, it is here in a synagogue in Antioch amongst a Jewish audience that he is asked to give a “word of encouragement” (Acts 13:15).⁵³ Similar to Peter and

⁵⁰ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 296.

⁵¹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 414.

⁵² Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 30.

⁵³ While this study strives to show how the gospel is proclaimed in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth it must be noted that this “end of the earth” usage is not to a primarily pagan or Gentile audience. Therefore, it would be beneficial for further examination to see Paul’s preaching of Christ in a Gentile setting (outside the synagogue) like Athens in Acts 17. Nonetheless, here in Acts 13 there is still the expanding geographical scope of the gospel by taking it to the ends of the earth in a setting where a large Gentile audience is present and believe (Acts 13:48).

Philip, Paul relies heavily upon the OT and utilizes key scriptures to point his audience to Jesus.

Paul seeks to establish that Jesus is not the beginning of the story, but rather is the fulfillment and hope of all that has come before him. He begins by declaring that “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers” (Acts 13:17). Paul then spends the remainder of the narrative affirming and showing how their election has been true throughout history and comes to a climax in the life of Jesus. Paul retells their story, building upon their election by showing how: they were raised up as a nation, delivered from Egypt, given a land, and finally a king and a kingdom (Acts 13:17-22). In the following verse Paul sees Christ as the fulfillment of this long-awaited hope: “Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised” (Acts 13:23). Thompson comments that Paul is intentionally combining “these ‘histories’ of Israel and Jesus.”⁵⁴ It’s imperative to understand Christ-centered expository preaching as recognizing Jesus as serving to fulfill and bring to an end all that the OT has prophesied. Tannehill notes how Paul is utilizing the OT and that the “the fulfillment of this promise to Israel of an heir to David’s throne is the leading idea of the speech.”⁵⁵ Therefore, the NT preachers have not separated Christ from the OT, but have come to affirm that Christ’s death and resurrection is the fulfillment of all that has come before.

Paul further purports that the message of this salvation has come to the family of Abraham (Acts 13:26). God has not forgotten his promise to Abraham (see Gen 12, 15) and has in fact “sent” the message of salvation to Abraham’s seed. Moreover, given the non-Jews who are “devout converts to Judaism” (Acts 13:43) in the audience, it is clear that God is being faithful to bless all the families of the earth through Christ.

⁵⁴ Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 35.

⁵⁵ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1990), 167.

Thompson commenting on this section of Paul's preaching notes that "it is from the descendants of David that God brings to Israel, as he promised (implying also a preservation of that promise through those descendants), the Saviour, Jesus."⁵⁶ Paul is utilizing what might be referred to as biblical theology in his preaching to display God's persistence in all things to glorify Jesus. Furthermore, Fitzmyer notes that God is systematically unfolding his purposes until it reaches the climax in the events of Christ.⁵⁷ This marshalling of all things to their end in Christ is an apt description of how Christ-centered preaching serves to utilize the OT Scriptures to affirm the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.

Paul affirms throughout his message that Jesus' life serves to fulfill the words of the prophets. First, the people of Israel have fulfilled the words of the prophets by condemning Jesus, even though their words are read every Sabbath (Acts 13:27). Then again in crucifying Christ they "carried out all that was written of him" (Acts 13:29). Finally, Paul mentions this fulfillment stating: "that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus" (Acts 13:32-33). Consequently, even the unbeknownst actions of God's people in the death of Christ serve to fulfill prophecy in accordance with the life of Jesus.

Paul declares that God has fulfilled three specific passages of OT scripture through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.⁵⁸ Paul uses the perfect-tense verb of "fulfilled" (*ἐκπεπλήρωκεν*) to affirm God's faithfulness to his promises. Thus, he cites Psalm 2:7 declaring, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you" (Acts 13:33). Barrett

⁵⁶ Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 32.

⁵⁷ Fernando, *Acts*, 387.

⁵⁸ In Acts 13:33 Paul cites Ps 2:7 as verifying that the Christ was to be raised. In the following verse, Acts 13:34, he utilizes Isa 55:3 as evidence for Christ resurrection. Finally, in Acts 13:35 he points to Christ resurrection being the fulfillment of Psalm 16:10.

contends that Paul is speaking about Jesus coming on the scene in history and that Jesus is merely being adopted as God's Son.⁵⁹ However, the surrounding context argues for an appeal to the resurrection, specifically in verses 30, 33-34. Moreover, Psalm 2 has already been utilized by Peter at Pentecost to proclaim Christ resurrection. Thus, it seems more plausible given the context and prior usage that this citing of Psalm 2 is affirming his resurrection and through the resurrection his Sonship has become evident.⁶⁰ Paul is working to prove that Jesus is the long-awaited hope of Israel's past and the guarantee of the future for all those who believe in him. Therefore, it is paramount that all Christian preaching be centered upon the person and work of Christ.

Paul's third defense of the resurrection based upon the prophets' words comes from Psalm 16:10 and speaks of God's Holy One whose body will not decay (Acts 13:35). It is apparent to Paul that this passage does not intend to speak about David, because he died and his body "saw corruption" (Acts 13:36). Just as Peter had done in Acts 2:27 on the day of Pentecost, Paul here in Acts 13:35 quotes Psalm 16:10 as finding fulfillment in the resurrection of Christ. Seeing both of them quote Psalm 16:10 and point it to Christ is an important point, because it demonstrates that Peter's preaching in Jerusalem and now Paul's preaching to the ends of the earth are both Christ-centered sermons that utilize the same passage of the OT. Furthermore, this citing of Psalm 16:10 provides credibility to the fact that Christological preaching is not primarily dependent upon the setting, but instead first and foremost fixed upon the content. However, it is noted that both audiences in Acts 2 and Acts 13 contain Jews and Gentiles who

⁵⁹ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 645-46.

⁶⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 456.

presumably have some knowledge of the OT.⁶¹ Therefore, here in Acts 13, with Paul being in the synagogue it seems fitting for him to quote from the OT to validate his claims that Jesus is the Messiah, because of his resurrection from the dead.⁶²

Paul is preaching Christocentrically from three OT passages to provide strong evidence that Jesus is the Christ. His three points seek to prove from Jesus' death and resurrection that: he is the Son of God, the one who has received the holy and sure promise to David, and God's Holy One who did not decay. Polhill asserts that the testimony of the apostles and Scripture verify the resurrection and validate Jesus as the one whom David and Isaiah were pointing.⁶³ The impetus comes upon Paul's listeners to finally recognize Jesus as God's choice, which is in keeping with what God has been doing throughout history. In fact, Jesus as God's choice has been made clear through the utterances of the prophets that have come to light in Christ. Along these lines, Fernando notes that Paul has been highlighting the displacement of people and God's choice as seen through the choice of Israel over the nations (v.19), the choice of David over Saul (v.22), the choice of Jesus over John (v.25), and finally, the choice of Jesus as the Jews are displaced (vv.40-41).⁶⁴ This choice is revealed by all of God's actions in Israel's history of acting on behalf of a helpless people and this greatest action on God's part is

⁶¹ In Acts 2 the text records that those present were "Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven" (2:5), and later Luke records that they were "both Jews and proselytes" (2:11). In Acts 13, Paul is in the synagogue (v.14) addressing "men of Israel and you who fear God" (v.16). Thus, both of these contexts are primarily Jewish or with Gentiles who would have been acquainted with the OT Scriptures.

⁶² While Athens in Acts 17 provides a great opportunity to see Christ-centered preaching in a pagan setting, it does not meet the criteria for selection in this study, because Paul does not quote any OT passages. Nonetheless, in all three settings of Acts 2, 13, 17, the resurrection of Christ is central to their preaching and thus draws upon the truth of Ps 16:10, even if it is not directly quoted in Acts 17.

⁶³ Polhill, *Acts*, 304.

⁶⁴ Fernando, *Acts*, 387.

the bringing forth of the Savior, Jesus (Acts 13:23).

Paul also utilizes OT texts to not only point to Christ, but to serve as warnings for what will happen if this offer of salvation is rejected. Paul's invitation to believe and be freed is also shrouded with a warning as he quotes Habakkuk 1:5, "Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you" (Acts 13:41). Peterson states that "what God has done in their days is to fulfill the messianic promises by raising Jesus from death."⁶⁵ Interestingly, while only citing Habakkuk 1:5, Paul speaks of the warning from "*the Prophets*." This plural usage and the reference to Habakkuk leads Barrett to note that Paul is referencing the entire book of the Twelve (minor) Prophets.⁶⁶ This utilization of Habakkuk's warning and referencing the Prophets again affirms how Paul is using the OT not only to validate Christ, but also to show how even the warning passages come to their desired end in him.

Conclusion

The biblical argument for Christ-centered expository preaching rests in the directive of Jesus and the model preaching of Peter, Philip, and Paul. While it is plausible to look to the OT passages that are cited in the NT as finding their fulfillment in Christ, there is still a sense in which these authors wrote and spoke of a mystery that had not yet been fulfilled. Therefore, the clearest example is to see the apostles' preaching in obedience to Jesus' command of applying all of the OT to Christ. In all of the apostles' preaching in the different contexts it is Christ's person and resurrection, i.e., the gospel, that was the primary focus of their sermon. Furthermore, the Spirit persistently pointed to Christ as the fulfillment of all the Scriptures. This example in the life of each of these

⁶⁵ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 395.

⁶⁶ Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 652.

three preachers (Peter, Philip, and Paul) helps to shape how all those who follow them should strive to center their own preaching in the death and resurrection of Christ. This desire to see Christ as the fulfillment of the OT and not a stranger separated from it, serves to help ministers from preaching like modern day Marcionites. In chapter three, the aim will be to further explore and uncover key components of the apostles' preaching.

CHAPTER 3

KEY COMPONENTS OF CHRIST-CENTERED EXPOSITORY PREACHING

In his work “A Plea for Biblical Preaching” Thomas Schreiner notes the need for sound preaching as “It seems that almost everyone trumpets the importance of expository preaching, and yet genuine and powerful expository preaching seems to be in short supply.”¹ In light of this short supply and in response to the apostles’ preaching, it is imperative to provide some direction for how a preacher can most effectively preach Christ-centered expository sermons. From the apostles’ preaching, two primary areas warrant further investigation and application for the preacher. First, it is imperative that the man of God preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. This work of the Spirit will reach his private life, preparation, and ultimately proclamation. The second primary foundation for Christ-centered preaching is making the person and work of Christ central. Following the highlighting of Peter, Philip, and Paul’s Christ-centered sermons will be the practical outflow of seven ways the preacher can implement Christ-centered preaching in their own ministry.

Preaching in the Power of the Holy Spirit

Before answering *how* someone preaches powerfully in the Holy Spirit, it is vital to first understand *why* it is so essential to Christian preaching. Jesus’ words to the

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, “A Plea for Biblical Preaching,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 2.

disciples are revelatory as “he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. . .you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:4, 5). These men had plenty of stories to tell about Christ in relation to his miracles, death, and resurrection; thus, it was not a lack of material that prevented them from preaching immediately. Instead, the Holy Spirit was so pivotal to their preaching that all of the stories, even that of his victory over death, would lack “power” (Acts 1:8) apart from the work of the Spirit. In the work *Encountering God Through Expository Preaching*, the authors highlight this essential work of the Spirit that “We may preach sin, persuade of its wickedness, and describe its degrading horror; but unless the Spirit helps us, men will never see themselves as guilty of sin.”¹ This necessity of the Spirit’s work is heard in Paul’s words to the church at Thessalonica as he shared about their election, noting that “our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in *power* and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (1 Thess 1:5, emphasis mine). Paul’s statement seems to imply that it is possible to preach the gospel with words, but without the power and conviction of the Spirit. What does this power look like? The answer lies in the apostles’ preaching.

Biblical Evidence of Spirit Empowered Preaching

The Book of Acts records the power of the Spirit at work in the preaching of Peter, Phillip, and Paul. Acts 2 begins with Peter and the other disciples who are “all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). Then the text records Peter preaching (Acts 2:14) as Luke is striving to help the reader see the first evidence of the fulfillment of Acts 1:8. This working of the Spirit, according to Arturo Azurdia, results in a supernatural way of

¹ Jim Orrick, Ryan Fullerton, and Brian Payne, *Encountering God through Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), 93.

speaking which clearly has supernatural results as over three thousand souls are added to the church.² Further confirmation comes as Luke points to the Spirit's work being both seen and heard (Acts 2:33). Moreover, the Spirit's work is evident as the people are cut to the heart and cry out for salvation (Acts 2:37). Luke's highlighting of the Spirit provides affirmation of the immediate work and fulfillment of the power of the Spirit in preaching. This work also presents a follow-up question. Was this unique to the day of Pentecost or is this working of the Spirit an ongoing pattern in the preaching of Acts, specifically, in the life of Philip and Paul?

In Acts 8, Philip is also contextually shown to be under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit as the story begins with him being directed by "an angel of the Lord" (Acts 8:26). The angel's leadership is directly connected to the Spirit as three verses later the Spirit takes the place of the angel "and the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over and join his chariot'" (Acts 8:29). Here the Spirit is so directly involved in the preaching moment that he literally speaks and directs his steps. Finally, Luke shares that after the Ethiopian's baptism "the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away" (Acts 8:39). Therefore, it is the Spirit who leads Philip to the right place, empowers his speech, and begins the work of faith in his hearer. This threefold working is significant because all three of these things also took place in the Spirit's work in the life of Peter in Acts 2. Will this continue with Paul in Acts 13? Yes and no.

Although Luke does not record a work of the Holy Spirit during Paul's preaching in Acts 13:14-43, the surrounding passage makes it clear that the Spirit is at work.³ Luke begins Acts 13 by noting the Spirit speaking and saying, "Set apart for me

² Arturo G. Azurdia III, *Spirit Empowered Preaching: The Vitality of the Holy Spirit in Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 1998), 104.

³ Although the Spirit is not specifically mentioned during his preaching here, there is a great work of the Spirit that Luke records in his preaching in Ephesus (Acts 19-20).

Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2). Furthermore, their sending is recorded as being “sent out by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:4). These two statements provide scriptural evidence that the Spirit is leading and empowering them for their called work. The Spirit’s role is further affirmed in connection to his preaching and upcoming miraculous work in that he is described as “Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:9). Additionally, there is a final indication of the Spirit’s work in and through Paul and Barnabas’ (preaching) ministry as the chapter closes by noting that the disciples who were under the influence of Paul’s preaching “were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:52). The Spirit’s work serves as a bookend to this chapter of Paul’s preaching. Thus, Paul, similar to Peter and Philip, is shown to be preaching as he is filled and directed by the Holy Spirit. Having now this precedent of the Spirit’s work affirmed in the apostles’ preaching, it is imperative to understand the practical implication of how the Spirit desires to work in other preachers of the Word of God.⁴

The Spirit at Work in the Private, Preparation, and Proclamation

The Spirit desires to do a wide range of things in the preacher, but three areas that are foundational if the preacher is to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. These three areas are: the private (personal life), the preparation (development of the sermon), and the proclamation (preaching moment). First, the work of the Spirit is manifest in the private life of the preacher. Stephen Olford speaks of how imperative it is for the Spirit to be in the private life as “God can only bless with the anointing of His Holy Spirit those

⁴ It must be noted that while there is a parallel between the Spirit’s working in the apostles and with preachers today, it is not exactly the same. Specifically, the apostles were empowered by the Spirit not only to preach, but to also work miracles and speak in tongues that attested to the authority of their message and, in the case of tongues, a sign that the Spirit was at work. Thus, preachers experience being empowered, but are not performing miracles as is a sign of an apostle.

who pursue a life of holiness.”⁵ Prior to preaching at Pentecost the text records that the disciples, including Peter, are in one accord as they “were devoting themselves to prayer” (Acts 1:14). While Philip himself is not specifically noted in the text as spending time praying, he is in communion with the Lord as an angel of the Lord speaks to him (Acts 8:26) and then later the Spirit speaks to him (Acts 8:29). Moreover, Philip was recognized by the church as a man of “good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3). No man can live a holy life, full of the Spirit and wisdom without spending time alone with the Lord.

The apostles’ model shows the importance of a praying pastor. Greg Heisler comments on the vitality of praying that “A holy resolution should dominate the praying of the man called to preach: to seek the vitality of the Spirit for what it is, the premier element indispensable to any effectual preaching.”⁶ Prior to Paul’s commission by the Spirit to go and preach in the direction of Antioch they were worshiping with fasting and prayer (Acts 13:2-3). According to Azurida, prayer is one of the three essential imperatives given to the man who has been called to preach as he is called to do greater works in the power of Christ (John 14:12-13).⁷ Throughout the text there are continual markers of corporate and private devotion to the Lord that would have included prayer. Thus, it is impossible to separate the power in the preaching moment from the power in prayerful preparation.

Secondly, the Spirit works in the preacher’s preparation for the development of the sermon itself, but how? The Spirit’s work in preparation is not to be thought of as a

⁵ Stephen Olford and David Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 218.

⁶ Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit’s Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 137.

⁷ Azurida, *Spirit Empowered Preaching*, 133-34.

sermon step that mechanically causes the Spirit to be at the pastor's bidding, but indeed an internal work of submission to the Spirit as he writes the sermon upon the heart of the preacher. Tim Keller affirms the Spirit writing it upon the heart as he states that what the Spirit will do in the hearts and lives of the preacher's audience, he will normally first do that in and through the preacher.⁸ Philip's appointment in Acts 6 is connected to the twelve apostles needing to devote themselves "to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). The ongoing ministry of the word is difficult and can be exhausting. Azurida comments on this need to prepare by diligently studying the word in recognition of our weakness and our own inability to transform anyone.⁹ Thus, the preacher's work is one of total dependence upon the power of the Spirit through the preached word that leads to transformation of the people. Practically working itself out as the Spirit seeks to equip the minister by helping guide the selection of the text.

Yet, this guiding is not at the command of the preacher and can present a challenging task. Charles Spurgeon comments on his own struggles:

To me still, I must confess, my text selection is a very great embarrassment. . . . I confess that I frequently sit hour after hour praying and waiting for a subject, and that is the main part of my study; much labor have I spent in manipulating topics, ruminating upon points of doctrine, making skeletons out of verses and then burying every bone of them in the catacombs of oblivion.¹⁰

It's interesting to note that Spurgeon's comment reminds preachers that prayer is not divorced from preparation as the two will perpetually intermingle. Preaching systematically through books of the Bible may prove beneficial to many pastors who find themselves struggling with what to preach week-to-week. Devotion to studying a certain

⁸ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015) 205.

⁹ Azurdia, *Spirit Empowered Preaching*, 138-44.

¹⁰ Charles Spurgeon, *Lecture to My Students* (1893; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 84-85.

book benefits both the preacher and the audience to better understand the context week-to-week and also how the overall text fits together. Furthermore, the preacher does not come into Monday wondering, what will I preach this Sunday? Additionally, over time it allows the pastor to deal with difficult passages, issues, and theological conundrums that he might otherwise run from.

Despite the fact that the text may be challenging, the expositor's primary hermeneutic is to seek to uncover the authorial intent. However, the preacher is never alone in this pursuit as the Spirit works to provide illumination for interpretation and application. The apostles' function as a model, as the Holy Spirit inspires them to rightly apply OT text to Christ.¹¹ Illumination is difficult to gauge due to the fact that it cannot be measured objectively. This challenge leads Heisler to advise that the "Subjective aspect must always be governed by the grammatical-historical method of biblical interpretation that is anchored in authorial intent."¹² This guideline for the Spirit's work in illumination is fitting as the Spirit's role is to guide the people of God into all truth by glorifying Jesus (John 16:13-14). Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart contend that the aim is not uniqueness in seeing what others have missed, but instead to find the plain meaning of the text.¹³ The plain meaning of the text or authorial intent is how the Spirit will serve to illuminate the text to the reader. Simply put, the preacher places himself in the best possible situation to have the Spirit illuminate the text as he actively pursues the author's primary purpose for writing the passage(s) being studied.

¹¹ Inspiration and illumination are not interchangeable terms. Inspiration is a completed process that guaranteed that the words of Scripture are the words of God and thus are without error. Illumination is a continuing work of the Spirit as he guides the preacher into the truth, but the preacher/interpreter is fallible. Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 43.

¹² Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 39.

¹³ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 16.

The third way the Spirit works in the preacher is through the proclamation of the word. Indeed, there is a great need for the Spirit's work in proclamation as Azurdia comments that "The greatest impediment to the advancement of the gospel in our time is the attempt of the church of Jesus Christ to do the work of God apart from the truth and power of the Spirit of God."¹⁴ With the need of the Spirit in mind, it is essential that the preacher not wait until the preaching event to rely upon the Spirit's power, but instead he should live a life of the Spirit's work in his private prayer time and also throughout sermon preparation. This reliance on the Spirit serves as a buffer for the desperation mode that can strike the preacher prior to his preaching. Moreover, time alone with the Lord in prayer and throughout the preparation process allows the preacher to abide in the presence of God throughout instead of just hoping God shows up in the moment of proclamation. Along these lines Heisler comments, "Preach fresh from the presence of God, and you will preach with fire."¹⁵ The freshness and fire in preaching can only be found by time alone in the presence of God.

It is essential that in the preaching moment the preacher is faithful to the text and also completely dependent upon the Spirit. Azurida, commenting on this balance of being faithful to the text and relying upon the Spirit, notes: "The unaccompanied scriptures are not sufficient for life transformation. The word of God must be attended by the operative power of the Spirit of God if salvation and sanctification are to occur."¹⁶ Thus, it is not an either or, but the preacher must have both the Word and the Spirit's work to bring about life change. Yet, in the moment of proclamation the preacher must remember that he is not alone. For the Spirit is there to guide and even provide insight in

¹⁴ Azurdia, *Spirit Empowered Preaching*, 29.

¹⁵ Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 79.

¹⁶ Azurdia, *Spirit Empowered Preaching*, 38.

that moment that he may have missed in his preparation. Ramesch Richard speaks of this reality:

The preacher remembers what he has prepared by the Spirit but yields to the Spirit's movements in spontaneously going beyond his preparation for what the Spirit wants to additionally say to the church. If you have ever experienced a listener affirm a part of the message that you didn't know you emphasized or even mentioned, the Spirit was doing his work of piercing the listener at exactly his point of need. An increasing awareness, surprise, and humility about the Spirit's stewardship of the sermon comprises aspects of the anointing. You are not in that pulpit alone, left to your devices, gifts, or talents. You sense that he is there with you effecting his purposes in your audience.¹⁷

The yielding to the Spirit in the preaching moment is essential, as it allows the Spirit freedom to speak through the preacher. Furthermore, being so tied to the outline or manuscript can become a way that the minister stifles the work of the Spirit. However, it is imperative to remember that the Spirit will never lead the preacher to say something that contradicts the Word of God, but instead he will always seek to continually glorify Christ.

Undoubtedly, if the Spirit works in and through the proclamation of the gospel in the preacher, he will also do a work in and through the people. Wayne McDill comments on this aspect: "The preaching hour is momentous because the Spirit of God comes to empower the word for preacher and hearer alike."¹⁸ Yet, it's not just in the preaching moment that the Spirit works in the lives of the congregation, but also prior to their hearing of the message. In Acts 2 the people were already in Jerusalem for Pentecost and were drawn in when they heard the people praising God in their own languages (Acts 2:5-6). The Spirit was working before Philip preached in Acts 8 as the Ethiopian was already reading from the prophet Isaiah (Acts 8:30). Finally, in Acts 13 there are people

¹⁷ Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 149.

¹⁸ Wayne McDill, *The Moment of Truth: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 3.

already gathered in the synagogue to hear God's word and even God-fearers who have converted to Judaism are among them (Acts 13:14-16, 43). All three settings testify to a work of the Spirit to ordain people and places prior to the preaching.

While the Spirit goes before the preacher, there is also a work of the Spirit in the lives of the people during and after the preaching event. The revelation of the Spirit's work appears as: the people are cut to the heart (Acts 2:37); salvation or belief is often indicated by baptism (Acts 2:41; 8:37-38; 13:48); and the final evidence of the Spirit following the preaching event was the filling of joy with those who had received the word (Acts 8:39; 13:52).¹⁹ This evidence provides credence to Vines and Shaddix's statement about the Spirit's work in preaching:

From outset to conclusion, preaching is the communication of the Holy Spirit. John Knox said, "True preaching from start to finish is the work of the Spirit." He inspired the Word we preach. He illuminates our understanding as to its meaning. He anoints our communication of it. He enlightens the minds of listeners. He convicts their hearts and prompts them to respond. Preaching is the Holy Spirit's event. If He is left out, preaching does not happen.²⁰

Indeed, there is no true Christian preaching apart from the Holy Spirit and his power at work in the preacher and the audience before, during, and after the preaching of the gospel. Moreover, this evidence of the Spirit's work serves to encourage the preacher to rely upon the Spirit in private prayer. Furthermore, the preacher must rely upon the Spirit to illuminate the text as he prepares by seeking the author's main point. Finally, the preacher must rest in the work of the Spirit. This resting happens as the pastor proclaims the gospel knowing that only the Spirit can open the minds and move men and women to respond to the preaching of the gospel.

¹⁹ This filling with joy is evidence of the Spirit's work as joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22).

²⁰ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 25.

The Fundamentals of Christ-Centered Preaching

The primary purpose of preaching is to proclaim Christ, lifting him up for all to behold the glory of his death and resurrection. C. H. Dodd listed six elements of the *kerygma* or the gospel message of the early apostles. Specific to this study are two of those components: (1) the age of fulfillment has come through the death and resurrection of Jesus; and (2) an appeal for repentance with the offer of forgiveness.²¹ In light of this theory, I will examine whether and how Peter, Philip, and Paul preached Christ-centered messages on Jesus' death and resurrection. Yet, if not guarded against, this pursuit of the apostles' preaching can become merely academic. Therefore, seven practical ways to model their preaching or to follow their example will be discussed.

Proclaiming Christ

Many things compete for the preacher's attention and what he should proclaim in the preaching moment, but one thing stood out among the apostles: Christ. Specifically, as Johnson notes, the apostles consistently point to Jesus' death and resurrection. In Acts 2, Peter continually preaches about the person and work of Christ as he proclaims "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and sign this Jesus, delivered up . . . you crucified and killed" (Acts 2:22, 23). Peter is striving to show that Christ was dead and is alive again. Johnson contends that determining whether Jesus is alive or dead is the most significant question that can be answered about him.²² Highlighting Jesus' death and resurrection centers the sermon upon Christ and anchors these events in the OT Scriptures. Peter states, "God raised him up" (Acts 2:24). Peter later proclaims that Jesus "was not abandoned to Hades, nor did

²¹ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, Three Lectures*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1944), 21-23.

²² Luke Timothy Johnson, *Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), 4.

his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God” (Acts 2:31-32, 33). Heisler affirms this approach as the goal of Christocentric messages as they “Focus on the redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ and carry with them the singular purpose of proclaiming Christ crucified and resurrected as the answer for humanity’s sin.”²³ Christ indeed is the answer, because Peter comes to a crescendo and declares: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36). Jesus’ resurrection has affirmed his identity as Lord and Messiah, and Peter’s persistent plan is to prove that very thing. Helping others see Christ true identity as Lord and Savior is the goal of Christ-centered preaching.

Similarly, Philip models that Christian preaching is taking the Scriptures and showing how they are the good news about Jesus. In Acts 8:34, the Eunuch has a question about the identity of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:34). The text records that “Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35). Jonathan Griffiths notes that the verb *euangelizomai* “good news” is also used in:

LXX Isaiah 52:7 and 61:1 (to refer to the activity of the messenger who announces the Lord’s universal kingship and restoration of Zion) is a significant textual and theological foundation for its use within the New Testament to refer to the proclamation of the good news in Christ.²⁴

This idea of universal kingship and restoration of Zion connects with Philip’s direction of pointing the Eunuch to Christ. This point is further strengthened with Luke’s additional clarity earlier in chapter eight when Philip’s preaching was also the “good news,” that included sharing about “the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12).

²³ Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 35-36.

²⁴ Jonathan Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 42 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 20.

Furthermore, as Paul preaches in Acts 28, Luke again highlights a connection between proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about Jesus (Acts 28:31).

In light of this connection between preaching Christ and the kingdom, Sidney Greidanus comments that preaching the glory of God in Christ is truly preaching the kingdom of God.²⁵ Therefore, Luke's abbreviated sharing of Philip and the Eunuch's conversation should lead the pastor to recognize that Philip, similar to Peter and Paul, was preaching the death and resurrection of Christ. For how could it be good news if the servant is simply slaughtered, but never rises again? Philip, rooted in the OT Scriptures, preaches Christ crucified and raised from the dead.

Luke's record of Paul's preaching in Antioch in Pisidia is similar to Peter's Acts 2 sermon as Paul's sermon continually returns to Jesus' death and resurrection. In relation to his death, Paul proclaims that there was a plan "to have him executed" (Acts 13:28) and that after they had crucified him they "took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb" (Acts 13:28, 29). Yet, immediately following this statement Paul notes, "But God raised him from the dead" (Acts 13:30). Moreover, Paul proclaims that God is making good on his promise to the fathers "by raising Jesus" (Acts 13:33). Additionally, Jesus is greater than David, because God raised him up to not see corruption (Acts 13:37). Clearly, throughout Paul's sermon, Jesus' death and resurrection serve as the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption. Christ is not added to the end of his sermon as part of the invitation, but Christ is his sermon. Tony Merida notes that the preacher is to develop the main point with a redemptive thrust that keeps him from moralizing, and allowing the preacher to focus upon the transforming work of God in Christ.²⁶ This

²⁵ Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 7.

²⁶ Tony Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor: A Field Guide for Word-Driven Disciple Makers* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2016), 158.

transforming work is Paul's thrust in Acts 13. In light of all three of these sermons and their focus upon the good news of Jesus death and resurrection, the preacher must ask: how might I best implement this focus on Christ in my own preaching?

The culmination of studying Peter, Philip, and Paul provides clarity to defining Christ-centered expository preaching. Primarily, that Christ-centered preaching seeks to exalt Jesus by revealing his identity as both Lord and Christ through his death and resurrection. This foundational principle of Peter, Philip, and Paul paves the path for all preachers to focus their message upon these central tenets of the good news about Christ. Yet, simply knowing this truth is not enough, instead an effort must be made to obtain some type of clarity on how preachers can most faithfully exposit the word of God, Christocentrically. To this end, Heisler states:

The key question every preacher must ask is: How am I going to put Christ at the heart and center of this message in such a compelling manner that all who hear will either reject him in unbelief or embrace him as Lord?²⁷

In an effort to place Christ at the center of all Christian preaching, the following seven applications are warranted.

Preach Christ and Him Crucified

First, although it may appear obvious, preachers must strive to continually preach Christ and him crucified. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, declared, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). Preaching Christ and him crucified is not to imply that this was the only thing Paul ever preached on or ever thought about, but is meant to convey that Christ crucified was the basis or foundation of all Christian preaching. D.A. Carson summarizes well Paul's

²⁷ Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 36.

teaching, noting “What he means is that all he does and teaches is tied to the cross.”²⁸ Given that the NT’s emphasis is upon Christ, does this focus mean that anytime a preacher’s sermon is from the NT that he automatically is preaching a Christ-centered sermon? The short answer is no.

Simply having a text and mentioning Christ or even preaching about Christ does not necessarily mean that Christ has been preached. Bryan Chapell warns of this danger:

However well intended and biblically rooted may be a sermon’s instruction, if the message does not incorporate the motivation and enablement inherent in a proper apprehension of the work of Christ, the preacher proclaims mere Pharisaism. Preaching that is faithful to the whole of Scripture not only establishes God’s requirements, but also highlights the redemptive truths that make holiness possible.²⁹

In light of Chapell’s argument, it must be noted that preaching Christ-centered sermons is to preach redemptively by placing the story within the biblical narrative. Redemptive preaching was the Apostle Paul’s passion as he desired to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Furthermore, Paul, along with Peter and Philip, continually returned to the death and resurrection of Christ as the only hope of rescue from the wrath of God.

Preaching the death and resurrection of Jesus is what constitutes Christian preaching. Commenting specifically on Paul’s focus in preaching, Carson notes:

He cannot long talk about Christian joy, or Christian ethics, or Christian fellowship, or the Christian doctrine of God, or anything else, without finally tying it to the cross. Paul is gospel-centered; he is cross-centered.³⁰

²⁸ D. A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 38.

²⁹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), xx.

³⁰ Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry*, 38.

Connecting all things to the cross is the primary aim of all Christian preaching. Jonathan Griffiths provides further clarity on Paul's words: "If Paul's practice is to be taken as a model, then Christian preaching is fundamentally nothing more and nothing less than an accurate transmission of the received gospel of the sin-bearing death and resurrection of Christ."³¹ Griffiths is contending that to preach Christ crucified is to connect all things in the preacher's sermon and ministry to Christ's death and resurrection. From the study of these three apostles, Christ death and resurrection clearly appears to be their primary aim in preaching. Interestingly, Griffiths states that "if" Paul's practice is a model, this question leads to the uncovering of the second application. Is the preaching in Acts a specific model for other preachers to follow?

Preach Christ, But Style Is Flexible

Undeniably the apostles' sermons provide clarity to how and why men called by God should preach, but their variation in preaching demonstrates that there is room for flexibility in each preacher's style. This variation is evident as Peter, Philip, and Paul all preach the same good news, but do so in separate ways.³² Their differences serve to remind the reader that Luke is not so much setting forth a certain model, as to focus on what must be shared. Commenting on the lack of a model, Howard Marshall notes, there is "no likely, 'straight-jacket' that shaped the early Christian sermons, but certainly they were molded by the kind of sermonizing that was familiar in the synagogues."³³ Thus, it might be helpful for post-apostolic preachers to allow themselves to be molded and

³¹ Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 81.

³² The uniqueness of these separate ways will be identified in the coming pages as they will unveil how their invitations or calls to repentance and faith differed.

³³ I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 521.

impacted by the way the apostles' preach, but not to set up a rigid standard of exact replication. Primarily, because even within Acts there are differences in the way they preach, even though there is great overlap in both their content and even homiletical style.

Preach Christ as the Fulfillment of God's Unfolding Story

The third specific application that flows from Christ-centered preaching is to follow the apostles' method of seeing the unveiling of Christ as connecting and bringing to fulfillment the entire unfolding story of God. The preacher's right understanding of this unfolding story in connection with the Spirit's power is essential. Along these lines, Azurdia compels preachers to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit by preaching in light of Christ, warning those who do not:

I have become convinced that preachers can rightly anticipate the Holy Spirit's power only when they are resolutely wedded to the Holy Spirit's purpose. What is His purpose? To glorify Jesus Christ through the instrumentality of the Old and the New Testament scriptures, both of which point to Him.³⁴

Azurdia is clear that both testaments point to Jesus and it is the Spirit's chief end to glorify Christ as the preacher helps his audience to discover this truth. The revelation of Christ is revealed as Peter recounts that Jesus' pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel about the last days (Acts 2:16-17). Moreover, he connects Jesus resurrection to the long-awaited hope of a Davidic Messiah who would be raised from the dead (Acts 2:24-31). In a similar way, Philip interprets the suffering servant of Isaiah to speak about the good news of Jesus (Acts 8:32-35). In Acts 13, Paul provides a lengthy discourse about Jesus' connection to the OT story of God. He identifies Jesus as: the offspring of David (13:23); the message of salvation sent to the family of Abraham (13:26); the fulfiller of the prophets' declaration of a suffering servant

³⁴ Azurdia, *Spirit Empowered Preaching*, 59.

(13:27-29); the answer of the good news promised to the fathers (13:32-33); and the one greater than David who did not see corruption (13:34-37). All of these lead Marshall to declare that the apostles preach as if the NT is a continuation of the work God began in the OT.³⁵ This continuation finds its climax in Christ's death and resurrection and thus necessitates Christ being the center of all sermons.

Preach Christ in Light of Biblical Theology

The fourth application of Christ-centered preaching is the importance of preaching all of the Bible which necessitates the development of biblical theology. James Hamilton defines biblical theology as an “Interpretive perspective reflected in the way the biblical authors have presented their understanding of earlier Scripture, redemptive history, and the events they are describing, recounting, celebrating, or addressing.”³⁶ For pastors, biblical theology implies that they understand and can see the progression from Genesis to Revelation and how Christ serves as the cornerstone of all that is taking place therein. Keller provides a comprehensive view of this component of preaching in his chapter “Preaching Christ from All of Scripture”:

The key to preaching the gospel every time is to preach Christ every time, and the key to that is to find how your particular text fits into the full canonical context and participates as a chapter in the great narrative arc of the Bible, which is how God saves us and renews the world through the salvation by free grace in his Son, Jesus Christ.³⁷

Thus, in order to preach Christ and the gospel, the preacher must understand the place of the text within Scripture.

³⁵ Marshall, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 514.

³⁶ James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 16.

³⁷ Keller, *Preaching*, 70.

Yet, seeing where the sermon fits in the Bible's grand narrative and how the text points to Christ is not automatic. The temptation in light of all that Scripture reveals and the challenges of culture can be to look to other things than Christ. Stephen Seamands notes that throughout history Christians have often been given to not completely dispense of Christ, "But to add to him or so focus on other things that, in reality, Christ is no longer deemed supreme and sufficient."³⁸ This type of preaching must be guarded against at all cost. There must be a return not only to the Scriptures, but to seeing Christ as the fulfillment and hope of all that the OT was awaiting and the NT proclaims has now come in him.

Preach Christ for a Response

The fifth application drawn from Christ-centered preaching is to preach in such a way that the hearer is left with a need to respond. The need to preach the death and resurrection of Christ and to call sinners to respond is no less urgent now than it was in the early church. It must be noted that the public invitation is a modern invention and has its detractors.³⁹ The premise here is not primarily to argue for or against a public invitation at the end of the message, but to recognize that Christ-centered expository preaching leaves the listener at a place of either having to receive or reject the Christ that has been proclaimed. Moreover; from the text of Acts 2 and Acts 13, there is clearly a compelling argument on behalf of the preacher to call his audience to respond. Pivotal to this investigation is what Greg Heisler notes as the trichotomy that happens in Spirit-led preaching when "the Word, the Spirit, and the preacher all testify to Jesus Christ in a

³⁸ Stephen A. Seamands, *Give Them Christ: Preaching His Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Return* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 12.

³⁹ For a historical study on the public invitation see David Bennett, *The Altar Call: Its Origins and Present Usage* (Lanham, MD: Univer. Press of America, 2000).

unified and powerful witness.”⁴⁰ This trichotomy is revealed in each of the sermons under investigation and thus a brief examination will be given.

The trichotomy of Word, Spirit, and the preacher are all present in Peter’s sermon in Acts 2. Peter’s citing of the OT passages all find their fulfillment in Christ. Additionally, the Spirit’s work is evident in the conviction of the people who are said to be “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37) in response to the Word of God that they have heard Peter preach. Furthermore, being cut to the heart leads them to cry out “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter definitively calls for a response: “Repent and be baptized everyone 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 2:38). The text further notes that “with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation’” (Acts 2:40). This text and others like it compel Daniel Akin to conclude that while the Scripture may not define the exact manner of the invitation, there is warrant for calling or challenging people to declare their allegiance to God publicly through repentance, public profession, and baptism.⁴¹

Unlike Peter’s call to repent and be baptized, Philip’s sharing of the gospel in Acts 8 does not have a recorded imperative to respond to what he has just preached. In fact, from the text it appears that the Ethiopian gives the invitation: “as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?’” (Acts 8:36). Despite the lack of a formal invitation, the Eunuch’s words indicate that Philip’s preaching of the word has resulted in a movement of the Spirit that leads the Eunuch to understand that he has a need to respond and to demonstrate his faith through baptism.

⁴⁰ Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 64.

⁴¹ Daniel L. Akin, Bill Curtis, and Stephen Nelson Rummage, *Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2011), 211.

At the conclusion of Paul's faithful preaching of the word in Acts 13:16-37, he provides an invitation, stating: "that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed" (Acts 13:38-39). Paul was calling them to believe that they might be forgiven. Paul, like Peter and Philip, does not try to manipulate his audience into responding, but simply relies upon the Word of God and the power of the Spirit to draw people to Christ. To help prevent against a desire to manipulate and bring false conversions, the preacher must recognize that salvation is of the Lord and must be the work of the Spirit. The preacher must never forget that he is a divine treasure in a clay pot (2 Cor 4:7). This recognition of weakness leaves the preacher with the knowledge that he has no power of his own to truly impact life change. Therefore, the call to respond is rooted in the work of Christ by the power of the Spirit for the glory of God.

Preach Christ in Light of the Audience

The sixth application calls for the preacher to understand their audience in an attempt to make the person and work of Christ primary in their preaching. Peter, Philip, and Paul all preach in unique places and to different audiences; thus, each varies in their delivery to accommodate to their audience. Norman Barker highlights this variation in the approach of the apostles: "One of the remarkable, and delightful, aspects of the Acts speeches is the way in which Peter and Paul vary their presentation according to the audience."⁴² For example, Peter, in Acts 2, preaches an expository sermon that is based upon the coming of the Holy Spirit and is in response to the bewildered questions of his audience about what the speaking in tongues meant and even if they might be drunk

⁴² Norman T. Barker, "Preaching in the Book of Acts," in *Preaching the Word: Essays in Honour of Professor Tom Wilkinson*, ed. Stewart Gill, Reformed Theological Review, Supplement Series 3 (Doncaster, Australia: Reformed Theological Review, 2009), 55.

(Acts 2:12-15). Christ-centered preaching is effective, because the preacher not only understands the main idea of the text and how it points to Christ, but he is also aware of the questions that his audience is posing on the subject.

While Peter preaches within Jerusalem, Philip's setting is outside of the city where he encounters a eunuch who is returning from worshipping in Jerusalem, but has yet to find clarity on the identity of the suffering servant in Isaiah (Acts 8:26-28). Philip's sermon is rooted in the Scriptures, but it begins by posing a question that he believed the Eunuch was desiring to know how to answer, "Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30). Thus, Peter's sermon was in response to a question that the people were asking, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:12) and in a similar way, Philip, was posing the question to gauge the interest of his audience. Effective preaching requires the preacher to work prior to the preaching moment on developing answers to questions that his listeners may have. Fred Craddock speaks about prior thinking as he states, "Before the first word of the sermon is spoken, the preacher has a clear idea of the listeners' posture of mind and heart in relation to the message to be delivered."⁴³ Therefore, the astute preacher is always seeking to ask and answer questions that he believes his audience will be forming as he preaches.

Paul, in Acts 13, demonstrates how the preacher needs to connect with his audience. Paul's audience is similar to that of Peter as he finds himself in a synagogue, but rather than having a question, Paul's audience is expecting a "word of encouragement for the people" (Acts 13:15). Keller commenting on the importance of preaching Christ to the heart notes that it is not enough for preaching to be accurate and doctrinally sound, but "it must capture the listeners' interest and imaginations; it must be compelling and

⁴³ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 188.

penetrate to their hearts.”⁴⁴ Paul captures the interest of his listeners by sharing about their rich spiritual heritage and then moves to their imaginations by stating that Jesus is the Savior from the line of David (Acts 13:17-23). John Stott affirming Paul’s flexibility in Acts goes on to note that we need to learn from him that we have “no liberty to edit the heart of the good news of Jesus Christ. Nor is there ever any need to do so. But we have to begin where people are, to find a point of contact with them.”⁴⁵ Thus; while Paul is preaching a sound Christ-centered expository sermon, he is also very aware of his audience and appeals to their hearts by way of their minds.

Dr. Robert Smith, Jr. implores preachers to be aware that most people come to church to hear preaching and wonder “Why?” The preacher must strive to answer this question for his audience as “doctrinal preaching does not answer all the questions and cannot solve all the problems, but it points the listeners to God.”⁴⁶ Indeed, Paul’s preaching does not appear to answer every question, as the people leave the synagogue still wanting to know more (Acts 13:42). Yet, Christ-centered preaching will provide enough clarity that the most important questions about Christ’s identity are answered.

Preach Christ by Focusing on the Text’s Big Idea

The seventh and final application focuses on how to develop the sermon that is based upon the central idea of the text. Ligon Duncan defines expository preaching not necessarily as a particular style or method but a “principled commitment to preaching in such a way that the Scripture itself is supplying the main theme, principle headings, and

⁴⁴ Keller, *Preaching*, 157.

⁴⁵ John Stott, *The Spirit the Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1990), 232.

⁴⁶ Robert Smith, Jr., *Doctrine That Dances* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2008), 24.

central application in our proclamation.”⁴⁷ Yet, how does the preacher uncover the main points of the text or the author’s movement within the text? Alec Motyer arrives at this answer by asking: “What is the one thing that all the other things are about?”⁴⁸ This main thing in the text may be revealed through repetition of words or ideas. Additionally, some form of discourse analysis helps the preacher to see key connecting words that will help uncover the main idea that all the other verses are pointing towards. Further help in capturing the big idea involves asking how this passage fits within the surrounding chapters, within this book as a whole, and ultimately seeking to understand how this fits within the rest of the Bible and the message of Christ’s redemption.⁴⁹ Yet, Chapell cautions that knowing what a biblical writer was saying is only part of the job, as the preacher must seek to understand why the Spirit included this passage in the Scriptures.⁵⁰ He further notes that this discovery helps to reveal the Fallen Condition Focus which enables the preacher to “interpret the passage properly, communicate its contents, and give the congregation the Holy Spirit’s own reason for listening.”⁵¹ Correct interpretation, coupled with the Spirit’s desire to make Christ known through the inspired text, leaves the preacher confident that the word will not return void but accomplish the purpose for which God sent it (Isa 55:11).

⁴⁷ J. Ligon Duncan III, "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," in *Preaching the Cross* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 39.

⁴⁸ Alec Motyer, *Preaching? Simple Teaching on Simply Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013), 61-62.

⁴⁹ Keller, *Preaching*, 216.

⁵⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 3rd ed., 28.

⁵¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 3rd ed., 32.

Conclusion

The example of the apostles (what preachers are compelled to follow) in these three passages is to preach expositional sermons utilizing the biblical text as their basis for affirming Jesus' identity as the true Messiah and inaugurator of the Kingdom of God. If not guarded against, the tendency in preaching can be to utilize a text (even expositionally) to develop a main and sub points that are not grounded in the main point of the passage. Thus, it is advantageous for the pastor to understand how the apostles supported their primary thesis that Jesus is the Messiah by affirming his death and resurrection. The pastor can be encouraged to know that the power does not come from him, but he is "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This vitality of the Spirit, according to Azurida, is the Spirit's "effectual work of glorifying Jesus Christ through fallible men who faithfully proclaim the Christocentric scriptures."⁵² May each man of God be faithful to his trust to proclaim Christ from all of the Scriptures.

⁵² Azurida, *Spirit Empowered Preaching*, 62.

CHAPTER 4
A METHODOLOGY FOR TRAINING MEN
TO PREACH CHRIST-CENTERED
EXPOSITORY SERMONS

This chapter focuses on the methodology used for training men in the RCAKB to preach Christ-centered expository sermons. The project consisted of: (1) an initial stage of preparing the 8-week material, (2) recruiting participants, (3) administering the pre-survey, (4) teaching the courses, and (5) administering the post-survey. These elements were implemented based upon the project's goals: to assess the understanding of Christ-centered expository preaching amongst the participants, to develop the material, and implement the curriculum to equip these men to faithfully exegete and preach a passage of Scripture.

Scheduling of Events

The seminars began on August 5, 2019, and concluded September 30, 2019. A timeline for the project's elements consisted of the following:

1. May 1 – Began developing course seminars.
2. July 1 – Mailed letters to all 32 churches of the RCAKB inviting any called men of God to attend the seminar.
3. July 15 – Follow-up by either email, text, or phone call to any pastors in the RCAKB to whom I had sent the letter and had their contact information but had not gotten a response.
4. July 30 – Presentation and acceptance of course material by expert panel who made some recommendations.
5. July 31 – Changes made to course material based upon input from the expert panel.
6. August 1 – Emailed pre-seminar questionnaire to all registered participants

7. August 5 – Ate first meal with participants prior to classes beginning the first night.
8. August 5 - Administered pre-survey questionnaire to the participants that had not filled it out prior to the class.
9. August 5 – The *Preach the Word* seminar began.
10. September 16 – Cancellation of week 6 due to illness. It was rescheduled for the following week.
11. September 23 – Discussion by the group was abbreviated and time extended an extra thirty minutes to combine week 6 and 7.
12. September 30 – The *Preach the Word* seminar concluded.
13. September 30 – Administered post-seminar questionnaire to the participants.

Including preparation and formal arrangements, the class project preparation covered five months, from May through September.

The Development of the Course Material and Preparation for the Seminar

The development of the course material was by far the most time-consuming part, requiring months of reading, studying, and prayer. The content of the material was drawn from a range of books on preaching and many of these books were given away during the seminar.¹ These books were chosen due to their impact upon my own preaching and also their recognition and respected status in the preaching community. Designing each weekly seminar around the different materials required the seminars to

¹ Here is the list of books that were given away: Arturo G. Azurdia III, *Spirit Empowered Preaching: The Vitality of the Holy Spirit in Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 1998); Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018); Tim Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015); David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); John Piper, *Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015); Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014); Robert Smith, Jr., *Doctrine That Dances* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2008); Charles Spurgeon, *Lecture to My Students* (1893; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).

last one hour and a half. Utilizing this time most efficiently and providing for interaction helped to structure each class to contain twenty minutes of lecture/teaching followed by a ten-minute breakout for students to practice what they had learned. The cycle was repeated three times each week. Therefore, to be manageable, there was one page of seminar session material and one page for the breakout (notes or work) that the participants primarily would do in small groups.² Most sections had an area for additional notes below the breakout session. Each seminar was bound into a spiral notebook allowing participants to have the entire session, breakout, and section for notes laid out before them.

The primary challenge to this study was that only three full-time pastors currently served in the RCAKB with the majority being either bi-vocational or retired.³ Due to the small number of full-time pastors the schedule had to be on a week night after typical work hours where these pastors did not already have regular church commitments. Therefore, the days were limited to Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays. After prayer, consideration, and consultation with others, Monday evening was decided. Almost immediately I was met with some of the men who had hoped to be a part of the study who now could not due to work, school, or other obligations.⁴ After settling on the date, the letter was mailed to every church in the RCAKB on July 1, 2019. The target group were either pastors or men who sensed a calling to preach within those churches. On July

² To make the material fit on one page the margins of the participants' guide had to be adjusted for some weeks.

³ Two of the three full-time pastors consisted of myself and the other pastor who serves here with me. The third full-time pastor did not attend any of the sessions. Full-time is not meant to say that these men do not serve full-time, just to indicate that they have another vocation or are retired from another profession.

⁴ Their inability to attend was especially disheartening, because two of these were men who are in our church that feel a call to preach and could have greatly benefited from the training.

15, I began following up with many of the men who had not signed up.⁵ The sign-up was electronic and was available on our church website.⁶ The follow-up proved to be one of the most crucial steps as five more men signed up within twenty-four hours of my contact. By the time the class began, thirteen men had signed up, including a Presbyterian pastor who is one of my friends and serves as pastor of two of the local churches.⁷

Weekly Fellowship Meals

One of the great strengths of this training was the intentional plan for fellowship. To this end, my wife and our associate pastor served a meal with dessert prior to the class each week. Participants were asked to confirm their attendance at the meal by the Thursday of the week prior to help with quantity and prep. It's hard to overstate the impact the meals had on fellowship, retention, and overall perception of the seminar. During week five, one of our children became ill and my wife was not able to attend and oversee the meal prep, delivery, and cleanup. My wife's absence proved to be a lot on me and contributed to my being more overwhelmed and struggling with that week's delivery of the seminar material. Of all the things that this seminar accomplished the sharing of a meal was something I would advocate to others considering their projects, specifically those who are striving to reach a large group of bi-vocational leaders.

⁵ Text messaging was more effective than trying to email or even making phone calls.

⁶ The site contained the following information: My testimony and reason for the class; the flyer that had been sent to each church; a place to register; and then a detailed breakdown about the food, lecture material, group discussion, and weekly book drawing.

⁷ Even though he is not a member of the RCAKB, his desire and eagerness to be a part of the study made him a great fit for the class and also worthy of the exception.

Expert Panel and Pre-Questionnaire

Setting a deadline of meeting with the expert panel on July 30 was intentional in forcing the material to be completed and ready to go prior to the start date of the seminar.⁸ Additionally, meeting on July 30 allowed a one-week buffer to make any corrections deemed necessary by the panel. The panel met at a local restaurant and enjoyed a meal. Following the meal, I walked through the material, allowing them the opportunity to ask questions, provide criticism, and to help clarify each session's purpose. The meal and meeting lasted around two hours and ended with the panel in full support and requiring only a few changes that were completed by the following day.⁹

The pre-seminar questionnaire was emailed to those who had signed up and asked them to fill it out prior to the class beginning. Several of the men completed the survey prior and those participants who either forgot or had not signed up filled out the questionnaire on the opening night. The questionnaire included an agreement to participate and asked for biographical information, including: how long they had been a Christian, their education, age, calling to preach, have they ever preached, and for how many years they have been doing so. The biographical section was followed by seventeen statements for the individual to indicate his agreement or disagreement with on a six-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was intentional in providing one or more statements that would reflect upon the primary content of each week and then overall statements to deal with expository preaching. Additionally, there were some short answer items aimed

⁸ To be considered an expert they must have a degree in theological education and at least 7 years of ministry experience. The panel consisted of the Associational Mission Strategist of the RCAKB and two pastors from the association who met the above criteria.

⁹ One of the concerns involved the amount of material overwhelming participants with all of the sessions totaling about fifty plus pages. Therefore, I reassured the panel that they would only be getting one week at a time and a total of six pages per week. Another issue was lack of clarity.

at understanding what the students felt was most important about preaching, how confident they felt to interpret and preach, and their sermon preparation process.

The aim of the class was centered on hermeneutics and homiletics. The first few weeks were heavier on helping participants understand what expository preaching is and slowly began to transition to help them understand how to prepare a sermon. The weekly seminar material consisted of one main point, and several sub-points, with five or six fill-in-the-blank statements on each page of notes. The fill-in-the-blank aimed at keeping the class engaged. Additionally, the participants only received the packet when they showed up each week to encourage attendance and permit any tweaking that might need to happen due to unforeseen circumstances. However, with the understanding that there would be times when students could not attend, each week was videoed and then made available to them through a private link on Vimeo. Moreover, the packet from that week was given to them so that they could utilize it as they watched the video.

One of the decisions made prior to the class was not to allow students to preach a sermon for group evaluation.¹⁰ Not allowing students to preach was primarily due to the limited time in the evenings. If the classes would have been during the day there might have been more time; therefore, allowing the addition of a preaching component. While giving participants an opportunity to preach would have been beneficial, the decision was made to let the weekly seminar material be primary and then allow the breakouts and class discussion to afford them the opportunity to share how they would approach or preach a certain text.

¹⁰ Allowing students to preach a brief twenty-minute sermon was considered as this would have given them opportunity to display the different areas targeted by the seminar and yet brief enough to allow for multiple men to preach.

The Eight-Week “Preach the Word” Seminar

The next phase after developing the material consisted of eight weeks of training men to preach Christ-centered expository sermons in the RCAKB. The eight weeks covered the following topics: What is Preaching?, the Work of the Holy Spirit, Key Words, Biblical Theology, Discovering the Big Idea of the Text, Practical Components of Every Sermon, and Preaching Christ from All of Scripture. Each class was an hour and a half and was broken down as follows: Session 1 5:30-5:50p.m., Breakout 1 5:50-6p.m.; Session 2 6-6:20p.m., Breakout 2 6:20-6:30p.m.; Session 3 6:30-6:50p.m., Breakout 3 6:50-7p.m. From the first week until the last, the men continually commented about how they liked having twenty minutes of teaching followed by ten minutes of small group discussion of questions and application during the breakout sessions.¹¹

Session 1: What Is Preaching?

The seminar began on Monday, August 5, 2019, with Session 1.1.¹² The session briefly covered how preaching is defined in the Old Testament and New Testament, with special focus on key Greek words from the New Testament. The intent was not only to help the men understand how the Bible defines preaching but also to see how preaching has served as the center of God’s communication to man throughout history. Additionally, it was emphasized that the goal of preaching is Christ and him crucified, serving as the foundation for all Christian preaching. In Breakout 1.1 the participants separated into groups and defined preaching by choosing from a list of sermon definitions that came from four of the eight different books that were being given

¹¹ There were a few questions posed by the participants during the time of teaching, but the dialog was limited that the material might be covered. Most teaching sessions ended with 3 minutes or so remaining that allowed for questions, push-back or disagreements, clarity on a topic, etc.

¹² See appendix 5 for Sessions 1.1-1.3 and accompanying breakout sessions.

away. Most of the groups settled on one of the definitions, but one came up with their own. Session 1.2 considered the case for expository preaching being superior to topical preaching.¹³ Several men, advocates of topical preaching, raised concerns, but the discussion was charitable and sharpening for all of us. Breakout 1.2 provided discussion as the men shared about which preachers, both contemporary and historical figures, most influenced them. Session 1.3 was aimed at helping the men understand their connection/bridge between them, other preachers, the apostles, and even the prophets. The men were so encouraged and at the same time sensed the great weight of what they had been called to do.

One of the biggest discussions from Session 1 centered upon question two in Breakout 1.3 stating: “Jonathan Griffiths notes that the hallmark of a man of God is that he speaks the very words of God. Based upon that definition and in light of your preaching, could we call you a man of God? If not, what needs to change about your preaching?” Many of the men confessed that they were not always faithful to preach the text and had preached sermons they later realized were in contradiction to the Scriptures. It was a humbling time of confession and repentance that proved to be a moment of real bonding and recognition for all the men present, sensing the seriousness of the task of preaching.

Session 2: The Holy Man and the Spirit’s Role in Preparation and Preaching

Session 2 reflected a lot of material from chapter three of this project on the work of the Holy Spirit. During our time, the Spirit of God moved and filled many men

¹³ I was not as clear as I wanted or needed to be on what expository preaching was; therefore, I spent the first three minutes of Session 2.1 further clarifying that expository preaching does not mean you must preach through a book systematically (although you can and I encouraged them to), but is primarily allowing the main point of the text to be the main point of your sermon.

in that room with praise and affirmation of God's holiness and the need to preach his Word. Session 2.1 covered three marks of a holy man (weakness, fear, and much trembling) based upon 1 Corinthians 2:3.¹⁴ Additionally, the material highlighted practical steps that they could take to grow in personal holiness. Breakout 2.1 allowed them to further discuss these three marks and the vast majority of the men present shared that they recognized their weakness and inability to preach apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

Session 2.2 focused upon the Spirit's role in preparation of a sermon. The focus of this session strived to help them understand different terms like inspiration, inerrancy, and illumination. Then the session transitioned to help the participants see how they could place themselves in the best position for the Spirit to illuminate the text, through: personal holiness, prayer, recognizing the need for the Spirit to transform the listeners, seeking the big idea, and knowing their people. This time served to be a great encouragement to the men present and they were eager to go prepare their upcoming sermon. The session was followed by Breakout 2.2 covering 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and the source of the preacher's authority. Additionally, the men were challenged to consider how the Spirit enables understanding (1 Cor 2:6-16), but does not make interpretation automatic. The men seemed to grasp this truth, as evidenced by several men who confessed how they had misinterpreted text in the past.

The final session for week two (2.3) centered upon the Spirit's role in the preaching moment. First, definitions from well recognized preachers were shared to define the work of the Spirit in the preaching moment. Following the definitions, the focus was upon showing the participants three primary things that the Spirit does in the

¹⁴ See appendix 6 for Sessions 2.1-2.3 and accompanying breakout sessions.

heart of the listener: enlightening, convicting, and transforming. However, the work of the Spirit was balanced by pressing upon the men their role in persuading (2 Cor 5:11) and imploring others to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:19-20). The last breakout of the night (2.3) allowed each man to share with his group a moment when he had experienced a work of the Spirit in himself and/or the listeners as he was preaching. The participants' testimonies were cause for overflowing praise to God as each of the men recounted things that God had done to save and transform those to whom they were preaching.

Session 3: Selecting and Studying the Text

Text selection is pivotal and given that many preachers tend to run to the text(s) they like best, preaching expository sermons through a book provides accountability and credibility. The preachers were shown how preaching through a book would help them deal with issues that they might normally avoid due to theological challenges or the potential to offend. Moreover, preaching through a book would provide credibility as the issues would arise from the text, rather than our people perceiving that we were intentionally attacking them. Furthermore, Session 3.1 provided practical steps for selecting a sermon text through: prayer and fasting,¹⁵ selecting a book, diving the text into paragraphs, possibly preaching through a chapter(s), and working to develop a preaching calendar.¹⁶ Additionally, a chart was provided that broke down each of the books of the Bible into sections (Law, History, Wisdom and Poetry, Prophecy, Gospel, and Letters). The participants were then asked them to look back on their preaching to see if there was a balance of these sections, revealing an intentional effort to preach the

¹⁵ While prayer and fasting do not serve as a magical wand, they do help the preacher slow down and prepare himself to be led by the Holy Spirit and to appeal for the will of God as he begins to examine possible sermon text.

¹⁶ See appendix 7 for Sessions 3.1-3.3 and accompanying breakout sessions.

whole counsel of God and not just certain portions or testaments. The men shared about how this chart was beneficial and allowed them to take a big picture look at their preaching.

In Tim Keller's book *Preaching*, he provides a set of steps (rounds) to follow to work through a text and these steps were utilized throughout Session 3.1-3.3 and 5.1-5.2 to help provide a basis of how to develop a sermon.¹⁷ Round one consists of reading the English text two times and then investigating and interrogating the text. During this time, intentional discussion took place about why preachers should not first look to a commentary or what their favorite preacher had to say on the passage, because this can prevent them from doing the hard work of wrestling with the text. This wrestling often involves time in prayer, contemplation, and seeking what the Lord intended when he inspired the biblical author to write that text. The participants immediately put round one into practice in Breakout 3.1 by investigating and interrogating 1 Peter 2:24-25.

Session 3.2 centered upon Keller's round two of studying the text by looking at the content, context, repetitions of words, and more. Additionally, a Bible Translation Continuum chart was shared and discussion about how utilizing different translations in preparation can be helpful. Several of the men were already examining different translations in their sermon preparation, but a few shared how this chart helped them see that they could really benefit from comparing translations from both ends of the spectrum. Breakout 3.2 continued the study of 1 Peter 2:24-25 as the participants had different translations presented and then they made observations by going through the different steps of round two.

¹⁷ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 214-218.

Session 4: Key Words and Biblical Theology

Session 4.1 focused upon utilizing key connecting words to better interpret the text.¹⁸ Learning to recognize these connectors has been one of the biggest growths in my own preaching and has equipped me to better teach how the passage presents and supports its main point(s). Sessions 4.1-4.2 afforded the opportunity to pour into these men something that I was convinced would transform their own preaching.¹⁹ During Session 4.1, participants learned how key connectors could help them simplify and better understand the main point. Additionally, how these connecting words could transform not only their teaching, but also their theology. Breakout 4.1 utilized John 3:14-16, because verse sixteen begins with the connector word “for,” and I wanted them to realize how this most familiar passage was connected to the verses that came before. Session 4.2 was a practical application of working through Hebrews 3:12-14 and breaking down a difficult passage theologically by utilizing key connecting words. Following this session was Breakout 4.2 where Philippians 2:5-11 was examined as a large group to see how the connector words helped better interpret the passage.²⁰

Session 4.3 introduced the participants to systematic and biblical theology. While the presentation that night was balanced, biblical theology received more focus throughout other sessions in an effort to help them grasp how their passage fit within a

¹⁸ See appendix 8 for Sessions 4.1-4.3 and accompanying breakout sessions.

¹⁹ To this end, at the close of Session 8.2 one of the men shared how identifying key words had already greatly impacted his preaching.

²⁰ Almost immediately the men began to identify the key connecting words and how it shed light on verses before and after. Moreover, they noted how this helped to give clarity to the entire passage as we discussed what Paul’s main idea appeared to be from the text. Prior to the study, I had intended to focus more of the classes on this emphasis, but due to the limited time and the amount of material that was necessary to cover this was the only time we discussed these words. Yet, in light of the men’s immediate growth in interpretation it would have been beneficial to have given the entire session that night to helping them better utilize key connecting words in their preaching.

larger narrative. Focusing on biblical theology, throughout the eight weeks, also served to help participants recognize how each passage pointed to Christ. In Breakout 4.3 the participants had the opportunity to see how the surrounding verses, chapters, book, and entire Bible impacted their understanding of John 3:14-16.

Session 5: The Big Idea. Then Onward to the Outline and Manuscript

Session 5.1 focused upon Bryan Chappell's "Fallen Condition Focus." The participants learned to define the fallen condition focus, how it benefits preaching, and how it is determined.²¹ In Breakout 5.1, utilizing John 3:14-16, they answered the following questions: What does the text say?; What spiritual concerns did the text address?; and, What spiritual concerns do present listeners share with the original audience? Session 5.2 began with a quick review of the sermon preparation steps utilized so far and then continued on with the next steps from Tim Keller's process. These included: (1) identify the goal of the text, (2) write your aim sentence or what you hope the Spirit will do in the life of the hearers, (3) describe how the text points to Christ, and (4) combine them to write your theme.²² The participants put these steps into action as they applied them to 1 Corinthians 2:3-5 in Breakout 5.2. The last session of the night (5.3) focused on how to outline the text by focusing upon: unity, with each point supporting the main point; proportion, as each point received similar time; and finally order and movement, so that each point built momentum heading to the conclusion.²³ Examples of how to outline a sermon were given and then participants were encouraged

²¹ See appendix 9 for Sessions 5.1-5.3 and accompanying breakout sessions.

²² Keller, *Preaching*, 214-223.

²³ Keller, *Preaching*, 224-225.

to consider writing a sermon manuscript in their future preparation. Breakout 5.3 had them work on outlining Psalm 16:8-10.

Session 6: Introductions. Conclusions. Illustrations. Transitions.

Session 6 focused on the practical components of any sermon, including: introductions, conclusions, transitions, and illustrations.²⁴ Session 6.1 highlighted the importance of introductions as many listeners decide if they are interested in the topic within the first 30 seconds.²⁵ To help introductions be effective, it is important to: (1) introduce the problem, (2) present the fallen condition focus, and (3) then state the main (big) idea of the sermon. Participants applied these three criteria to Psalm 16:8-10 in Breakout 6.1. The following session (6.2) centered upon crafting the conclusion by: recapping, illustrating, providing a key application, or sharing a quotation or hymn. Additionally, participants' learned things to avoid in the conclusions, such as, saying "in conclusion" when they do not mean it. In Breakout 6.2, students wrote a conclusion to their work on Psalm 16:8-10.

Session 6.3 highlighted transitions and illustrations. Participants learned how to use knitting statements and questions to help listeners transition from one point to the next. After the teaching segment on transitions, the participants were instructed on how to utilize good resources for illustrations. The men were also reminded that they needed to

²⁴ See appendix 10 for Sessions 6.1-6.3 and accompanying breakout sessions. On the Monday of Session 6, I became sick with a virus that had struck our church at a pot-luck meal the Sunday prior due to contaminated food. That virus had left two of my children and then my wife ill, causing her to not be able to prepare food for Session 5. Having to cancel was a hard decision but was in the best interest of the participants as almost fifty people from our church had been sick. Therefore, Session 6 and 7 were combined the following week. The class was extended thirty minutes and group discussion was limited, but all of the content was able to be covered.

²⁵ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 219.

credit the source and guard against using illustrations everyone has heard numerous times before. Breakout 6.3 afforded participants the opportunity to come up with an illustration for their main point from Psalm 16:8-10 or write a transition sentence from their introduction to their first point. Throughout Session 6, the men commented about how beneficial and immediately applicable the teaching on introductions, conclusions, transitions, and illustrations were to their preaching.

Session 7: Application

The entire focus of Session 7 was on the importance and utilization of application in preaching.²⁶ Session 7.1 began with challenging participants to know their audience by focusing upon: individual spiritual states, sins that are true of everyone listening, condition of errant sheep, and the diversity of the congregation.²⁷ Participants were reminded of how things such as unique situations in Scripture can limit application. In the following breakout students considered how to apply Titus 2:11-14. In Session 7.2, the participants were provided with ways to grow in application, for example: having diverse conversation partners, weaving application throughout the sermon, and by varying the forms.²⁸ The participants were challenged to consider the diversity of people in their congregation and apply Psalm 23:1 to different scenarios in Breakout 7.2. Finally, in Session 7.3 an application grid was utilized to help the participants apply the different main points of the message to the various people groups and focuses of the church.²⁹ In Breakout 7.3 participants worked through Luke 15:3-7 on an adapted grid.

²⁶ See appendix 11 for Session 7.1-7.3 and accompanying breakout sessions.

²⁷ Adapted from Jim Orrick, Ryan Fullerton, and Brian Payne, *Encountering God through Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), 150-157.

²⁸ Keller, *Preaching*, 181-186.

²⁹ William Klock, "Application Grid Blank," *Anglican Expositor*, October 2011, <https://anglicanexpositor.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/application-grid.pdf>.

Session 8: Preaching Christ from All of Scripture

The final week attempted to drive home the importance of redemptive sermons that preach Christ from all of Scripture. The men were encouraged in Session 8.1 to look for: how the OT text is cited, referenced, or alluded to in the NT.³⁰ All of these are important, because they often are an easy way to see how the passage fits within the great narrative of the Bible. In Tim Keller's book *Preaching*, there is a section on "Preaching Christ" where he highlights how preachers should look to preach Christ from every: genre, theme, major figure, image, and deliverance story.³¹ Keller's emphasis was utilized to help participants better recognize the different ways that Christ is pointed to or revealed in the Bible. Breakout 8.1 focused upon the story of David and Goliath and challenged participants to accept or reject a series of statements based upon how they pointed to Christ.

The final session of the study (8.2) worked to identify redemptive principles that are evident in the text and then determine how these principles would have impacted the original audience. After discovering the intent for the original audience, participants were challenged to consider how they now apply to the contemporary hearer. These redemptive principles were further expressed by how grace impacts the passage and transformers the listener. In Breakout 8.2 participants were asked to examine three potential sermon outlines and share which one would not be considered a redemptive sermon. Within about thirty seconds the longest tenured preacher in the room (almost fifty years) acknowledged that it was the sermon with the point: "cleanse yourself from all unrighteousness." Following his response there was a good discussion on how we often preach or teach in such a way that members of our church think they can live well

³⁰ See appendix 12 for Sessions 8.1-8.2 and accompanying breakout sessions.

³¹ Keller, *Preaching*, 70-90.

enough to be the hero of the story, instead of showing them how to rely upon the redeeming power of Christ.

Post-Seminar Questionnaire Administered

Week eight only had two sessions to allow the participants to take the post-seminar questionnaire during the final thirty minutes.³² After the participants finished the questionnaire, I took a few moments to pass along my sincere appreciation for the sacrifice and devotion that these men had shown over the past two months. They expressed their appreciation for the class and a few things from our time together that had impacted their preaching already and how much they had enjoyed it. It was a great time of encouragement and thanksgiving for the Lord affording us these Mondays to grow in our desire to better preach Christ-centered sermons.

³² See appendix 3 for the CCEPS post-seminar survey.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

Introduction

The final chapter serves as an evaluation of the ministry project described in chapter four. The project's purpose will be evaluated, followed by a discussion of the project's goals. Next, the strengths and weaknesses of the project will be presented, as well as what I would do differently. Finally, my theological and personal reflections on the overall experience will be set forth.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip active and potential preachers in Christ-centered expository preaching in the RCAKB. The results from the pre-test and post-test surveys comprised the primary data that was evaluated for this project. Utilizing a six-point Likert Scale, each response was assigned a point value between one and six, with six being the desired response. Fifteen men filled out the pre-seminar questionnaire, but only nine men took the post-test questionnaire. The post-seminar number was lower because five of the men did not attend six or more of the training sessions. Attending six of the eight sessions was 75 percent and qualified as having successfully completed the training.¹ Therefore, the participants who did not have a pre-and post-seminar questionnaire were not included in the analysis of this data.

After compiling the results of the pre- and post-seminar questionnaire, I ran a

¹ See table A1 for Attendance record of the participants who completed the course.

t-test for dependent samples and determined that the training did not demonstrate a positive, statistically significant difference between pre-and post-seminar survey scores: $t(8) = -.966$, $p = .1811$. Additionally, my t-stat (-.966) was smaller than my t critical one-tail (1.859). Furthermore, the p one-tail (.1811) was greater than .05 demonstrating that the results of this study could have been by chance. While these results were disappointing, it is likely connected to the small sample size. Although the t-stat did not show a positive statistical difference the overall mean of the group's score increased from 81.77 in the pre-seminar survey to 84.11 in the post-seminar survey, revealing an average increase of 2.34 points as shown in table 4.

Table 4. Scores for pre- and post-seminar surveys

| Participant | Pre-Seminar Total | Post-Seminar Total | Change |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------|
| Participant 1 | 77 | 77 | 0 |
| Participant 2 | 79 | 86 | 5 |
| Participant 3 | 70 | 80 | 10 |
| Participant 4 | 95 | 90 | -5 |
| Participant 5 | 94 | 89 | -5 |
| Participant 6 | 65 | 79 | 14 |
| Participant 7 | 86 | 79 | -7 |
| Participant 8 | 80 | 83 | 3 |
| Participant 9 | 90 | 94 | 4 |
| Average | 81.77 | 84.11 | 2.34 |

Although the overall mean of the group increased; participants 4, 5, and 7 post-seminar questionnaire results decreased by over 5 points each (-5, -5, and -7). There appears to be no correlation between attendance and decrease in scores as their number of weeks attended was 6 weeks (participant 4), 8 weeks (participant 5), and 7 weeks

(participant 7).² Furthermore, their years of preaching did not explain the decrease as it varied greatly as well. As seen in table 5, participant 4 had preached for ten plus years; participant 5 has just begun preaching (less than a year); and participant 7, who showed the biggest decrease, had preached for over forty-four years.

Table 5. Number of years participants have preached

| Participant | Number of years |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Participant 1 | 36 |
| Participant 2 | 8 |
| Participant 3 | 0 |
| Participant 4 | 10 |
| Participant 5 | 0 |
| Participant 6 | 5 |
| Participant 7 | 44 |
| Participant 8 | 1 |
| Participant 9 | 7 |
| Average | 12 |

All three of the participants whose overall score decreased also had a negative change between their pre vs post scores on item 20 as seen in table 6.

Table 6. Actual responses of three decreasing participants to item 20

| Item 20: I feel confident in my ability to utilize illustrations to help further the point of the text. | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------|
| Participant Number | Pre-Seminar | Post-Seminar | Change |
| Participant 4 | 6 (Strongly Agree) | 4 (Agree Somewhat) | -2 |
| Participant 5 | 5 (Agree) | 4 (Agree Somewhat) | -1 |
| Participant 7 | 5 (Agree) | 2 (Disagree) | -3 |

² See table A1 for the attendance record.

Additionally, table 7 shows that two of these three participants decreased on item 19 with a decrease of -5 points collectively.

Table 7. Actual responses of three decreasing participants to item 19

| Item 19: I often find myself not having prepared well enough for my introductions and conclusions. | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Participant Number | Pre-Seminar | Post-Seminar | Change |
| Participant 4 | 3 (Disagree Somewhat) | 1 (Strongly Disagree) | -2 |
| Participant 5 | 5 (Agree) | 2 (Disagree) | -3 |
| Participant 7 | 4 (Agree Somewhat) | 4 (Agree Somewhat) | 0 |

These decreases are important to note, because items 19 and 20 were not well written as they were ambiguous and had several of the respondents noting after the survey how they struggled to answer both of these items.³

With the purpose of this project focused upon helping the participants grow in their understanding and implementation of expository preaching it was vital to assess their growth in this area. The survey intentionally targeted their comprehension of expository preaching with nine out of sixteen items dealing with expository preaching. Seven out of nine participants increased their score in this area with an average increase of 3.2 for the entire group. Table 8 demonstrates the results of these nine items that targeted expository preaching, they were items number: 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21.⁴

³ For more on this discussion, see “Weakness of the Project” below.

⁴ See appendix 3 for these specific items.

Table 8. Scores from items based upon expository preaching

| Participant | Pre-Seminar Total from the Nine Items | Pre-Seminar Total from the Nine Items | Change |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Participant 1 | 39 | 39 | 0 |
| Participant 2 | 44 | 51 | 7 |
| Participant 3 | 39 | 46 | 7 |
| Participant 4 | 54 | 54 | 0 |
| Participant 5 | 53 | 52 | -1 |
| Participant 6 | 35 | 49 | 14 |
| Participant 7 | 48 | 45 | -3 |
| Participant 8 | 41 | 44 | 3 |
| Participant 9 | 52 | 54 | 2 |
| Average | 45 | 48.22 | 3.22 |

The largest increase was 14 points by participant 6. He noted in his response to item 31, that expository preaching protected the preacher from going off on their own interpretation of Scripture.⁵ Evidenced by both his statistical improvement and his reasoning, there is hope that this project has served to build or strengthen his conviction that expository preaching empowers the preacher to be more faithful to the original author’s intent. Furthermore, in light of the increase of 7 out of 9 participants in their understanding of expository preaching there is reason to believe that this project has strengthened these men to be more faithful expository preachers.⁶

⁵ Item 31 said, “Supply three reasons why expository preaching is the superior model for preaching.”

⁶ Even the two participants who decreased provided compelling short answer responses to their affirmation and belief of expository preaching. For example, participant 5 who decreased by one point in the area of expository preaching stated in response to item 31 that expository preaching was the superior model of preaching because the preacher is (1) preaching the whole counsel of God, (2) forced to preach the harder text, and (3) this is how one comes to Christ. In light of this answer and other dialog with the participant, that despite a decrease in his score, he clearly affirms the importance of expository preaching.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The project had three goals: (1) to assess the understanding of Christ-centered expository preaching among men who are actively preaching or feel called to preach in the RCAKB; (2) to develop an 8-week curriculum that focuses on Christ-centered expository preaching for this group of the RCAKB; and (3) to implement the curriculum and equip these men to faithfully exegete and preach a passage of Scripture.

Evaluation of Goal 1

The first goal was to assess the understanding of Christ-centered expository preaching. Measuring this goal was achieved by creating and administering the pre-test questionnaire, called the Christ-Centered Expository Preaching Survey (CCEPS), to the participants.⁷ In order for this goal to be successfully met, 8 participants needed to take the survey and have their results analyzed. On August 5 and August 12, 15 men filled out the CCEPS, and I analyzed their results.⁸ Therefore, this goal was successfully met, based on the predetermined criteria. The number of pre-test is higher than my t-test sample, because 6 of the 15 did not attend six or more of the sessions.

The hope was for 25 percent of the RCAKB churches to have representation at the training seminar. To this end, 15 men who filled out the survey represented 9 churches from our RCAKB; thus, representing 30 percent (9 out of 30 churches) of the RCAKB.⁹ Having 30 percent of the churches represented was a great success for this project due to the large number of men who serve bi-vocationally within the association. In fact, of the men who were present from the RCAKB, 7 were bi-vocational pastors.

⁷ See appendix 3.

⁸ Two men were not able to come the first week, and so they filled it out on August 12.

⁹ Two churches in the RCAKB had two representatives, 3 men were from another association (both of these represented men who had been called to preach while at GBC), and one of the men was a Presbyterian pastor.

While it was encouraging for this percentage of churches to be represented, the sample that completed the course only served to comprise 20 percent (6 out of 30) of the RCAKB.

Evaluation of Goal 2

The second goal was to develop an 8-week curriculum that focuses on Christ-centered expository preaching. Measuring this goal was achieved by the completion and approval of the training curriculum by an expert panel who utilized the Curriculum Evaluation Rubric¹⁰ to evaluate the core content and its overall effectiveness. Goal 2 was considered successful when all 3 committee members gave each item a response of “Agree” on the six-point Likert Scale. Each of the 3 members scored all items as “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” and thus the benchmark for this goal was successfully met. Nonetheless, there were a few suggestions offered by the panel about different sections. Although, it was not required for resubmission, these comments were utilized to make necessary adjustments to strengthen the material.

Evaluation of Goal 3

The third and final goal was to implement the curriculum and equip these men to faithfully exegete and preach a passage of Scripture. The measurement of this goal was based upon the re-administering of the CCEPS at the conclusion of the course and considered successful if the t-test demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre-survey and post-survey scores. As described above, while the overall mean of the test scores rose approximately three points the t-stat did not represent a positive difference between pre-survey and post-survey, implying that this goal did not meet the statistical objective.

¹⁰ See appendix 4.

Strengths of the Project

There were many strengths to the project, but I would like to highlight three that I believe had the greatest impact. First, the community that developed between the participants was one of the greatest strengths of this project. The weekly meal was designed to create community, and it did so by affording the men an opportunity to sit down and just get to know each other on a more personal level. During the meal there was lots of laughter and sharing stories of funny moments in preaching. Then as the group gathered for the class there were opportunities to encourage one another and grow in fellowship during the breakout sessions. To this end, one of the participants responded on the post-survey that one of the strengths of the class was the “great diverse interaction with other preachers.” Moreover, as a result of the class I have continued having on-going prayer and support with one of the men that I did not know prior to the class beginning.

The project’s ability to equip participants to see Christ in all of Scripture was another strength. Item 30 on the post-survey asked the respondents to describe: “How has this seminar helped you to better preach Christ from all of Scripture?” One of the respondents noted that “It has challenged me to look at how every text points to Christ.” Throughout the sessions, the participants learned to recognize and examine the text through different lens to help them see how the text was pointing to Christ. They were especially strengthened by learning to look for any time the NT references, quotes, or alludes to the OT and how these markers impact the central truth of the text, specifically as it relates to Christ being the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Yet, it was participant 3’s response to item 30 that proved to be exceptionally encouraging as the respondent stated: “Learning how to show Christ in all Scripture instead of just at the end during the invitation.” What made this so encouraging was that participant 3 has been preaching for less than a year; thus, he is beginning his time as a proclaimer of the Word of God by

recognizing that Christ is the center of all Scripture. Moreover, he is now better equipped to fight against the tendency of many preachers who relegate Christ to the invitation.

The third strength of the project was the teaching format that allowed for twenty minutes of teaching followed by ten minutes for a breakout discussion.¹¹ A continual comment from week-to-week referenced how much the men enjoyed the structure that afforded them to hear a brief lecture on a component of preaching or sermon development and then a quick debrief for any questions, push back, or further clarity. Instead of lecturing for longer stints, breaking up the hour of teaching into three twenty-minute sections was more palatable and the participants claimed aided in their understanding. The twenty minutes of teaching was also extremely practical as the men would immediately break into a small group and began to implement what they had just learned. The time for breakout sessions was extremely valuable to me as well, as it afforded me the opportunity to join with different groups each night to gauge if they were understanding the material and able to apply it to a practical component of preaching. Repeatedly, I was encouraged by how the men were comprehending the material for that session. Not only were participants able to work through the breakout, including discussing amongst themselves about how they would apply this principal to a past or upcoming sermon.

Weaknesses of the Project

Three general weaknesses of the project are worth mentioning. One of the major weaknesses of this project pertained to the survey, specifically that several items were not well written. These items contributed to the results of the t-stat failing to reveal that the project had made a positive statistically significant difference. For example, 2

¹¹ The format was a strength, even though it would have helped to have more time for teaching (see “Weaknesses of the Project” below).

items left participants not sure how to answer them. Item 19 stated: “I often find myself not having prepared well enough for my introductions and conclusions.” Similarly, item 20 asked: “I feel confident in my ability to utilize illustrations to help further the point of the text.” Following the post-class survey the men noted their difficulty in responding to these 2 items, because prior to the class they had felt they were doing well in these areas. Yet, after participating in the study several of the participants’ commented that they now recognized how much room there was for growth in these areas. Therefore, even though they had been equipped as a result of the class, they noted that their answers now factored in how they were incorporating what they now realized was possible. Thus, item 19 saw no growth in the respondents’ collective answer, while their totaled responses to item 20 decreased by 6 points. Both of these items could have been rewritten to be more objective and minimized the ambiguity that the respondents felt.¹²

The second weakness of the project resulted from having too much material. Item 27 on the post-seminar asked the participants to share “the strengths and weaknesses of the seminar class.” Of the 9 men who finished, 6 out of the 9 commented with a statement like it was “a lot of material” or “it felt rushed to get it all in.” While I intentionally strived to contain each teaching session to one single page of paper, it still felt like rapid fire many weeks. Often, I overwhelmed the men with ideas and attempted to provide enough arguments to prove my point. Unfortunately, this comment was not just at the end of the class, but all three of the men who evaluated the curriculum prior noted that it felt like too much material. I naively believed that I could streamline and get it in within the twenty minutes. I did achieve getting it all in, but at what cost?

¹² Item 19 could have asked: “I often utilize my introductions and conclusions in connection with the main point of my sermon.” Similarly, item 20 could have asked: “I often utilize illustrations to help further the point of the text.” These items allow for a greater focus on implementation of the taught material as opposed to the ambiguity of how the items were stated on the survey.

The third weakness of the project was that the discussion time was too short. Each session was designed to have 20 minutes of teaching, followed by a ten-minute breakout that I facilitated. While I finished most of the teaching sessions in fifteen-seventeen minutes, the class would have benefited by having more time for discussion.¹³ There were several times when I would ask specific individuals, “Tell me what this looks like in your preaching?” It would have really strengthened the class to allow the years of experience of the different preachers to have been more involved in providing input and clarity to how the specific topic impacted their preaching. Instead of allowing the vast years of experience to be a positive, it was often not realized.

What I would Do Differently

If I were completing this ministry project again, I would make three primary changes to better equip these men to preach. First, I would strive to provide the men an opportunity to preach. At the end of the last class the men had an opportunity to talk and discuss the overall value of the classes. During this time, one of the men commented how much he would have enjoyed for everyone to have an opportunity to preach and then provide feedback. The majority of men present also nodded or voiced their affirmation. I informed them that I had desired to have everyone preach as well, but due to the limited amount of time, there was no way to be able to cover what I felt was essential and also allow the men to preach. Prior to the project beginning I had considered adding two additional weeks, one at the end and one at the beginning, to afford them an opportunity to preach. Potentially designing it where the participants would have broken into 3 groups of 4. Then the ninety minutes would have allowed approximately 4 men to preach a fifteen-minute sermon and then have five minutes or so for group feedback, in addition to

¹³ Specifically, this extended discussion time was not just needed at the end of the teaching material, but would have benefited by having more time throughout while I was teaching to stop and ask questions or allow for more feedback.

a form that the men would have filled out and returned to the presenter. Unfortunately, this preaching component would not have worked for this class as we began the first week following summer break (August 5) and finished the last week before fall break began (September 30).

The second change I would make would be to extend the classes by thirty minutes each week. Originally the classes were scheduled to last two hours each night, but in attempt to appeal to more men the class was limited to ninety minutes.¹⁴ Extending the class by thirty minutes would have provided an additional ten minutes of teaching time to all 3 sessions each week. These extra minutes would have allowed the pace of covering the material to have been less rushed and afforded more interaction during the teaching. Furthermore, given the number of men who stopped coming during the program and those who remained it is likely that the extra thirty minutes would not have been a deterrent to the men who finished the course.

The third thing I would have done differently was to have been more direct about the expectation of attendance. I had relied too heavily upon my relationship with several of the men as I assumed that our friendship would have kept them committed. I attempted to remedy the situation by texting or speaking with them directly over the final three weeks that they needed to attend 6 of the 8 sessions for me to be able to count their responses in my results. Moreover, I tried to get them to watch the videos of the weeks they missed, but they failed to do so. Thus, if I were doing the project again, each of the men would have been asked to sign a form committing themselves to coming or watching the video for at least 6 of the 8 weeks. While this may not have resulted in all of the

¹⁴ The impetus for limiting the class is because we live on the edge of a time zone and many of the men live and work on eastern time, although our county is in the central standard time zone. Thus, extending it thirty minutes for those men would have meant that they would not be getting home until closer to 9p.m. eastern.

participants staying, an upfront expectation of commitment would have served as personal accountability and something that I could have challenged them to stay true.

Theological Reflections

As I reflect theologically upon my project, three central lessons deserve to be mentioned. First, understanding the meta-narrative of Scripture is vital to right interpretation. Prior to this study, I was guilty of often preaching the passage in isolation from what God is doing from Genesis to Revelation. Yet, it was in research for this project that different authors continually brought biblical theology to my attention. Therefore, it was vital to help myself and the participants see how the Bible is one book, with one author, telling one story. Along this line, when asked how this seminar had changed his thinking on preaching (item 28), one participant noted that he was striving to show his people how the passage he was preaching fit from creation to the coming kingdom. It has been a joy to see the meta-narrative of Scripture unfold in my preaching and the life of these men.

Secondly, expository preaching does not have to be dry or appear to lack leadership from the Holy Spirit, even though a pastor may preach systematically through a book of the Bible. Often when men ask me what I am preaching on and when I share with them that I am preaching through a book of the Bible, it appears as if they may be disappointed that it's not something more trendy or exciting. As I began teaching the classes, I sensed that some of the participants felt that way about my advocating for expository preaching through a book. Yet, I strived to show them that the Lord is just as capable to direct our hearts to preach for months through a book as he is to give us clarity with a new sermon text from week-to-week. Moreover, throughout this project my confidence has been affirmed and strengthened that all Scripture is God breathed and ultimately finds its place in pointing to Christ and him crucified. The men seemed to connect with the principal of preaching systematically through a book, as it allows the

Lord to bring the preacher to topics or issues that he might normally shy away from. Furthermore, preaching through a book serves to keep preaching fresh and growing. Additionally, verse-by-verse preaching brings text that confront the sin in the lives of our people without it appearing as if we are intentionally trying to attack them.

The final theological lesson that stood out to me was the importance of rightly defining preaching. In preparation for the project, I had the opportunity to read books by some of the most well-known and respected preachers and theologians. It was remarkable to read how each of them defined preaching similarly and yet uniquely. Jonathan Griffiths book *Preaching in the New Testament* was paramount as it worked through the different Greek terms used in the NT to define preaching. Moreover, he showed how preachers connect back to the apostles and even the prophets. In light of this, I was moved in session one of the classes to show the participants these key terms and also help them see their place in God's great plan to proclaim redemption through Christ alone. The men were so stirred that night that it was palpable and there was a sense of a renewed fire within them and myself to preach the word faithfully, clearly, and worshipfully.

Personal Reflections

My biggest take away from this project and my time in class during my DMin program was my growth in utilizing the Greek NT to identify key words that helped diagram and identify the main thoughts of the author. One of the DMin classes required for this degree focused upon exegeting the Greek NT. It was in preparation for this class and during our time together on campus that I began to see the vitality of discourse analysis, sentence diagraming, or however it may be variously defined. As this light went off for me, I immediately began to think about how I could utilize discourse analysis in a way to help the men who would attend the preaching seminar. Therefore, week four of this study focused upon helping the men see how they could recognize key English words that were built upon key Greek words and in turn utilize them to better interpret and

understand what the author is trying to say.¹⁵ It was during this week, and also after, that so many of the men commented about how identifying key connecting words was immediately helping not only their sermon preparation, but their own private study and understanding of the Bible. By equipping these men with this tool, I feel confident that they will more faithfully preach the Word of God in the years to come.

Another way this project transformed my preaching is that I began to manuscript my sermons every week. Prior to this study, I failed to consistently manuscript my sermons, and even when I did, I often did not write out some of the most important components of my sermon: introductions, conclusions, and transitions. However, throughout the research and writing phases of this project I was convicted by how often I tried to just wing it when I came to these areas of my sermon. Thus, I began to strive for greater clarity and to be intentional to show how one point connected to the other by utilizing connecting statements to help with my transitions. Additionally, writing out my introductions forced me to consider how I was introducing my text and setting before the people the fallen condition focus. Similarly, the conclusion has now become more intentional and specific, whereas, before I often came to the end of my final point and provided a quick invitation and ended with a prayer. Additionally, now when I reference back on a previous sermon, I am able to see clearly what point I was trying to make in each portion of the message. Previously I only had an outline that provided little clarity on how each point was contributing to the main focus of the sermon. I intend to continue scripting all of my sermons from this point forward.

Finally, this project has afforded me the opportunity to see the value in offering trainings for pastors to come together to discuss and learn about preaching. To this end, I have already begun planning another preaching class for the first few months

¹⁵ Words such as: *and, also, now, but, then, for, because, therefore, so that, in order that*. For more info, see Session 4.1 in appendix 8.

of 2021. In light of some of the weaknesses of this study, the format will be: (1) ten minutes of teaching on a principle of preaching or some practical component of sermon preparation; (2) followed by a twenty-minute sermon by one of the participants; and (3) then ten minutes for the group to provide audible feedback to the preacher, in addition to a written form that the preacher will receive. The forty-minute cycle will be repeated three times over the course of two hours. The format will allow the men an opportunity to preach and also afford me an opportunity to provide short segments that will strengthen their preaching. The class structure will provide the balance of the teaching component that was a strength of this project and also add the element of preaching that the participants were interested in.

Conclusion

Failing to achieve the positive statistical results for this project has been humbling yet motivating. I have always struggled with not seeing a response when I preach and, in many ways, not achieving the desired statistical results has caused me to have to deal internally with defining what is success and how do you best measure it? Therefore, this project has left me more committed than ever to strive to be: faithful, clear, and worshipful in my preaching. First, to remain faithful to keep preaching the word, even when I do not see the results for which I am longing. Secondly, to pursue clarity in all of my preaching and teaching. Henceforth, I am attempting to write myself clear by utilizing a sermon manuscript, in an effort to help my audience better understand what the text says and what I am endeavoring to say about what the text says. Finally, to never forget that as I prepare and preach, that I am striving to do so as a worshiper of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be glory forever and ever, amen.

APPENDIX 1

LETTER SENT TO ALL PASTORS OF THE RCAKB



GREENSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

128 N. Main St // Greensburg, KY 42743
blake@greensburgbaptist.com
(270) 932-4495 // greensburgbaptist.com/preach

July 3, 2019

Dear Pastor,

What: Beginning on Monday, August 5, 2019, I will be teaching a **free** 8-week practical step-by-step seminar on how to develop Christ-Centered Expository Sermons. For the tentative weekly schedule please see the flyer, but each night will have 3 sessions that include: 20 minutes on one topic followed by a brief 10-minute breakout into small groups for further dialogue with one another. This seminar is the culmination of my project that I am finishing up for my Doctoral program at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

When: The seminar will meet on **Monday Nights from 5:30-7pm central**. If you are available, we will be having a **free supper each week from 5-5:30pm**. We just ask that you RSVP by the Thursday before if you are going to eat that following Monday. Please note that **we will not meet on Monday, September 2** in view of Labor Day.

Where: The seminars will meet at Greensburg Baptist Church in **Room 204** on the second floor of the church. The meal will be in the church fellowship hall on the second floor. Please enter through the side door by the church office (close to Limestone Bank) or the door connected to the CLC ramp (both of these are on the middle floor)

Who & Why: There are two main reasons for this seminar that also answer who's the target audience. One is when I began preaching I had no clue how to prepare or how to preach and just found myself trying to figure it out and imitate others that I heard. How I would have loved to had someone to come beside me and help me work step-by-step on how to develop a sermon. Therefore, this seminar is ***for those who find themselves just starting out and long for someone to help give them some direction on how to develop a sermon.*** Yet, it's not only for them. After pastoring for over 10 years now I still find myself struggling to prepare a sermon or frustrated that the sermon didn't go as well as I had hoped. Thus, ***this seminar is about helping myself and others who are already preaching to just get better.*** No matter your experience level, you are welcome. My hope is that at the end of the class we are all better equipped to preach more clearly, faithfully, and worshipfully!

How do I sign up? Go to greensburgbaptist.com/preach

Is there any free stuff? Besides the free meal each week (make sure and RSVP), we will also have a ***weekly drawing for one free book on preaching!*** You just have to be present to win. Come and join us!

In Christ,

Blake Jessie
Pastor
Greensburg Baptist Church

APPENDIX 2

PREACH THE WORD FLYER

GREENSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

"PREACH THE WORD"

*A Free 8-Week Practical Step-by-Step Seminar
on How to Develop Christ-Centered Expository Sermons*

Monday Nights 5:30-7pm (central)
Room 204, please enter on 2nd Floor. RSVP by Thursday, August 1.

Who is this for? Any man who has a calling or senses a calling to preach the Word...For the most seasoned preacher or the man just starting out.

Weekly Overview
5-5:30pm...Free Supper
5:30-5:50pm...Session 1
5:50-6pm...1st Breakout
6-6:20pm...Session 2
6:20-6:30pm...2nd Breakout
6:30-6:50pm...Session 3
6:50-7pm...3rd Breakout

Tentative Schedule

Aug 5: *Preaching the Word: What...How...and Why?*
Aug 12: *The Holy Man & Spirit's Role in Preparation and Preaching*
Aug 19: *Selecting and Studying the Text*
Aug 26: *Investigation: Key Words...Connecting the text to the rest of the Bible.*
Sept 2: Off-Week for Labor Day
Sept 9: *Discovering the Text Big Idea. Then Onward to the Outline & Manuscript*
Sept 16: *Introductions...Conclusions...Illustrations...Transitions*
Sept 23: *Application*
Sept 30: *Preaching Christ from All of Scripture. How to Develop Redemptive Sermons.*

Free Supper 5pm (RSVP Required). **Weekly Book Drawing!**

For More Info Contact: Blake Jessie
blake@greensburgbaptist.com or (270) 932-4495
Register at greensburgbaptist.com/preach

Figure A1. Flyer sent with letter to pastors

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE: PRE- AND POST-SEMINARS

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate the level of understanding you have as we begin our classes. This research is being conducted by Blake Jessie for the purpose of obtaining research for his project dissertation addressing the equipping of ministers in the Russell Creek Association of Kentucky Baptist in the basics of Christ-centered expository preaching. In this research, you will answer basic statements about your understanding of the nature of the Scriptures, your calling, and information relating to expository preaching. 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 the study at any time.* By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

1) Please write your name: _____.

2) Circle the number of years you have been a Christian.

1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years 20+ years

3) Education: Please circle the last level of training you completed

High School Undergraduate (College) Graduate (Masters or Doctoral)

4) Age: Please circle the age range which applies to you.

18-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 over 70

5) Do you feel like God has “called” you to preach? Yes No Not Sure

6) Have you ever preached (not a devotional)? Yes No

7) If you are, or have been, in the position of pastor/preacher, how many years have you been preaching? _____

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer using the following scale as a guide.

SD = strongly disagree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = agree

SA = strongly agree

8) The primary reason we should normally do expository preaching is that it expresses and unleashes our belief in the whole Bible as God's authoritative, living, and active Word.

SD D DS AS A SA

9) Expository preaching grounds the message in the text so that all the sermon's points are points in the text.

SD D DS AS A SA

10) No difference exists between topical and expository preaching.

SD D DS AS A SA

11) The private/personal holiness of the preacher is as important as what he preaches.

SD D DS AS A SA

12) The Holy Spirit's work is more important in the preaching moment than in the preacher's preparation.

SD D DS AS A SA

13) Expository preaching assumes that the entire Bible is relevant for all time and, therefore, should be preached.

SD D DS AS A SA

14) Expository preaching increases the likelihood that the preacher will preach difficult and neglected passages and, over time, the whole counsel of God.

SD D DS AS A SA

15) Expository preaching is not interested in the details of a Scripture passage (e.g. words, grammar, literary genre, context, etc)

SD D DS AS A SA

16) I can explain how the small, individual stories fit into the big, overarching story that runs throughout the entire Bible.

SD D DS AS A SA

17) The goal of expository preaching is to express the original authors' (God & human writers) intended meaning of a particular scriptural passage.

SD D DS AS A SA

18) The nature of expository preaching helps prevent the preacher from imposing his own thoughts onto a given scriptural passage.

SD D DS AS A SA

19) I often find myself not having prepared well enough for my introductions and conclusions.

SD D DS AS A SA

20) I feel confident in my ability to utilize illustrations to help further the point of the text.

SD D DS AS A SA

21) Expository preaching is NOT concerned with contemporary relevance and application to the congregation.

SD D DS AS A SA

22) I am able to articulate how this text applied to the people in the Bible and now how it applies to the people to whom I am preaching.

SD D DS AS A SA

23) I am able to articulate the ways in which the major stories, people, and events of the Old and New Testament find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

SD D DS AS A SA

24) I am confident in my ability to preach Christ-centered sermons, revealing that we are called to live godly, but we can't, and therefore need Christ to redeem and transform us.

SD D DS AS A SA

Short Answer

25) What do you think is the most important aspect of preaching? Explain why.

26) Do you feel confident and adequate to interpret and preach the Scriptures? Explain your methods/processes of sermon preparation.

Post-Seminar Additional Items¹

27) What were the strengths and weaknesses of the seminar class?

28) How did this seminar change your thinking concerning preaching?

29) How did this seminar help improve your sermon preparation?

30) How has this seminar helped you to better preach Christ from all of Scripture?

31) Give three reasons why expository preaching is the superior model for preaching.

¹ These questions were only included on the post-seminar questionnaire.

APPENDIX 4
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your assessment of the content of the seminar's class sessions designed to equip active and prospective pastors to preach Christ-centered expository sermons. This research is being conducted by Blake Jessie for the purposes of a ministry project at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In this research, you will be asked to answer the following questions/statements regarding your assessment of the material that will be utilized for each session. 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 the study at any time.* By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Evaluator Name: _____

Directions: Please mark the appropriate answer using the following scale as a guide.

- SD = strongly disagree
- D = disagree
- DS = disagree somewhat
- AS = agree somewhat
- A = agree
- SA = strongly agree

1) The content for this class clearly defines and explains the nature of expository preaching.

SD D DS AS A SA

- 2) The content for this class demonstrates the need for a Holy man and the Holy Spirit's role in preparation and preaching.
SD D DS AS A SA
- 3) The content for this class will help equip a preacher to both select and study the text.
SD D DS AS A SA
- 4) The content for this class will equip preachers to investigate key words, grammar, and context to determine the big idea.
SD D DS AS A SA
- 5) The content for this class will strengthen the preachers development of introductions, conclusions, illustrations, transitions, and application.
SD D DS AS A SA
- 6) At the conclusion of this course preachers will be better equipped to preach Christ-centered expository sermons from all of Scripture.
SD D DS AS A SA
- 7) The content for this class will prove genuinely helpful for active and prospective preachers.
SD D DS AS A SA
- 8) I would feel confident recommending this content to be taught in my own church.
SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 5

SEMINAR SESSIONS 1.1-1.3

Session 1.1...What is Preaching?

Preaching Defined in the Old Testament¹

- 1) To prophesy under the **INFLUENCE OF GOD'S SPIRIT**² (Jer 25:30; Amos 3:8)
- 2) To bear news (Psalm 40:9; Isaiah 61:1)
- 3) To **CALL OUT**, to proclaim (Deuteronomy 32:3; Nehemiah 6:7; Jonah 3:2)

Preaching Defined in the New Testament³

- 1) *Eunagelizomai* (*Eu-an-geliz-o-mi*) occurs 54 times in the NT and means 'bring **GOOD NEWS**', 'announce good news', or 'proclaim the gospel'
 - a. *Jesus...Luke 8:1*
 - b. *Apostles...Acts 5:42*
- 2) *Kerysso* occurs 59 times in the NT and means to 'announce', '**MAKE KNOWN**', 'proclaim aloud' and 'make proclamation as a herald'
 - a. *Jesus...Matthew 4:17*
 - b. *Someone who is sent to preach...Romans 10:14*
- 3) *Katangello* occurs 18 times in the NT and means to 'proclaim' or 'announce'
 - a. *The OT Prophets...Acts 3:24*
 - b. *Paul...Acts 13:38*
- 4) The verbs typically refer to the act of making a public proclamation; the person preaching is typically someone of recognized authority; and the substance of the proclamation is normally some aspect of Christ's Person and work, the implications of the gospel, or another truth from God's word.⁴

The Goal of Preaching: CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

¹ World Hope Bible Institute, *Expository Preaching*, Session 1.1.

² Participants' version had spots for them to fill-in-the-blank. Those are noted by being in all caps, bold, italic, and underlined throughout all eight sessions.

³ Jonathan Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, 42 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 20-27.

⁴ Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 33.

- 1) Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, declared, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). This is not to imply that this was the only thing Paul ever preached on or ever thought about, but is meant to convey that this was the basis or foundation of all Christian preaching.
- 2) Jonathan Griffiths provides further clarity on Paul’s words: “If Paul’s practice is to be taken as a model, then Christian preaching is fundamentally nothing more and nothing less than an accurate transmission of the received gospel of the sin-bearing death and resurrection of Christ.”⁵

Summary of Preaching⁶

- 1) The preacher is uniquely **CALLED** and supernaturally **EMPOWERED** by God.
 - 2) The preacher’s message is not his own, but that of **God’s WRITTEN WORD.**
 - 3) Preaching is simply the good news of Jesus Christ death, burial, and resurrection for sinners.
 - 4) The entire message of the Bible points to Jesus (Luke 24:25-27).
-

Breakout 1.1...What is Preaching?

As a group choose one of the following definitions or come up with your own definition of preaching. Prepare to defend your definition before the group (if we have time).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - “Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire.”⁷

Haddon Robinson - “The communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to the hearers.”⁸

Tim Keller - Expository preaching grounds the message in the text so that all the sermon’s points are points in the text, and it majors in the text’s major ideas. It aligns the interpretation of the text with the doctrinal truths of the rest of the Bible (being sensitive to systematic theology). And it always situates the passage within the Bible’s narrative,

⁵ Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 81.

⁶ Adapted from World Hope Bible Institute, *Expository Preaching*, Session 1.1.

⁷ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Kevin De Young, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 97.

⁸ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 21.

showing how Christ is the final fulfillment of the text’s theme (being sensitive to biblical theology).”⁹

Robert Smith, Jr - “The escorting of the hearers into the presence of God for the purpose of transformation.”¹⁰

Bryan Chapell – “An expository sermon may be defined as a message whose structure and thought are developed from a biblical text, covering its scope, on order to explain how the features and context of the text disclose enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Spirit, who inspired the text.”¹¹

Notes:

⁹ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 32.

¹⁰ Robert Smith, Jr., *Doctrine that Dances* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2008), 25.

¹¹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 8-9.

Session 1.2...How Should We Preach?

The Need for Sound Biblical Interpretation¹²

NT passages assume a proper interpretation of Scripture 2 Timothy 2:15-17; 4:2-3; 2 Peter 3:15-17.

- 1) Biblical Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek term *hermeneia* meaning “an interpretation,” or the verb meaning “to **INTERPRET**” (John 1:42; 9:7; 1 Cor 12:10; 14:26).
- 2) Exegesis. From the Greek term *exegeomai* “to **LEAD/EXTRACT**”.
 - a. Thus, hermeneutics involves the interpretation, while exegesis is the application of those specific principles to specific text.

Forms or Types of Preaching

- 1) **TOPICAL** (typically not organized around a single passage of Scripture)
 - a. Evangelistic = convey truth to non-believers
 - b. Catechetical = instruct the church in a specific area of theology/confession
 - c. Festal = help celebrate events like Christmas, Easter, etc.
 - d. Needs = Appealing to what you think your people most need to hear
- 2) **EXPOSITORY**
 - a. Systematic Exposition. This is where you work chapter-by-chapter or paragraph-by-paragraph until you make your way through a book or section of Scripture.

The Case for Expository Preaching: Why you should consider it

- 1) It best conveys that we actually believe that the Bible is God’s living, active, and authoritative word.
- 2) The main point and sub-points of the sermon come from **THE TEXT**. The preacher can stand upon the authority of the Word of God and not his opinions.
- 3) Over time the preacher works to cover **THE WHOLE COUNSEL** of God, as opposed to only preaching their favorite portions of Scripture or favorite topics.
- 4) The context of the passage usually presents its own application. Therefore, the preacher is not having to work from scratch each week on the primary application, but instead can help bridge the gap between the ancient world and our contemporary setting.
- 5) The outline follows the **BIBLICAL TEXT**; thus, the preacher doesn’t have to come up with an outline on their own each week.
- 6) Protection from simply attacking someone or some issue in the church.
Expository preaching through books will deal with many issues over time (many of them which the preacher is unaware).

¹² Adapted from World Hope Bible Institute, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation (Hermeneutics)*, Session 1.1.

- 7) You're helping equip your people on how to **STUDY** their Bibles at home, in Sunday School classes, in small groups as they learn how key words explain a verse and clarify the context of a passage.

Breakout 1.2...How Should We Preach?

Break into a group and share your primary preaching type: topical or expository. Share 2 advantages and 2 disadvantages to your style.

If you have time, discuss what preachers have influenced you the most and what type of preaching did they use?

Notes:

Session 1.3...Why must we preach the Word? Understanding our Connection¹³

The NT often speaks about the preaching of OT prophets, Jesus, the apostles; but rarely does it speak about the preaching of post-apostolic church leaders. So what's our connection?

The TEXT

- 1) **2 Timothy 4:2, Paul calls Timothy¹⁴ to “preach the WORD”**
 - a. The word is unveiled in 2 Timothy 3:16 as: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”
-

The MAN

- 2) **2 Timothy 3:17 “that the MAN OF GOD may be complete, equipped for every good work.”**
 - a. “man of God” has deep OT roots as it identifies: Moses (Deut 33:1), David (2 Chr. 8:14), Samuel (1 Sam 9:6, 10), Elijah (1 Kgs 17:18, 24), Elisha (2 Kgs 4:7, 9). The hallmark of the man of God is that he speaks the very words of God.
 - b. In 1 Tim 6:11, Paul calls Timothy a “man of God.”
 - c. It's the man of God that is continually recognized as different (2 Tim 3:10, 14)
-

The CHARGE

- 3) **2 Timothy 4:1-2 “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: reach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”**
 - a. The charge reveals that Timothy's assignment will be primarily (not exclusively) to believers in Ephesus as he is patient, correcting, encouraging, and training in righteousness.
-

The BRIDGE

- 4) **2 Timothy 2:2, “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to FAITHFUL MEN, who will be able to teach others also.”**
-

¹³ This session's content is drawn from Jonathan Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, 42 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 58-59.

¹⁴ We must acknowledge that he is different from us in that he was directly chosen by Paul, trained, appointed and sent out. However, the baton is passing from Paul to Timothy and on from Timothy to others. There appears to be an ongoing pattern of those called and equipped, who will preach and teach in the church.

- a. The charge to preach and teach is passing from the apostles, like Paul, to those like Timothy and then onto other faithful men who will come after him.
- b. This helps us see that as called men of God, as long as we are preaching the Word of God (and living as a ‘man of God’) then we too find ourselves in a line connected to the words of Christ and the apostles.
- c. **This is a holy and high calling, my brothers!**

Breakout 1.3...Why must we preach?

Gather in your group and discuss these questions.

- 1) Share if you agree or disagree with the following statement: According to 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Timothy 4:2 if you are preaching the Bible you are in fact preaching the very words of God? How does that impact your preaching?
- 2) Jonathan Griffiths notes that the hallmark of the man of God is that he speaks the very words of God. Based upon that definition and in light of your preaching, could we call you a man of God? If not, what needs to change about your preaching? Is there anything from which you need to repent?
- 3) Do you see the bridge between you and the apostles, as described in 2 Timothy 2:2 (note: this does not mean we are Apostles)? Does that encourage you? Frighten you? Or how does it make you feel?

Notes:

APPENDIX 6

SEMINAR SESSIONS 2.1-2.3

Session 2.1...The Need of a Holy Man

“God can only bless with the anointing of His Holy Spirit those who pursue a life of holiness”¹

1 Cor 2:3 (ESV) - “And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

3 Marks of a Holy Man

1) WEAKNESS

- a. Relates to the call to do something great and glorious and yet we are weak
 - i. Possibly Paul is even referring to his own preaching as weak (2 Cor 10:10)
- b. The Holy Man never forgets his own weakness and hunger for sin
- c. Thus, if we are to be used by God we must cleanse ourselves from what is dishonorable [1 Tim 2:22-23]...so that we can be **SET APART** as holy, **useful** to the master of the house, **READY** for every good work (2 Tim 2:21)

2) FEAR

- a. above all else, there must be a holy fear of God that humbles us and reminds us that we cannot compromise on this gospel (1 Tim 4:1-2; James 3:1)
- b. “Whatever ‘call’ a man may pretend to have, if he has not been called to holiness, he certainly has not been called to the ministry.”²

3) Much TREMBLING

¹ Stephen Olford and David Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 218.

² Charles Spurgeon, *Lecture to My Students* (1893; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 9.

Session 2.2...The Holy Spirit's Role in Preparation

What we pray the Spirit will do in our hearers, he must first do in us.

The Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture⁴

- 1) **INSPIRATION** of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 1:1-2)
 - a. God by the Holy Spirit superintended the writing process of the Biblical authors, so that everything they wrote was exactly what God desired to be written.
 - b. Therefore, the Bible has dual authorship in that it was written by men, but inspired or the very breathed out words of God.
- 2) **INERRANCY** of Scripture (Numbers 23:19; Psalm 12:6; Psalm 19:7)
 - a. Because it is God's word it is entirely and completely truthful or without error.
 - b. This means that inerrancy's foundation is inspiration for if it were just men writing it would undoubtedly have error.

Inspiration vs ILLUMINATION from the Baptist Faith and Message 2000
"The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures [infallible]. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth [fallible]."

- 1) The inspired writers of the Scripture were infallible (incapable of error)
- 2) As we interpret the Scriptures through illumination we are fallible (capable of error).
 - a. Illus = having a map in a cave, but needing a light to see it.

Practically How can I put myself in the best position for the Spirit to illuminate the text?

- 1) **Be a holy man** (see Session 2.1)
- 2) **PRAYER**
 - a. "If any one enquire of me, 'How shall I obtain the most proper text?' I should answer, 'Cry to God for it.'"⁵
- 3) **Study recognizing your own weakness and inability to TRANSFORM anyone.**
 - a. "The power that is in the gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converter of souls. Nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it consists in the wisdom of men...We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be

⁴ World Hope Bible Institute, *Expository Preaching*, Session 1.1.

⁵ Charles Spurgeon, *Lecture to My Students* (1893; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 86.

converted unless there were the mysterious power of the Holy Ghost going with it, changing the will of man.”⁶

- 4) **Seek the BIG IDEA or the author’s main point for writing**
 - a. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart contend that the aim is not uniqueness in seeing what others have missed, but instead to find the plain meaning of the text.⁷
- 5) **Know your PEOPLE.**
- 6) **Wait...**Realizing it is not easy, even for the greatest of preachers
 - a. “To me still, I must confess, my text selection is a very great embarrassment...I confess that I frequently sit hour after hour praying and waiting for a subject, and that is the main part of my study; much labor have I spent in manipulating topics, ruminating upon points of doctrine, making skeletons out of verses and then burying every bone of them in the catacombs of oblivion”. – Charles Spurgeon⁸

Breakout 2.2...The Holy Spirit’s Role in Preparation

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)— ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- 1) According to v16, what is our authority to preach? How should this impact our preparation and preaching?

- 2) Share if you agree or disagree with the following statement and why: The Spirit enables understanding (1 Cor 2:6-16), but does not make interpretation automatic.

⁶ The Complete Works of C.H. Spurgeon, Volume 51: Sermon 2920.

⁷ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003),16.

⁸ Charles Spurgeon, *Lecture to My Students* (1893; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 84-85.

Session 2.3...The Holy Spirit's Role in the Preaching Moment

Defining the work of the Holy Spirit in our Preaching

- 1) The Puritans called it: “**that uncertain unction**”
- 2) G. Whitefield (the powerful preacher of the 1700s) = “**THUNDER & LIGHTNING**”
- 3) Martyn-Lloyd Jones referred to it as: “**an access of power**”
- 4) Spurgeon defined it as: “**the sacred ANOINTING**”
- 5) However, we define it...mark it clear...we all desperately need it if our preaching is to overcome the hardness of the human heart (Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit – Zechariah 4:6)

3 of the Primary things the Spirit does in our preaching⁹

- 1) He **ENLIGHTENS** the minds of the listeners, so that they can understand (2 Cor 4:4-6)
- 2) He **CONVICTS** their hearts and prompts them to respond (Jn 16:7-11; Acts 2:37)
- 3) He **TRANSFORMS**. It is his event. If he is left out, preaching does not happen.
 - a. Yet, when he is present there is a transformation of both the preacher and the people (1 Thess 1:5)

Warning: This does not mean that preaching is **EASY!**

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 - “the cross is foolishness” (1:18)...the foolishness of what we preach (v21)...we preach Christ crucified – foolishness to Gentiles” (v23)...the foolishness of God” (v25)

- So, what are we to do with the fact that we and the gospel we preach are both seen as foolish?

KEEP PREACHING the Gospel

1 Cor. 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.”

- **The moment u empty the gospel of its foolishness, you empty it of its POWER**
- Illus = Small English church with “We Preach Christ Crucified” above the door
 - They did exactly that...but as years went by the ivy grew and it just read “We Preach Christ” and they did: Christ the example, Christ the humanitarian...Finally, it grew over it where only the words “We Preach” could be seen...And they preached how to have ur best life now, etc.

⁹ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 25.

If it depends upon the work of the Spirit, then what role do we have?

- 1) We **PERSUADE** others (2 Cor 5:11)
- 2) We **IMPLORE** them to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:19-20)

2 Final Reminders...Never Forget that

- 1) Preaching the Gospel in the power of the Spirit is God's plan to **SAVE** (1 Cor 1:21)
- 2) God is with you and He will build his church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 18:9-11)

Breakout 2.3... The Holy Spirit's Role in the Preaching Moment

Share briefly with your group a time that you experienced the Spirit doing 1 or all of the following in your preaching: enlightening, convicting, and transforming. Did this only take place in the people or did you also experience it within you?

Notes:

APPENDIX 7

SEMINAR SESSIONS 3.1-3.3

Session 3.1 = Selection and the First Round of Studying the Text

What drives our selection process?

- 1) **We have a responsibility to preach the whole *COUNSEL OF GOD***
 - a. Acts 20:26-27 (ESV) – “...I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.”
- 2) Expository preaching is unique in that it provides the opportunity to deal with topics and text that you would normally run from or not be as inclined to preach.
- 3) Instead of attacking someone or a certain issue, preaching verse-by-verse through a book allows the Bible to speak to the issues in the church and the lives of your people.
- 4) **While all Scripture is *GOD BREATHED AND PROFITABLE (2 Tim 3:16)*, some portions of Scripture are more profitable than others.** Thus, it calls for discernment and the leadership of the Holy Spirit in seeking the Lord’s will on what text to choose.

Now the question remains: How shall we best narrow in on our selection?

- 1) **Pray and Fast.** This is especially true if you are going to begin preaching through a book. It can last weeks, months, or even years. Therefore, we must be certain of the Spirit’s leading before we start.
- 2) **Consider the whole counsel of God.** Asking the following questions to help balance your preaching:
 - a. Is there a balance in my preaching of the Old and New Testament?
 - b. Am I preaching from the different genres? Any that I avoid? Any that I always run to?¹
- 3) **Consider a *BOOK*.**
 - a. Consider the book’s: length, difficulty of concepts, application to church context, etc.
- 4) **Consider dividing the sermon text into *PARAGRAPHS*.**
 - a. While it is possible to preach an entire sermon on one or two sentences, you will likely be drawing upon the surrounding verses for context anyway.

¹ See the Genres chart on the next page.

- 5) **Possibly preach through a CHAPTER OR CHAPTERS**
 - a. Ex: When preaching on David and Bathsheba it would be helpful to the audience to hear both chapters from 2 Samuel 11-12.
- 6) **Remember, text divisions are not divinely inspired.**
 - a. Paragraph and chapter breaks are helpful, but don't limit your sermon.
- 7) **Develop a preaching CALENDAR.**
 - a. Begin by working a week or two ahead. Then strive for a month. Some might consider a year.²

A few reasons to not preaching expository sermons (verse-by-verse)

- 1) **Expository Preaching is not EASY.**
 - a. In fact, it will require you to study a new text, new ideas, new topics, and more almost every week. This freshness will help you and your people handle the meat, but there is a sense that you will feel like you're cutting teeth to get ready.
- 2) **We may fear that our people will find it BORING.**
 - a. Andy Stanley says that this style of preaching no longer fits our culture and that we should look for a human need or problem and then go to the Bible to solve it. However, Tim Keller points to Hughes Old that expository preaching was the norm during the first 5 centuries of church history; and this during a time when the culture was not only non-Christian, but violently opposed.
- 3) **We may have DOUBTS that all Scripture is indeed sufficient.**
 - a. Now we may not believe that we do, but if we often find ourselves running to the same books, same authors, same topics and avoiding others – we need to wrestle with if we believe that ALL Scripture is God breathed.

Round 1 of Studying the Text³

- 1) **Read the English text 2 TIMES**
- 2) **INVESTIGATE.** Note anything that strikes you
 - a. Warning! There is a great danger if you never proceed past what strikes you. Many sermons today could be labeled “the whatever strikes you” method. This must be avoided at all cost. However, during this step you are just trying to investigate and interrogate

² Note: This doesn't mean they have the entire sermon ready. Often it may be as little as having the text divided up, so that they know beforehand where the passage will begin and end. Some may be able to develop more of a main idea and possibly even sub-points. Each preacher will be different in how they approach this.

³ Rounds are adapted from Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 214-215.

3) **INTERROGATE**. Write down any questions that you have

Breakout Session 3.1 = Selection and the First Steps of Studying the Text

Practice Round 1 on the following passage. Read the entire paragraph twice. Due to our limited time focus your investigation and interrogation portion only on v24-25.

1 Peter 2:18-25 (ESV) - “¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Investigate (What strikes you in v24-25?)

Ex: Jesus “bore our sins” (v24). Investigate the OT animal sacrifice and how sins were transferred to the animal by placing their hands on its head. Possibly teach about substitutionary atonement (he died in our place). It’s “our sins” – Jesus didn’t die for a cause, or for an idea, but for individuals!

Interrogate (What questions do you have from v24-25?)

Ex: Could this “by his wounds you have been healed” (v25) relate to physical and/or spiritual healing?

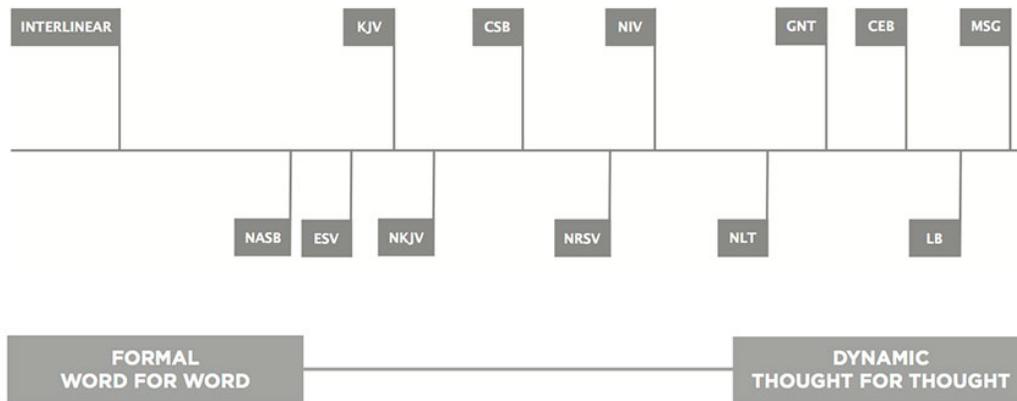
| LAW | HISTORY | WISDOM & POETRY | PROPHECY | GOSPEL | LETTERS |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Old Testament Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy | Old Testament Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther New Testament Acts | Old Testament Job Psalm Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs | Old Testament Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi New Testament Revelation | New Testament Matthew Mark Luke John | New Testament Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon General Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude |

Session 3.2 = Round 2 of Studying the Text

Read the English text **2 OR 3 MORE** times and focus upon the following questions and ideas.

- 1) **CONTENT** – what does the text actually say?
 - a. It's helpful to read the text in multiple translations.
 - b. Are there any major differences? If all of them are different, you likely have something going on in the text that you will need to further uncover.
 - i. Note: Reference the chart below. It's wise to read a translation from each of the different areas.
 - 2) **CONTEXT** – What do the Scriptures say before and after?
 - a. For more context related questions see Session 4.3
 - 3) **Why did the author use this? What if this wasn't here?**
 - a. What is the significance of quoting from Isaiah 53:5 "by his wounds you have been healed"?
 - i. Could it be possible that Peter writing to a people that are suffering reminds them of the suffering servant in Isaiah?
 - 4) **Next, examine the REPETITIONS of words, ideas, grammatical forms**
 - a. Straying like sheep reinforces what it was like to live in sin (1 Peter 2:24-25)
 - 5) **Look for CONNECTOR words**
 - a. Therefore, because, for, since, if, then, that
 - i. Note: For more info see Session 4.2
 - 6) **Look for metaphors or IMAGES**
 - a. Ex: Jesus is referred to as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25)
-

BIBLE TRANSLATION CONTINUUM



Bible translations shown in the top half of the chart are original translations directly from ancient languages to English. Versions shown below the line began with the English text of another Bible translation.

Image source: <https://csbible.com/translation-optimal-equivalence/>

Breakout Session 3.2 = Round 2 of Studying the Text

Read the following passage 2-3 more times

1 Peter 2:24-25 (ESV) - ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

#1 = Content – what does the text actually say?

1 Peter 2:24-25 (CSB) - ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 2:24-25 (NLT) - ²⁴ He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. ²⁵ Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

#2 = Context – What do the Scriptures say before and after?

#3 = Why did the author use this? What if this wasn't here?

Ex: What is the significance of quoting from Isaiah 53:5 "by his wounds you have been healed"? Could it be possible that Peter writing to a people that are suffering reminds them of the suffering servant in Isaiah?

#4 = Next, examine the repetitions of words, ideas, grammatical forms

Ex: Straying like sheep reinforces what it was like to live in sin (1 Peter 2:24-25)

#5 = Look for connector words. How does that word help you interpret or explain the meaning of the text?

#6 = Look for metaphors or images

Ex: Jesus is referred to as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25)

Session 3.3 = Round 3 of Studying the Text

Read the passage again (this is now the 5 or 6 time) – utilize original languages and commentaries

1) Determine the meaning of each SIGNIFICANT WORD

- a. Significant words are often repeated or stand out in the passage.
 - b. What does it mean here and other places in the Bible?
-

2) Any Greek or Hebrew words that get repeated that the English didn't show?

- a. Many tools and apps today that help with this: Biblearc.com or blueletterbible.org
-

3) CULTURE – What was the social setting at that time? What was the historical situation?

4) Use COMMENTARIES to seek answers to things in the text that puzzled you

- a. Guard against running to the commentaries first. Do your own work. Spend time praying, wrestling, asking what does this mean, and just struggling with the passage. This prior labor is some of the most important work you will do all week for both your own soul and for the souls of your people.
-

5) What does this image mean in other places of the Bible?

- a. Ex: The Shepherd image is not unique to Peter, but utilized often by Jesus and throughout the OT to speak of the ultimate shepherd who was coming to care for God's people.
 - b. Ask about these images: How does this point to Christ?
-

6) Anything that is: quoted, referenced, or alluded to in other parts of the Bible, especially the OTHER TESTAMENT?

- a. Study Bible's help a whole lot here. Look for any cross references that are listed as connected to this verse and go read them. Especially when your preaching from the OT as this often gives you a direct link to Christ in the NT.
-

Breakout Session 3.3 = Round 3 of Studying the Text

Read the passage again (Remember that you likely would be reading a paragraph or even chapter)

1 Peter 2:24-25 (ESV) - ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

#1 = Determine the meaning of each significant word.

- 1) "Overseer" – "charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon)
 - a. Peter writes to people who are facing serious persecution and some will even die for their faith. How significant it is for them and us to know that in their darkest of times there is one who is watching over and guarding their/our faith (cf 1 Peter 1:5)?
 - b. Application = The term overseer is only used 5 times (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7) in the entire NT. The other 4 all speak about elders/pastors who are watching over the church. Pastor do you know that the new Christian in your care is being watched over? Are you aware of how the faith of that senior adult lady is doing since her husband died?
- 2) The word "live" or some variation of it is often repeated throughout Peter's letter. Here are a few examples and think about how this might help better communicate both its importance and meaning to your people.
 - a. We have been born again to a "living" hope (1:3)...We have been born again through the "living" word (1:23)...Jesus is a "living" stone (2:4) and we are like "living" stones (2:5)

#2 = Any Greek or Hebrew words that get repeated that the English didn't show?

#3 = Culture – What was the social setting at that time? What was the historical situation?

#4 = Commentaries – answers to questions that puzzled me or to gather info on the culture and setting.

Yet the oversight of the 'Chief Shepherd' (5:4) has majestic breadth and depth; it goes far beyond the care of any under-shepherd. The Lord who knows the secrets of our hearts watches over our souls. So Jesus was the Overseer of Peter's soul, warning him,

calling him to watch and pray, praying for him that his faith should not fail, and searching his heart in order to restore him to his calling.⁴

#5 = What does this image mean in other places of the Bible? (How does the image point to Christ?)

Ex: The Shepherd image is not unique to Peter, but utilized often by Jesus and throughout the OT to speak of the ultimate shepherd who was coming to care for God's people.

#6 = Anything that is: quoted, referenced, or alluded to in other parts of the Bible

⁴ Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 126.

APPENDIX 8

SEMINAR SESSIONS 4.1-4.3

Session 4.1...Investigation: Learning to Look for Key Words

This session is about going deeper in the text as we examine the grammar (syntax) and key words that the author utilizes to help us interpret the passage. Even if your grammar is weak, learning to look for these key words will help you begin to unpack and ultimately better interpret and explain the meaning of passages to your people.

4 Ways “Key Words” help us better interpret the text

- 1) Key words help us strive after the main point of the passage as opposed to preaching our FAVORITE POINT.**
 - a. We all tend to have our hearts captured by something in a verse and then try to fit the rest of the passage around that verse or point. Yet, this very thing might cause us to distort the author’s point and how he is utilizing the other surrounding verses.
 - b. **2 Timothy 1:5-7 (CSB)** = ⁵ I recall your sincere faith **that** first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also.⁶ **Therefore**, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ **For** God has not given us a spirit of fear, **but** one of power, love, and sound judgment.
- 2) Key words can help us breakdown or SIMPLIFY the passage.**
 - a. Illustration: When assigning jobs to my boys, the older boys get the harder job. I want the youngest to get the low hanging fruit – start with what is obvious (we will do this in Romans 12:1-2 below)
- 3) Key words help us see how the verses are WORKING TOGETHER.**
 - The verses in a paragraph are usually working together to help further a central point or idea and we learn to recognize or see these connections through key words.
 - Romans 12:1 (CSB) = **Therefore**, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.
 - 12:2a = Do not be conformed to this age,
 - 12:2b = **but** be transformed by the renewing of your mind
 - 12:2c = **so that** you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
- 4) Key words can transform not only our teaching, but also our THEOLOGY.**

- a. Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV) = ¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³**for** it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
-

Breakout Session 4.1...Investigation: Learning to Look for Key Words

Work through John 3:14-16 (ESV) on your own.

- 1) Circle or underline any key connecting words
- 2) Explain below how any of the key words help you to explain/interpret the meaning of the sentence.
- 3) Did any of the key words point you back to the verse or verses that came before it???

¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

| Connector | Translation | Example | Function |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| καί | and, also | Matthew 1:21 And (καί) you will call his name “Jesus” | Closely connects words, phrases, clauses, sentences or paragraphs on the same level |
| δέ | now, but, and, then | Matthew 1:18 Now (δέ), the birth of Jesus Christ happened like this. | Identifies the second part as a development of the first (often used in lists) |
| ἀλλά | but, instead | 2 Timothy 1:9 not because of our works but instead(ἀλλά) because of his own purpose | Connects two equal parts by contrasting the second part as a correction or replacement of the first |
| γάρ | for, because | Matthew 1:21 For (γάρ) he will save his people... | Closely connects two equal parts by introducing the second part as an explanation or ground of the first |
| οὖν | therefore, then | Ephesians 5:1 Therefore (οὖν), be imitators of God as beloved children. | Closely connects two equal parts by identifying the second part as a development of the first |
| ἢ | or | Matthew 5:17 the Law or (ἢ) the Prophets | Closely connects two equal parts by identifying the second part as an alternative to the first |
| ἵνα | so that, in order that, that | John 3:16 so that (ἵνα) everyone who believes... | Connects the second part to the first as its purpose, content, or sometimes result |
| ὅτι | because, that, so that, | Matthew 4:2 Now, after he heard that (ὅτι) John was arrested... Philippians 1:8 because (ὅτι) it was granted to you... | Connects the second part to the first as its cause, explanation, or content |
| ὥστε | with the result that, in order that, so that | John 3:16 with the result(ὥστε) that he gave his One and Only Son | Connects the second part to the first as its result or inference |

*This chart is based on definitions from Steven Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek NT* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010).

Session 4.2...Investigation: Key Words and How They Help Us Construct Our Message

Key Words can help us become more faithful interpreters and therefore more faithful preachers.

Hebrews 3:12-14 (ESV)

12 = Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

13a = **But** exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,”

13b = **that** none of you may be hardened

13c = **by** the deceitfulness of sin.

14a = **For** we have come to share in Christ,

14b = **if** indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

Let's work through the text

- 1) According to v12, what is the danger that we all face? **FALL AWAY FROM THE LIVING GOD**
- 2) According to v13a, how might we combat this? **EXHORT/ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER**
 - a. ἀλλὰ “but” = serves as a correction or replacement to what came before
- 3) According to v13b, what is the purpose of this exhortation or encouragement? **NOT BE HARDENED**
 - a. ἵνα “in order that” = Connects the 2nd part to the 1st as its purpose, content, or sometimes result
- 4) According to v13c, what will harden us? **DECEITFULNESS OF SIN**
 - a. How might this deception sound the alarm of how much we all need to be exhorted?
- 5) According to v14a, this serves as the explanation/reasoning for doing what? **TAKING CARE AND EXHORTING**
 - a. γὰρ “for” = connects 2 parts by introducing the 2nd part as an explanation or ground of the 1st
- 6) According to v14b, this appears to be conditional because of the “if” ...but how does the tense “we have come” (v14a) impact our interpretation?

Let's now use what we have uncovered to develop a little bit of our sermon

- 1) **What is the context of the passage?**
 - a. Immediate Context = The text is pointing to the fact that they “have come” to share in Christ (v14a). Yet, there is a danger of falling away (v12), being hardened (v13b), and the possibility of not holding firm to the end (v14b).
 - b. Surrounding Context (Hebrews 3:7-19) = is a warning from the Exodus Generation about hardening your heart and not entering God's rest.
- 2) **What's the big idea or goal of this text?**
 - a. **HOW WE KNOW IF WE HAVE COME TO SHARE IN CHRIST**

- b. Is the tense “we have come” important? If so, how does it help you interpret the passage?
- 3) How is this point proven?**
 - a. **TAKING CARE (V12)** = being watchful of your own heart
 - b. **EXHORT/ENCOURAGE** one another (v13a)
 - i. This exhortation has to deal with the deceitfulness of sin
 - c. **HOLDING OUR FAITH (V14B)**
- 4) So what? What difference does this make? How would you apply this to your people?**
 - a. How can our people learn to “take care”?
 - b. How, when, and where does our church intentionally exhort or encourage one another?

Breakout 4.2...Investigation: Key Words and How They Help Us Construct Our Message

Breakout 4.2

Philippians 2:5-11 (ESV)

⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Work through Philippians 2:5-11 (ESV) in your group.

- 1) Read through it and circle or underline any key connecting words in v9-11.
- 2) Why does God exalt Jesus in v9 (what key connecting word in v9 helps you make that decision)?
- 3) What is the result of God exalting Jesus (what connecting word in v10 helps you make that decision)?
- 4) All of this Jesus exalting, knee bowing, tongues confessing results in what to God (identify the key connecting word in v11)?
- 5) If you were going to preach this text today, what would be your main idea (share it in a single sentence).

6) How might you apply this to specific people in your congregation? How can they live it out?

- a. Student/Children:
- b. Parent:
- c. Boss: Even though you are the boss, you can humble yourself by putting your employees interest before your own by...
- d. Church Member:
- e. Single Adult:
- f. In society/culture:

Session 4.3...Connecting Your Sermon Text to the Rest of the Bible

Understanding Systematic and Biblical Theology and how they relate to Expository Preaching¹

Systematic Theology in preaching aligns the interpretation of the text with the **DOCTRINAL TRUTHS** of the rest of the Bible.

- 1) Systematic Theology prevents us from taking one passage and building our sermon on it, as if the entirety of the other Scriptures in the Bible did not exist.
- 2) Ex: James 2:24 (ESV) = “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone”
 - a. If we don’t have a strong systematic theology we might preach something that says the exact opposite of what Paul is saying in Romans 3:28 = “For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” Now the hard part is helping our people see how these two statements don’t contradict (hint: they don’t!).

Biblical Theology in preaching places the sermon passage within the **BIBLE’S NARRATIVE**, showing how Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the text.

- 1) This is not to say that we take every text and twist it to show some connection to Jesus. However, when we realize that everything is pointing toward him and finds its ultimate fulfillment in him, we realize that we must keep pressing to this end.
- 2) Preaching Christ-centered (that is preaching Christ) every time is how we help our people that the Bible is connected from the OT through the NT.
- 3) Ex: Luke 24:27 = And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
 - a. We see this the clearest by looking at the preaching of the Apostles in Acts

4 Key Questions to Ask to Preach Christ from All of Scripture

- 1) **How does this passage connect to the surrounding verses and chapters?**
 - a. Ex: James 2:14 states: “if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can **THAT FAITH** save him?”
 - b. It appears that James is speaking of a specific faith. One that professes with its lips, but doesn’t match it with his life.
- 2) **How does this passage fit within the rest of the BOOK?**
 - a. Ex: James is writing to believers to compel them to live out their faith.
- 3) **How does this passage fit within the ENTIRE BIBLE?**

¹ These are drawn from Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 32.

- a. Ex: Paul, throughout Romans, but especially in Romans 4-5 is helping people understand how they can become righteous. He is not dealing with their works at this time. His audience and intended purpose are different than James.

4) How do the Biblical themes in this section point to CHRIST?

- a. Ex: James points to Christ by showing how faith should transform the way we live. It should sound a real warning to us and our people that saying you are a Christian or just going to church will not cut it. Real faith, Christ indwelling faith, will be revealed by the way we live.

Breakout 4.3... Connecting Your Sermon Text to the Rest of the Bible

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that

whoever believes in him may have eternal life.¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only

Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Work through John 3:14-16 (ESV) with your group.

1) How does this passage connect to the surrounding verses and chapters?

2) How does this passage fit within the rest of the Book?

3) How does this passage fit within the entire Bible?

4) How do the Biblical themes in this section point to Christ?

Notes:

APPENDIX 9

SEMINAR SESSIONS 5.1-5.3

Session 5.1...Determining the Fallen Condition Focus

We have only done ½ the work when we have determined ***WHAT*** the Biblical writer was saying. We must also understand ***WHY*** the Holy Spirit included it in Scripture.¹

Rest in the fact that according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 every passage has a purpose:

- teaching/doctrine (what is ***RIGHT***)...rebuking (how to ***GET*** right) ...correcting (how to ***STAY*** right)... training in righteousness (how to ***DO*** right)
- And that purpose is to complete us (2 Timothy 3:17). Which implies we are broken!²

What is the Fallen Condition Focus (FCF)?

“The FCF is the mutual human condition that contemporary persons share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God’s people to glorify and enjoy him.”³

When do we share the FCF and how does it benefit our preaching?

- 1) Share the FCF in the ***INTRODUCTION***
- 2) Sharing the FCF at the start allows our sermon to have immediate application. We are not waiting until the end of our sermon to connect with our people. Show them from the start why they need to listen and how this passage answers the “So what?”

How to determine the FCF?⁴

- 1) What does the text say?
 - 2) What spiritual concern(s) did the text address (in its context)?
-

¹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 28.

² It must be noted that the “work” (v17) relates to the Christian minister rather than the sanctification of the believer. However, the purpose in preaching “All Scripture” is to present our people to God complete (Eph 4:11-14).

³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 30.

⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 33.

- 3) What spiritual concerns do listeners share in common with those to (or about) whom the text was written? (Be specific here)

We preach for transformation not information! So why does the FCF matter?

- 1) Ex: We “must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1) and then Paul applies this to real life and real people (Titus 2:2-6).
- 2) This isn’t simply about making people want to listen (although we do want them to) this is ultimately about centering the passage on how Christ redeems and restores us.⁵
- 3) We and the people are like leaking buckets. We don’t want them leaving thinking I need to keep my finger in this hole and I will be good. If they do this, then what do they do after the 10th sermon, look for their toes? But if Christ is the one who fills that whole and by his power he keeps it filled, then the water can flow out as it should.

Breakout 5.1... From Big Idea to the Proposition to the Purpose

Read John 3:14-16 and try and determine the FCF by answer the questions.

John 3:14-16 (ESV) - ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

#1 = What does the text say?

#2 = What spiritual concern(s) did the text address (in its context)?

#3 = What spiritual concerns do listeners share in common with those to (or about) whom the text was written?

Notes:

⁵ We will focus more on this in Session 8.

Session 5.2...Discovering the Big Idea from the Text

Remember: This session is a continuation of Sessions 3-4. Therefore, don't begin here first

Alec Motyer says we must ask: "What is the 1 thing that all the other things are about?"⁶

Quick Review. By this point you have already...

- 1) Read the English text 6 times or so
 - 2) Written down questions and things that stood out
 - 3) Identified repetitions of words, ideas, and images
 - 4) Identified the meaning of key words
 - 5) Utilized commentaries
 - 6) Spent time looking at key connector words and how they impact the argument
 - 7) Discovered how this passage fits within the rest of the Bible and points to Christ
 - 8) Determined the Fallen Condition Focus (note: you might discover this prior to step 8)
-

Onward from Session 3-5.1...What's Next⁷

- 1) **What's the goal of this text? What's the 1 THING that all the other things are about?**
 - a. Think about repetitions in the text as you answer this
 - b. Think about context – how this section relates to the other chapters, the entire book, and the Bible as a whole
 - 2) **Write your AIM sentence**
 - a. What are u praying the HS will be pleased to do in the lives of the hearers as a result of the sermon?
 - 3) **How does the text point us to CHRIST, and how does his salvation help us change in line with the pastoral aim?**
 - a. If the sermon does not point and look to Christ then you can just be trying to form more Pharisees. The text has to show us that we are fallen and can't rescue ourselves. Only Christ can do this. Help the people see how Christ transforms us to live out this truth.
 - 4) **Combine these 3 to write your THEME**
-

⁶ Alec Motyer, *Preaching? Simple Teaching on Simply Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013), 61-62.

⁷ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 217-223.

- a. It's helpful if the theme can be an active, declarative sentence
 - i. John 16:16-23
 - ii. Big Idea: Jesus comforts his disciples with teaching about his 2nd coming
 - iii. Theme: Christians, through the hope Christ gives, can face anything

Breakout 5.2...Discovering the Big Idea from the Text

1 Cor 2:3-4 (ESV) - "And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

We have already spent time studying this passage so with your group attempt to answer the following 4 questions.

- 1) **What's the goal of this text? What's the 1 thing that all the other things are about?**

- 2) **Write your aim sentence**

- 3) **How does the text point us to Christ, and how does his salvation help us change in line with the pastoral aim?**

- 4) **Combine these 3 to write your theme**

Notes:

Session 5.3...Onward to the Outline and the Manuscript⁸

This is the step where you take all of your work and begin putting it together

Develop 3 to 4 points that support your main point (thinking about the following):

- 1) **Unity** = each point supports ur main point
- 2) **PROPORTION** = each point is given roughly equal time and importance
- 3) **Order** = does each point build upon the others
- 4) **MOVEMENT** = like a plane ride, we are going somewhere
 - a. Bring them face-to-face with God

Even if it's not a narrative think about it this way

- 1) **Intro:**
 - a. What the **PROBLEM** is.
 - b. Our contemporary cultural context: *Here's what we face*
 - c. Fallen Condition Focus: how sin has knocked life out of whack
- 2) **Early Point(s):**
 - a. What the Bible says
 - b. The original readers' cultural context: *Here's what we **MUST DO***
- 3) **Middle Point(s):**
 - a. What prevents us
 - b. Current listeners' inward heart context: *Why we **CAN'T DO IT***
- 4) **Late Point(s):**
 - a. How Jesus fulfills the biblical theme & solves the heart issue
 - b. *How Jesus **DID IT***
 - i. This should move us to worship and wonder!
- 5) **Application:**
 - a. How through faith in Jesus u should now live

Example Outline

- 1) What you must do
- 2) But you can't
- 3) But there was 1 who did
- 4) Only now we can change

A Few Encouragements for Writing a Sermon Manuscript

- 1) **Clarity. Clarity. Clarity.** Write yourself clear. This is the most important and the biggest reason to do it.
- 2) It's helpful for you the next time you pick up that message
- 3) If nothing else...Consider writing out these areas:

⁸ Keller, *Preaching*, 224-233.

a. Your sermon in a Sentence...Introductions...Conclusions...Transitions
Breakout 5.3...Onward to the Outline and the Manuscript

Using Psalm 16:8-10 try and answer the following questions.

8 I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

10 or you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

#1 = What you must do?

#2 = But you can't

- “The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply” (16:4). We are all guilty of running after other gods.

#3 = But there was 1 who did

#4 = Only now we can change

Notes:

APPENDIX 10

SEMINAR SESSIONS 6.1-6.3

Session 6.1...Introducing the Message

The Introduction

Researchers note that within the first **30 SECONDS** of a presentation audiences decide if they are interested or not.¹

Purpose of the Introduction

- 1) **Get their ATTENTION**
 - a. Don't assume they will be interested just because you are. Get their attention with that opening sentence. Involve their imaginations, appreciation of the past, fear of the future, outrage, or compassion.
- 2) **Catch FIRE.**
 - a. "When the flint of a person's problems strikes the steel of the Word of God, a spark ignites that burns in the mind" (Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 170).

3 Essentials to Include in your introduction²

- 1) **Introduce what the PROBLEM is.** Not simply tell them what the sermon is about.
 - a. Red riding hood isn't just going to grandma's house, there is a wolf there waiting to eat her!
- 2) **Our contemporary cultural context. The Fallen Condition Focus**
 - a. We too have wolves that we face (list a few) and the temptation is to retreat or fight with our flesh.
- 3) **State the BIG IDEA**
 - a. You can't overcome the wolf/wolves, but Christ has and he can empower you through prayer, the Word, and accountability to overcome.

5 Ingredients for a Good Introduction:³

¹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 219.

² Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 231.

³ Adapted from Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 231-233.

- 1) Be **BRIEF**
 - a. 2-3 minutes or 2-3 written paragraphs. This is the sermon's front porch.
 - 2) Be **CONTROLLED**
 - a. "A preacher who starts off in high gear while listeners are just getting their thoughts on track is likely to race alone" (Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 232).
 - 3) Be **VARIED**
 - a. Don't start every sermon the same way. Use different doors or even windows to get into the house. Tell a story. State a problem. Ask a question. Use a powerful quote or statistic.
 - 4) Be **SPECIFIC/PERSONAL**
 - a. Ex title: "God saves by faith alone." Instead be more specific: "When will u be good enough for God?"
 - 5) Be **PREPARED**
 - a. You don't want to read your introduction. You're likely nervous and feeling the weight of trying to convey God's Word. Even if you don't write out any other part, it is helpful to write the intro.
-

Breakout 6.1...Introducing the Message

Using Psalm 16:8-10 try and answer the following questions.

8 I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

- 1) **Introduce what the problem is.**

 - 2) **Our contemporary cultural context. The Fallen Condition Focus**

 - 3) **State the Big Idea/Main Theme**
-

Additional Items to consider during the Introduction:⁴

- 1) **It can't last forever.** “An old woman said of the Welsh preacher John Owen that he was so long spreading the table, she lost her appetite for the meal” (Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 173).
- 2) Introduce something (ideally what the text and sermon is about!)
 - a. It might be helpful to write the intro last. This way you know the main point and how you plan to show or prove it from the text.
- 3) At the end of the introduction you want to be able to state your main idea in 1 single sentence. Be clear, be clear, be clear. If you can't express what your preaching about in a single sentence after a week or more of study, how are they going to be able to tell someone what you preached?

Characteristics of a poor Introduction

- 1) **Apology-ridden** = you make excuses for not being fully prepared
- 2) **Complex** = Avoid being overly technical or academic
- 3) **Confusing** = It's not clear and no one can understand what you are saying or where you are going.
- 4) **Boring** = If you don't see how this message can transform anyone, how is your audience supposed to see it?
- 5) **No dumping allowed.** If you take your study seriously, you will inevitably have more material than you can preach in one sermon. What should you do with that additional material? Save it for another message. Do not stick it in the introduction. The introduction is not the place to dump information you cannot find a place for anywhere else.

⁴ H.B. Charles, Jr, “#035: Keys to Effective Sermon Introductions,” The On Preaching Podcast, July 29, 2016, accessed June 1, 2019, <https://www.hbcharlesjr.com/2016/07/29/035-keys-to-effective-sermon-introductions-podcast/>.

Session 6.2...Conclusions...land that plane

Purpose of the Conclusion

This is the climax of the message. A sermon like a PLANE RIDE is good, if it LANDED.

The purpose is to conclude not merely stop or cut it off. This is not the time to re-preach the sermon, but instead drive home the big idea of the biblical text. This is where you are calling them to respond!

Qualities of a good sermon conclusion

- 1) RECAP...
 - a. give a brief summary bringing the key points back before the audience. Do this in 1-2 sentences for each point (Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 128).
 - 2) **Elevation (climax)**
 - a. Finish the race well...Don't run out of steam before u get there
 - b. Are you moved to respond? If you are not, how will they be?
 - c. Remember you are a dying man, speaking to dying men!
 - 3) PERSONAL
 - a. The person should feel like you are talking directly to them. Imagine you are one-on-one compelling them to go share the gospel at work, pray with a family member, resist that struggle with temptation, etc...
 - 4) TERMINATION
 - a. 1 last sentence/statement that they will take with them this week. When they eat after church, what will they be able to share w/ others?
-

Practical Ways to Conclude

- 1) **Recap** (see above).
 - 2) ILLUSTRATION. Few things are more moving than a powerful story. Just make sure it affirms your main point.
 - 3) KEY APPLICATION. It's often helpful to not save all of your application to the end. But, if you have not made application prior to the conclusion, make sure you do it now.
 - 4) A QUOTATION. Maybe the words to a hymn (even better if you can sing!). Possibly a single verse from your text is a powerful way to end.
-

Things to avoid in your sermon conclusions

- 1) Don't promise to LAND THE PLANE EARLY, just because the people are bored.
 - a. "In conclusion..." don't say it, when you and the audience know it's not going to happen.
- 2) Don't bring out new MATERIAL.
 - a. You may have forgotten something or felt you needed to move past it earlier. However, this is not the time to teach something new. Recap and drive home that main point.
- 3) Don't keep circling THE RUNWAY.

- a. It is time to land the plane. Don't miss your opportunity by taking another lap around the runway. Say it and sit down.

Breakout 6.2...Conclusions...land that plane

Breakout 6.2

Let's practice writing a conclusion to our sermon on Psalm 16:8-10.

Recap. Provide a few sentences of recap of your main point.

Termination. Attempt to write a single sentence to leave your audience with. What will they tell them you preached about at lunch today?

The Invitation

- 1) Extend an invitation for the people to respond to the "Christ-centered" focus of every biblical text. Tell them how to respond to the question, "*What must I do to be saved?*" (Acts 16:30)
- 2) The primary argument about invitations seems to center on the function of the invitation to respond and the form (altar calls, etc). Most everyone agrees that we are preaching for people to respond, but we might just argue on how to go about that. Remember, there is more than 1 way to call people to respond.

Session 6.3...Transitions & Illustrations

Transitions

Help the audience understand how you made it from church to the Mexican restaurant after church. Without transitions the audience will at one minute be singing “Amazing Grace” and then feel teleported to eating chips and salsa. Give them the directions. Here are a few possible ways from Bryan Chapell.⁵

- 1) **Knitting Statements.** “Not only....but also...” “If this is true, then here should be our response...” “Yet, just knowing this isn’t enough, now we need to...”
- 2) **Dialogical QUESTIONS.** Knowing what the audience will ask before they ask it.
- 3) **Numbering.** First, Next, we are going to see that. Third and last (finally), this brings us to
- 4) **BILLBOARDS.** These can be really helpful when going from the introduction to the body of the message. Ex: “To have an assurance of your relationship with God, you must believe that the love of Jesus is greater than *sin, circumstances, and Satan.*”

7 Places to Find Good Illustrations⁶

- 1) **The BIBLE.** This can be especially helpful when you are not preaching a narrative passage. Stories give life and are easy for people to follow and remember. Find ways to utilize other passages that explain your text.
- 2) **Biblical Commentaries.** Often commentaries provide a single sentence synopsis on the verse that just captures it really well.
- 3) **Sermon Illustration Books/Websites.** Just guard against them becoming generic or the one everyone has heard 50 times.
- 4) **General Reading.** As you read books, blogs, the paper, etc. you are going to come across compelling stories and facts that can be used.
- 5) **Other PREACHERS.** Podcast. Sermon transcripts.
- 6) **Personal EXPERIENCES.** There is nothing better than laughing at yourself and inviting the congregation to join you.
- 7) **Everywhere.**

It’s only good if you know where it is

⁵ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 242-245.

⁶ H.B. Charles, Jr, “#033: How To Find Good Sermon Illustrations,” The On Preaching Podcast, July 15, 2016, accessed June 1, 2019, <https://www.hbcharlesjr.com/2016/07/15/033-how-to-find-good-sermon-illustrations-podcast/>

- 1) Print the article and place it in a filing system of some type.
- 2) Use an app like Evernote. Copy and paste the illustration with the link. Use a couple of key words to identify the story.

Breakout 6.3... Transitions & Illustrations

Do one or both of the following:

- 1) Come up with a key illustration to prove your main point of Psalm 16:8-10.
- 2) Write a transition sentence to connect your introduction to your first main point.

Transitions: Write them out! Make them clear. Don't just try and wing it in the moment.

- 1) **Knitting Statements.**
- 2) **Dialogical Questions.** "If repaying evil for evil doesn't work, then what will?"
"If it is God's will for us to suffer, does this make him the author of evil?"
- 3) **Numbering.** Remember that this can get old every week (keep it fresh).
- 4) **Billboards.** These can be really helpful when going from the introduction to the body of the message. In our example the audience is now prepared for us to speak to them about (1) sin... (2) circumstances... (3) Satan. Billboards help us make sure that we follow the traditional rhetorical instruction:
 - a. Say what you will say. (intro)
 - b. Say it. (the body)
 - c. Say what you said. (conclusion)

More Info on Finding Good Illustrations⁷

- **The Bible.** So instead of trying to explain justification, show them the response of someone being forgiven by Christ of everything they have ever done.
 - This can be a huge help when you are not preaching a narrative passage. Utilize other Bible stories to help the flow and retention of the truths you are trying to teach.
- **Biblical Commentaries.** If you use their quotes, give them credit. "One author said it well, when he noted..."
- **Other Preachers.** Just remember, you're not the only 1 listening to them (give them credit!).
- **Personal Experiences.** If you are going to use experiences that involve your family or others – get permission and be extremely selective on anything that might embarrass.

⁷ H.B. Charles, Jr, "#033: How To Find Good Sermon Illustrations."

APPENDIX 11

SEMINAR SESSIONS 7.1-7.3

Session 7.1 = The Staying Power of Scripture¹

No doctor will have much success saying to patients, ‘Take these pills,’ without explaining why.

What’s our Motivation for Obedience?

- 1) God’s Past and Future Saving **GRACE**
 - a. Past = Exodus 20:2-3 = ² “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ You shall have no other gods before me.”
 - b. Future = Titus 2:11-13
- 2) God’s **AUTHORITY**
 - a. Matthew 28:18-20 = “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples...”
- 3) The Presence of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Gal. 5:16 = “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

Know Your Audience

- 1) Individual Spiritual States
 - a. Christian vs Non-Christian
 - b. Legalistic vs Free to live anyway they want
 - 2) Sins that are True of **EVERYONE** Listening
 - a. Idolatry: Power, pleasure, pride, \$, status
 - b. Self-justification: Justify our idols, excuse our sin, & commend ourselves to God
 - c. Love of the World: sex, \$, power, possessions, entertainment, beauty, etc...
 - 3) Condition of *Errant Sheep* (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
 - a. Idle: Not so much lazy as headstrong and impulsive; they reject discipleship.
-

¹ Adapted from Jim Orrick, Brian Payne, and Ryan Fullerton, *Encountering God through Expository Preaching: Connecting God’s People to God’s Presence through God’s Word* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), 150-157.

- b. **Timid:** Disobedient because they are fearful of the consequence & perhaps responsibilities.
 - c. **Weak:** Those who lack faith and obedience that results from poor teaching.
- 4) ***DIVERSITY of Your Congregation***
- a. Groups: Men, women; singles, married, widows; elderly, middle-aged, youth, children
 - b. Reconciling conflicts (in marriage, family, work, the church, etc.)
 - c. Difficult situations (debt, stress, grief, unemployment, etc.)
 - d. Local/World Issues (racism, poverty, abortion, injustice, education, war, etc.)

Limits of Application

- 1) ***Unique Situations***
- a. Ex: The rich young ruler in Luke 18:22. Do all of us need to sell all that we have? Jesus didn't apply this same principle to everyone that followed him.
- 2) ***What aspect of the application is rooted in God's CHARACTER?***
- a. Matthew 5:44-45 = "Love your enemies...that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." The passage is directly transferable because the practice is rooted in God.
- 3) ***What aspect of the application is reflecting God's created order?***
- a. In Matthew 19:5 Jesus quotes Genesis 2:24 as his defense of monogamous marriage. It's rooted in God's created order and applies to every age.
- 4) ***What aspect of the application is delivered as COUNTERCULTURAL?***
- a. Jesus said, 'You have heard that it was said...But I say to you' (Mt 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43). Jesus was challenging the culture of that day and wasn't limited to that specific context. It makes sense that our modern application will also be countercultural.

Breakout 7.1 = The Staying Power of Scripture

Titus 2:11-14: ¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Do you see any of the following in the above passage?

- 1) ***God's Past and Future Saving Grace***
- 2) ***Individual Spiritual States***

3) *Sins that are True of Everyone Listening*

4) *Condition of Errant Sheep*

5) *Diversity of Your Congregation*

6) *Are there any limits of the application?*

Notes:

Session 7.2 = How to Grow in Your Application²

#1 DIVERSIFY your conversation partners

- *We typically preach to the people that we listen to during the week.*
- Build relationships with the lost and grow to learn how they think, their objections, and their questions they have about Christianity.
- Check out articles from more liberal periodicals or newspapers.
- Al Mohler's *The Briefing* is also an excellent way to stay connected to what is happening in our world that impacts our faith.

#2 Diversify whom you PICTURE as you prepare

- Take a picture or mental snapshot of your congregation (likely you can remember who sits where anyway). As you prepare scan the pews thinking, how might this apply to them.
- This picture will bring up application addressed to mature Christians, non-Christians, new/weak believers.
- It may also remind you of certain areas of sin or circumstances that they find themselves in.
- Note: This assumes that you are also building relationships with your people to know where they hurt, where they struggle, how they might best be encouraged, etc.

#3 WEAVE application throughout the sermon

- While it is okay to leave the primary section of application until the end, it's often helpful to make application throughout the message – even if it is primarily at the close.
- Session 7.3 will provide more clarity on how you might do this.

#4 USE VARIETY

- *Ask direct questions*
 - How many of you this week looked at porn or saw something that didn't honor God on your phone or tv? (Pause and give them a moment to think & feel the weight of it)
 - This can be much more effective than: This reminds us that we shouldn't look at porn...
- *Balance the forms of application*
 - Warning
 - Encouraging
 - Comforting
 - Urging

² Adapted from Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 180-187

- We all have a default or tendency to specialize in one of these likely given our character and makeup. Strive to be more balanced so your folks don't always know what is coming.

#5 Be Emotionally *AWARE*

- There are moments when you become aware that the Holy Spirit is doing a work. Don't rush pass these moments. Slow down and allow the Spirit to help you drive home the application, but do it with gentleness and respect.

Breakout 7.2 = How to Grow in Your Application

Take a moment and picture your congregation or the last group to whom you preached. In light of that group of people, how might you make the following applications from Psalm 23:1 (ESV) – “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

Encourage a new/weak believer to break from being consumed by playing video games.

Urge the non-believer who is trying to satisfy their soul with sexual immorality or addiction.

Comfort an adult in your congregation who is struggling, because of having to care for a parent who no longer recognizes them due to dementia.

Notes:

Session 7.3 = The Application Grid

You can download the actual application grid from 9 Marks by going to:
<https://anglicanexpositor.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/application-grid.pdf>

1) Unique Salvation History

- a. What about the passage is important for the way God unfolds his plan of salvation in history? What's unrepeatable by us but worthy of worshiping God for?

2) Non-Christian

- a. How does the passage speak to the unbeliever? How does it call him/her to repentance and belief? How does it warn, rebuke, correct, or prod the unbeliever? What does it say about the danger of the unbeliever's situation, the exclusivity of Christ, the sinner's need for a Savior, or the sufficiency of that Savior as a substitute for the sinner?

3) Public

- a. What does the passage say about our lives and roles in the public sphere, both as Christians and non-Christians (e.g., government, neighborhood)?

4) Christ

- a. How is Jesus foreshadowed or typed? What particular perfection of Christ does that type depict? How is Jesus remembered or described in character, authority, glory, or essence?

5) Unity in Diversity

- a. How does this passage demonstrate the unity that we have in Christ? How does it reflect the diversity of the body?

6) Work

- a. What does this passage say to the employee and employer?

7) Individual Christian

- a. What does the passage mean for the life of the individual Christian? How does it call him/her to deeper repentance and belief? How does it warn, rebuke, correct, motivate, comfort, or encourage the Christian?

8) Your Local Church

- a. What does the passage mean for the corporate life of our local church? How does it call the local corporate body to tend to its corporate life together and corporate witness to the unbelieving community around it?

A few other categories that aren't included on this chart:

- 9) **SINGLE Adults**. Not everyone is called to be married. Every application doesn't need to be to the married, or those who have kids, or assume that everyone should be moving that direction.
- 10) **DISCIPLESHIP**. How does this passage instruct or help shape how we make disciples?
- 11) **MISSIONS**. What about this passage compels our mission outreach, giving, going to the nations, etc...?

Breakout 7.3 = The Application Grid

Let's work through this adapted version of the grid using The Parable of the Lost Sheep in

Luke 15:3-7. Two things to not forget: (#1) If you were using this for your sermon you would have your other key points and also your conclusion on here. (#2) = There is no way you can use every category for every point. This is just to keep u from always making the application in the same area or to the same group of people. Any category that you might add or delete?

| Key Points | Unique Salvation History | Non-Christian | Public | Christ | Unity in Diversity | Work | Gender/Marriage/Family | Indiv. Christian | Local Church |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| #1 Christ seeks sinners (v4) | Religion couldn't save them... but Christ can! | Your lost and separated from the good shepherd. U can't make it back, but he comes to you. | The person across the street where do they go to church? Do they know Christ? | Christ notices the forgotten senior adult loading her groceries or the overlooked kid at the lunch table. | We all were lost despite race, financial status, nationality. Only Christ can make us 1 flock. | Can our boss expect u to work until u find the problem? | When our marriage gets off – don't spend a night on the couch. Go looking for them! | At times u may be one of the 99...d on't get upset that someone hasn't come to check on u. Others are lost! | Who's your 1? Who do u need to go looking for? |
| #2 | | | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX 12

SEMINAR SESSIONS 8.1-8.2

Session 8.1 = Preaching Christ from All of Scripture¹

Preaching Christ is not simply giving an invitation at the end. It's figuring out where your passage fits in the great narrative of the Bible that reveals how God saves and renews the world by grace through Jesus.

Essential First Steps

- 1) Is the OT text cited, referred to, or alluded to in the NT?
 - a. Does the OT provide an intercanonical theme?
 - b. If you preach from the OT – how do the NT writers understand that passage in light of Christ?
-

Preaching Christ from Every GENRE or Section of the Bible

- 1) “He’s the fulfiller of the law – both the ceremonial law, because he makes us clean in him, and the moral law, because he earns the blessing through his perfectly righteous life.”²
 - 2) In Isaiah, he’s the promised King (1-39), the suffering servant (40-55), & the world restorer (56-66).
-

Preaching Christ through Every THEME of the Bible

- 1) *Kingdom*. We are made to obey & serve our true King. We have rebelled, but Jesus death broke the power of sin & death so we can serve him in freedom.
 - 2) *Covenant*. We are created for relationship with God. Peace for those who keep the covenant – curse for those who don’t. Jesus’ life & death perfectly fulfilled the covenant on our behalf by becoming a curse for us.
 - 3) *Justice and Judgement*. We desire justice, but if there is no judge, what hope is there? But if there is a judge, what hope is there for us? Yet, Christ came the 1st time not to bring judgment, but to bear judgment, so that we can stand before him on that day without him ending us.
-

Preaching Christ in Every Major FIGURE of the Bible

¹ Adapted from Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015), 70-85.

² Keller, *Preaching*, 71.

- 1) *Prophet* - truer Jonah who was cast into the storm so that we can be brought out
 - 2) *Priest* - he is the true high priest by his once and for all sacrifice
 - 3) *King* - he is the greater victorious king David who defeated those in rebellion
 - 4) *Judge* - more powerful Samson who overcame all his enemies by death
- *Even the flaws of these show us that God works by grace using the weak and broken.

Preaching Christ from Every Major *IMAGE* of the Bible

- 1) Many images or “types” point to Christ, even though they are impersonal objects.
- 2) Ex: Hebrews tells us the entire sacrificial and temple system is pointing to Christ.

Preaching Christ from Every *DELIVERANCE* Story Line

- 1) Exodus 20:2-3. He first delivers & then gives the people the law. We are not saved by obeying the law, but saved for obedience to the law.

Breakout 8.1 = Preaching Christ from All of Scripture

In light of our desire to preach Christ from all of Scripture, how might you point to him through David and Goliath?

Consider some of the following ideas to reject or accept:

- 1) I need to have more faith to face the giants in my life
- 2) The Israelites weren't able to face the giant, they needed a substitute
- 3) The substitute wasn't a strong person, but a weak one (he couldn't wear the armor & took a slingshot). God used this weakness to overcome Goliath.
- 4) You can overcome cancer, depression, whatever – if u will just throw the stone.
- 5) David's victory is imputed to his people. They won, because he won.
- 6) Jesus fought the greatest giants (sin and death) not at the fear of his own life, but at the cost of his own life.

Notes:

Session 8.2 = How to Develop Redemptive Sermons

Christ-centered expository sermons' focus is to help people realize their need for the redeeming work of Christ to not only be transformed, but to live transformed lives.

3 Steps for Christ-Centered Expository Sermons³

- 1) Identify the REDEMPTIVE principles evident in the text.**
 - a. Reveal aspects of the divine nature, which provides redemption.
 - i. Isaiah 59:16-21
 - b. Reveal aspects of the human nature, which requires redemption.
 - i. Isaiah 59:2-13
- 2) Determine what APPLICATION these redemptive principles were to have in the lives of the original hearers/readers of the text**
 - a. How does grace serve as the motivation for obedience in this text?
 - i. Isaiah 59:14-15 is just 1 example. Isaiah 60 provides more.
 - ii. It was to compel them to turn from their sin (Isaiah 59:20)
- 3) Apply the redemptive principles to CONTEMPORARY lives in light of common human characteristics or conditions contemporary believers share with the original hearers/readers.**
 - a. When people walk away from the sermon, do they focus upon their own power or on the Redeemer's enabling to accomplish what you just preached?
 - b. Will their own good works be the source of their hope or is it God's work on their behalf?
 - i. God's Spirit and God's word transforms them (Isaiah 59:21) to now strive for justice for all people as the immigrant is made in the image of God and deserving of fairness in the courts (59:14).

Examples of these redemptive principles

- 1) Grace DESPITE our sin**
 - a. The Israelites have strayed, broken the covenant, and rebelled. Yet, God show's mercy and grace and calls them back.
 - b. Helps our people rest and grow in their confidence of God's love.
 - 2) Grace CANCELING the guilt of sin.**
 - a. These messages are centered upon justification and forgiveness that flow from cleansing grace.
 - b. Calls our people to confession, repentance, and assurance of Christ' sufficient sacrifice.
 - 3) Grace DEFEATING the power of sin.**
 - a. The work of sanctification comes from the power of the resurrected Christ.
 - b. Our people can overcome their flesh, the world, and the devil in the power of the Spirit and by the truth of his Word.
-

³ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 295-299.

4) Grace **COMPELLING** holiness.

- a. The motivation to live a holy life is in response to mercy, not to earn it.
-

Breakout 8.2 = How to Develop Redemptive Sermons⁴

Of the following 3 sermons, pick which one is not a redemptive sermon,

Think through the following questions.

- 1) Who is the hero of the text, based upon the sermon outline? Consider who is meeting or providing the righteous requirement.
 - 2) What is the motivation for obedience? Who is enabling the righteous living?
-

Sermon #1

- 1) God provides our redemption.
- 2) Claim the righteousness God provides.
- 3) Live the righteousness that God provides.

Sermon #2

- 1) Confess that God requires the righteousness you lack.
- 2) Recognize that God provides the righteousness you lack.
- 3) Ask that God provide the righteousness that you lack.

Sermon #3

- 1) Cleanse yourself from all unrighteousness.
 - 2) Follow God in renewed righteousness.
 - 3) Lead others to proper righteousness.
-
-
-

Notes:

⁴ Adapted from Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 296-297.

APPENDIX 13

ATTENDANCE RECORD

| Participant | Wk 1 | Wk 2 | Wk 3 | Wk 4 | Wk 5 | Wk 6 | Wk 7 | Wk 8 | Avg % |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1 | X | X | X | X | X | -- | -- | X | 75 |
| 2 | X | X | X | X | -- | X | X | X | 87.5 |
| 3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | 100 |
| 4 | X | X | X | X | X | -- | -- | X | 75 |
| 5 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | 100 |
| 6 | X | X | X | X | X | -- | -- | X | 75 |
| 7 | X | X | X | -- | X | X | X | X | 87.5 |
| 8 | X | X | X | -- | X | X | X | -- | 75 |
| 9 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | 100 |
| Avg % | 100 | 100 | 100 | 78 | 89 | 67 | 67 | 89 | 84.4 |

Table A1. Attendance record.

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING MEN IN CHRIST-CENTERED EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN THE RUSSELL CREEK ASSOCIATION OF KENTUCKY BAPTISTS IN GREENSBURG, KENTUCKY

Blake Hill Jessie, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Brian J. Vickers

This project seeks to equip members of the Russell Creek Association of Kentucky Baptists (RCAKB) in Greensburg, Kentucky to preach Christ-centered expository sermons. Chapter 1 presents the history and ministry context of the RCAKB and the goals of this project. Chapter 2 provides exegesis of four passages of Scripture (Luke 24:25-27; Acts 2:14-41; 8:26-40; 13:16-52) to demonstrate that expository preaching must be Christ-centered. Chapter 3 interacts with the key components of Christ-centered preaching. Chapter 4 details the project, highlighting the content and implementation strategy of the specific course curriculum. Chapter 5 evaluates the fruitfulness of the project in light of the completed goals. The central tenet of this project is to equip pastors to preach Christ-centered expository sermons to bring glory to God.

VITA

Blake Hill Jessie

EDUCATION

BS, University of Kentucky, 2004

MTh, Campbellsville University, 2007

MDiv, Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Student Minister, Greensburg Baptist Church, Greensburg, Kentucky, 2005-2008.

Senior Pastor, Greensburg Baptist Church, Greensburg, Kentucky, 2008-