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INTEGRATING EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND  
TEACHING AS THE MODEL OF MINISTRY  
FOR PRAY'S MILL BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Joshua Shane Buice  
May 2013

**APPROVAL SHEET**

INTEGRATING EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND  
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To my wife and our children, who have sacrificed and supported me on this journey –

I love you and cherish your prayers.

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## PREFACE

It would have been impossible for me to complete this project without the love and support of many people in my life. I would first like to thank my wife, Kari, who has sacrificed time and allowed me to remain dedicated to the end. She has been my helper and support through this journey of education since our first year of marriage. Kari has proven Proverbs 18:22 many times through this project, and I thank the Lord for blessing me with my wife. I would not have finished this project without her.

Second, I would like to thank each of our children, Karis, John Mark, and Kalli, for sacrificing “Daddy time” as I spent my off days in the office reading and writing. This project has taken me away from them, and I have learned to treasure our family time. I love each of them “to Pluto and back to Earth ten billion times,” and they are wonderful blessings from the Lord (Ps 127).

Third, I would like to thank Pray’s Mill Baptist Church for their support and prayers. It is a privilege to be part of a church with true deacons who serve and fellow pastors who have labored to free me up. Last of all, it is an honor to serve a church that loves Christ and the preaching of His gospel.

Finally, I want to thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for calling me out of the darkness of sin and gifting me with a calling to preach the Bible. Without Christ, I would not have any interest in His Word or His bride; to Him be all praise, honor, and glory – forever.

Joshua S. Buice

Douglasville, Georgia

May 2013

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to equip the preachers and teachers of Pray's Mill Baptist Church in Douglasville, Georgia to rightly divide the Word of God in both the pulpit and classroom settings through expository preaching and teaching.

#### **Goals**

This project attempted to accomplish four main goals that serve as markers to identify the overall success. The first goal was to enhance my personal abilities in the area of expository preaching and teaching. Many people claim to be expositors, but use methods that do not align with genuine verse-by-verse exposition. The project identified my earnest desire to become more polished and sharpened in the development of expository messages as well as the proclamation of those messages to the congregation. Through the project, I explained my desire to become a faithful expositor while avoiding the trap of delivering a dry commentary of the text.

The second goal attempted to educate the church on the importance and effectiveness of expository preaching and teaching. Within the body of Pray's Mill Baptist Church, many people respect and appreciate expository delivery methods. In fact, that is the predominate style that takes place within our Sunday school class setting. However, over the past few years, the church has gone through a hefty transition that has resulted in a lengthy line of temporary preachers, one stable interim pastor, a pastor who stayed only eight months, and another interim pastor, after whom, I was called to the pulpit ministry of Pray's Mill Baptist Church. During that time of transition, the main

diet of preaching was from a topical approach without a priority upon serious exposition. Prior to this transition period, the church had experienced solid exposition throughout its history, but these last few years of transition has allowed for an approach to the pulpit ministry that has introduced a topical flavor to the preaching and teaching ministry. Therefore, through this project it was my desire to see the people educated on the importance of expository preaching and teaching as the main avenue of rightly dividing the Word of God.

The third goal focused on educating preachers and teachers within the church on how to accurately develop an expository message. One of the greatest hurdles in the area of educational ministries within the church is the proper education of teachers and preachers on a given subject. The mark of a good leader is going beyond asking teachers and preachers to teach and preach with an expositional style to actually educating them on what that means. Therefore, it was my desire to train and equip the teachers and preachers on how to develop an expository message from start to finish. Through this goal, the teachers and preachers within our church were given a text and asked to break it down based on its given structure. Furthermore, the teachers and preachers were asked to analyze it for special words or phrases, and interpret the text within its proper context.

The fourth goal attempted to enhance preachers and teachers within the church on how to effectively defend the faith through expository teaching. Most cults use the Bible to support their belief system. Therefore, it is extremely important to educate teachers and preachers on how to rightly divide the Word so that they will be able to expose false teaching, defend the faith, and rightly handle God's Word. Rather than merely quoting a proof text, it would be much better to demonstrate the need to expose and overcome false teaching through line upon line exposition with specific passages devoted to the issue at hand.

## Ministry Context

Pray's Mill Baptist Church is located in Douglasville, Georgia. Pray's Mill is a 170-year-old Southern Baptist church. The church has over 436 people on the roll with an average attendance of 309 members on a Sunday morning and 270 in Sunday School. Pray's Mill was the first Baptist church in Douglas County and took on a name related to the founder of the congregation. In 1842, the newly formed church was given the name Pray's Mill due to the donation of land and materials by a man named Ephraim Pray; a mill owner who settled in Douglas County from the north. He desired for a "near place of worship" since the closest church was in a community to the west known as Villa Rica.

Today, Douglasville is a growing suburb of Atlanta. In the 1970's, Douglasville was a small rural community with dirt roads and farms. The town has reaped a great deal of growth over the past thirty years. Two specific periods of growth center around the 1996 Olympics held in Atlanta and the population increase following Hurricane Katrina that impacted the coastal communities of the Gulf of Mexico. Today new schools are operating, and neighborhoods are being added in the Douglas County region of West Georgia.

Within a 5-mile radius of Pray's Mill Baptist Church, both city and county populations are represented. The population within a 5-mile radius of Pray's Mill is 39,849 people, comprising 11,311 households.<sup>1</sup> The percentage of people within this population is divided by four major racial divisions. White residents account for 74 percent, black residents account for 23 percent, Asian residents account for 2 percent, and multi-racial (two or more races) residents account for 1 percent. Currently, our church is predominately white, with only a few non-white members. The goal of the church is to

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<sup>1</sup>Georgia Baptist Convention, *Community Assessment Profile – Pray's Mill Baptist Church* (Duluth, GA: GBC, Research Services, 2010). Unless otherwise noted, all census data is taken from this report provided by the GBC.



embrace other racial groups in the community with the gospel, but that has not successfully occurred in the history of the church. Historically, the reason Pray's Mill has not largely crossed the racial line was based upon a lack of non-white race population near the campus of the church. However, that has changed drastically as a large number of non-white residents in the community have been added over the last decade.

The median age of the residents in the community is 35.7 years. The overall population of the community is middle class with a median household income (within a 5-mile radius) of \$69,829. The greatest number of households is centered in the 45-54 age bracket. Within a 5-mile radius of Pray's Mill, there are 2,873 households (45-54) consisting of 25 percent of the total population.

The population surrounding our church campus is a mixture of educated and uneducated households. Being a suburb of Atlanta with easy access to a rural population south and west of our campus, the mixture is evident. Within a 5-mile radius of Pray's Mill, a total of 9 percent of the population did not graduate from high school. The largest percent of the population within a 5-mile radius is 33 percent and reports a high school education only. A total of 14 percent of the population within a 5-mile radius has a bachelor's degree and only 8 percent has earned a graduate or professional degree.

These statistics provide helpful information to our church and assist us in how we plan outreach and evangelism events. With a mixture of both single person residences and families within our area, it is beneficial to focus on a wide range of people and families as a whole. Over 3,400 homes are located within a 5-mile radius of our church as married couples, families, and another 1,181 single parent homes are also within a 5-mile radius. The statistics demonstrate a growing median age trend – rising from 35.7 to 37.3 by 2014. One of the most challenging statistics, however, is found on another document known as the 2020 report of the Georgia Baptist Convention. The GBC has reported that “the number of people in Georgia who do not know Jesus Christ

as Savior is projected to grow from 6.8 million in 2010 to 8.1 million in 2020.”<sup>2</sup>

It became clear to Ephraim Pray that a church was needed when the closest congregation was in another community to the west known as Villa Rica. Therefore, Pray donated 8.75 acres, land, lumber, and slave labor to build a wooden “meeting house” that would double for a church building and school. Pray insisted that the meeting house was to be used for worship and “cyphering.” It was also Pray’s intent to ensure that the church remained a Baptist church, so he put a stipulation that the land and building would belong to Pray’s Mill Baptist Church so long as it remained a “Baptist” congregation. Pray’s Mill Church was the first Baptist congregation in Douglas County, but was named after the sawmill of Pray since he requested that the church not be named after him.<sup>3</sup>

Through the 170 years of history, Pray’s Mill has gone through both peaks and valleys. While it started as a dream in the heart of a man named Ephraim Pray in order to have a congregation for the people in the south Douglas area, after growing and expanding, the congregation had to face some conflicting issues. At first, the congregation was in one accord and working together. During the Civil War, the church set aside the fifth Sunday of September for fasting and praying for the soldiers serving in the army. However, within a few years the church was divided over matters of doctrine and practice.

The first disagreement came over the practice and support of missions. Although the church was originally constituted as a missionary Baptist church, the church found itself ten years after its birth at a place of division over missions. A group in the

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<sup>2</sup>*Mission Georgia 2020 – Advancing Georgia Baptists Toward 2020*, [www.missionga2020.org](http://www.missionga2020.org) (accessed June 12, 2011).

<sup>3</sup>For information on the history of Pray’s Mill Baptist Church, see “Pray’s Mill Baptist Church – A Grand Heritage . . . A Glorious Hope! – Celebrating 150 Years,” a booklet written for the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration of the congregation in 1992. It was compiled by the Pray’s Mill Historical Committee and edited by former pastor Thomas M. Atwood.

church arose who opposed foreign missions. This group held to the doctrine found today in the Primitive Baptist church. This doctrine is an extreme view of Calvinism known as Hyper-Calvinism. Although Pray's Mill has had a long history of Calvinistic doctrine, the congregation has always been missions focused which is the opposite of Hyper-Calvinism. Those people who opposed missions eventually separated themselves from Pray's Mill Baptist Church and formed another congregation.

Around the same time period, another group created division in the congregation over the doctrines of Alexander Campbell. The group of dividers came to believe that baptism was necessary for the new birth and that music was not acceptable in the worship of the congregation. They were divided over both doctrine and practice. This group separated from the congregation of Pray's Mill and started Berea Church of Christ which dissolved fifty years later.

In more recent years, a group of people within the congregation of Pray's Mill decided to move in a different direction on some specific issues related to worship and practice. They separated themselves from the congregation of Pray's Mill and started an independent congregation known as King's Way Baptist Church. According to the history, the parting was amicable. The King's Way Baptist Church remains in existence today and operates a bus ministry along with an independent Baptist school.

In the mid 1980's, a group of 50 people led by Pastor Don Rhymes started a new church a few miles east of Pray's Mill. After prayer and planning, Pray's Mill purchased seven acres of land and started the new church in a mobile building supplied by the Georgia Baptist Convention. The Dorsett Shoals Baptist Church was constituted in 1985. Pray's Mill Baptist Church continued the partnership with Dorsett Shoals until the land was paid off in 1991.

The fact that I serve as the senior pastor of Pray's Mill is noteworthy because of the history that I have with the church. Through the history of Pray's Mill, the church has been led by thirty-six pastors. I have sat under the preaching of four of the pastors

dating back to the late 1970's. My family has a long history with the Pray's Mill congregation. Many of my family members lived near the campus and worked on farms. Two of my family members from my paternal grandfather's side pastored Pray's Mill. Oscar Buice served as pastor from 1950-52 and C. J. Buice served as pastor from 1958-60. My wife and I attended Pray's Mill Baptist Church from the time we were children until God called us away to seminary in January of 2004. In August of 2010, I accepted the call to pastor Pray's Mill Baptist Church and have been serving in this role for over two years now. All through the history of Pray's Mill, I can see the providence of God working things out for His glory. As I look back at the events related to God's moving my family back to Pray's Mill – the providential hand of God is clearly visible. Not only do I have the privilege of serving people who once served me as a child, but my children also call Pray's Mill their home church just as my wife, Kari, and I did as children.

Before I arrived back at Pray's Mill Baptist Church in late 2010, the church had experienced two more historical challenges. The latest controversial challenges experienced by the church have not been as clear as others in history, but the challenges involved failed leadership and a spirit of confusion among the congregation. These problems led to division, lack of trust for leadership, and a vision that was never accomplished. One of the issues surrounded a couple of church discipline issues that resulted in people leaving the church. Another issue, and the most recent, was the issue surrounding the former pastor who served only nine months. The problem was apparently related to character problems and a lack of trust in his leadership. During this time, several families left the church creating a spirit of instability. During the aftermath of this event, I was called to serve as senior pastor.

Over the past two years, Pray's Mill has become stable, and we are starting to see some things accomplished related to our vision and mission. A few months after my arrival, we proposed a new mission statement to the church that seeks to provide clarity regarding our identity, purpose, and future goals of our church. The statement reads:

“We exist to believe and spread the gospel of God, to see and savor the sovereignty of God, and to passionately reflect the glory of God to all people groups for their joy in Christ Jesus.” During these past two years, the church has embraced this mission statement – in word and practice.

Pray’s Mill Baptist Church is 170 years old and officially celebrated that milestone marker as a congregation on September 9, 2012. Throughout the history of the church, missions has been a central emphasis. Although missions has been a focus and teams have taken trips for mission purposes, the church has never been part of an international church planting project. Part of our mission, as it relates to our mission statement, is dedicated to church planting. Rather than just doing the average mission trip, we have a desire to be perpetually involved in reaching the nations through church planting efforts. In the last year, we have been led to plant a church in the remote mountains of Ecuador. God has been gracious and allowed us to work with a group in a specific village through evangelistic efforts. The Lord has already confirmed a specific man as the indigenous pastor of this new church plant and we are presently working to build the new church a building for worship and discipleship purposes. The first scheduled worship service as a church body in the new facility is scheduled for December of 2011. Therefore, Pray’s Mill is seeking to reach both the neighborhoods and the nations with the gospel.

Pray’s Mill has become stabilized, but has wavered on a couple of key foundational issues over the last few years. The church has taken a step back from the doctrine of God’s sovereignty in salvation. While this has not been any official step of the church, it has happened due to the lack of solid preaching in that area. In fact, some of the preaching has not been hostile toward the doctrine of God’s sovereignty, but it has disagreed with the historical reformed positions that the church has stood upon for many years. Another foundational area that has wavered in recent years has been the practice of expository preaching and teaching. Once again, like the doctrine of God’s sovereignty

in salvation, the leadership has not had an agenda to become hostile toward expository preaching, but the weekly practice of exposition has certainly wavered and has been loosely defined. Therefore, it has been my goal to bring Pray’s Mill back to the center on these two foundational elements, and that is the reason for including such a clear statement about God’s sovereignty in the mission statement.

Over the last two years, Pray’s Mill has grown and organized several new ministries including an organizational ministry titled RECON which includes evangelism, discipleship classes, campus work, maintenance projects, and a new beginnings class is also being formed at this present time that will further assist the growth and maturity of Pray’s Mill. Having gone through some serious issues in the recent history, Pray’s Mill is now starting to come out of the fog and move forward upon a solid identity that is grounded on the Word of God. The church has a sense of purpose, identity, and a passion to accomplish the mission. However, all of these elements must be driven by the Word of God, and that is the reason a commitment for solid expository preaching is necessary in the present and future days of Pray’s Mill Baptist Church.

### **Rationale**

According to 1 Peter 5:2, the pastor’s task is to feed the flock of God. That is a weighty task and a very important foundational goal for the pastor as he takes the oversight of the church. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”<sup>4</sup> The church is made up of many different people on various different spiritual levels, but all of these different people have needs. The plan of God is to provide for those spiritual needs through the central function of the church – the preaching of Holy Scripture.

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<sup>4</sup>Unless noted, all Scripture references are from the English Standard Version.

One of the greatest problems in our land today is the lack of biblical preaching. Many churches exist to entertain people rather than to glorify God and feed His flock. Therefore, we are living in a day where many churches do not have a lack of people or money, but inwardly there remains a lack of biblical nourishment and discipleship that stems directly from a faulty pulpit model. Albert Mohler, in his book *He Is Not Silent*, writes, “The preaching of the Word is central, irreducible, and nonnegotiable to authentic worship that pleases God.”<sup>5</sup>

Pray’s Mill Baptist Church has been spared from many of the errors related to faulty pulpit models and methods that are currently being employed in many churches, but unfortunately, Pray’s Mill has been influenced by preachers in recent years who have not been committed to the serious exposition of God’s Word. The recent history of Pray’s Mill is full of men who are capable of standing in the pulpit to preach the Word, but they preached the Bible with a topical methodology that has led the people to become accustomed to that type of delivery method. Albert Mohler rightly says, “Preaching that is central to Christian worship is expository preaching. In fact, I believe that the only form of authentic Christian preaching is expository preaching.”<sup>6</sup> Not only has this led to a misunderstanding in the pew, it has also influenced the style of teaching in the discipleship and Sunday school classes. Since teachers will likely follow the model they see each week in the pulpit, it becomes essential to model and validate a solid expository model before the congregation in order for them to know how to study and teach the Scriptures.

Furthermore, Pray’s Mill has built a close relationship over the years with several SBC evangelists who are not expository preachers. The current library of Pray’s Mill has a large collection of tapes, CD’s, and sermons that include both expository and

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<sup>5</sup>R. Albert Mohler, *He Is Not Silent* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 49.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

non-expository preaching models. While some of these men claim to be expositors, they run the risk of allegory and false applications in many sermons and this is a serious issue that must be avoided in the preaching and teaching of God's Word.

Expository preaching is essential to faithfully unpacking the entire truth of God's Word to the people. When rightly accomplished, the people should leave the assembly with the truth of God's Word in their hearts each week. The local church today, in many ways, is immature and disconnected from society. The levels of immaturity may vary within a congregation, but as a whole, the church without expository preaching and teaching will unlikely grasp the weighty doctrines revealed in Scripture. With immaturity in God's Word comes an inability to engage the culture and reach people for Christ. Therefore, many of the local churches throughout the United States are being forced to close their doors. Unless something is done to prevent that from happening, other larger churches will soon follow that same path in the days to come.

The faithful pastor who stands in the pulpit and desires to lift up the truth of holy Scripture each week before the people will be more effective in bringing about the glory of God in the hearts of the people than the man who desires to glorify his own flesh. Much of our contemporary preaching is devoted to bringing about fleshly results that glorify man as opposed to lifting up the majesty and splendor of God. It is through expository preaching that man is decreased and the glory of God increased in the hearts of the people. "The New Testament requires that a pastor elder '[hold] fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching' (Titus 1:9a). This means that an elder must firmly adhere to orthodox, historic, biblical teaching."<sup>7</sup> In order to be most faithful to this task, the pastor must practice expository preaching.

The pattern of preaching and teaching that is visible in the pulpit and class

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<sup>7</sup>Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1995), 79.



settings for children will often be what they are most accustomed to as they grow into adulthood. These methods will often shape their positions upon issues such as hermeneutics and the sufficiency of Scripture. Pray's Mill has a gifted group of youth and children's workers, but some of the children's material is not centered upon a heavy dose of exposition. While children have to be approached a bit differently due to their lack of attention span, it is extremely important to allow children and youth to be exposed to expository teaching and preaching at an early age in order to be familiar with the best approach to reading, studying, and proclaiming the truth of Scripture.

As an entire church ministry, it is most beneficial to learn that there are times when doctrinal studies are necessary that may require a topical approach. Occasionally doctrinal studies can be accomplished through topical expository sermons while other studies may require selective topical studies. The church should be able to recognize the need for differing approaches, but the spiritual diet of the local church should be centered upon a method of expository preaching that is committed to teaching the Word in context. Otherwise, the church will gravitate toward sermons that seem to use the Bible as a proof text in order to support the preacher's specific topic. Pray's Mill has responded well to expository preaching over the past two years, but it is important to drive home a firm commitment to this approach on all levels of the church's life as we prepare to move forward.

The preaching of God's Word is essential to the local church. Since God, in His Word, places such a high regard and importance upon this in the life of the church, it should be carried out in the most careful manner as possible. Because Pray's Mill has a high view of Scripture and preaching as the central mark, it is the goal of this project to bring about unity, clarity, and purpose in the area of expository preaching and teaching within the context of our church family. My overall goal is to both implement the pattern and develop a means of continued training on the subject of expository preaching and teaching that will strengthen the church as a whole.

## **Research Methodology**

The first goal of this project attempted to enhance my personal abilities in the area of expository preaching. The preparation for the sermon series, leadership classes, and research surveys allowed me to wrestle with the meticulous details that surround the subject of expository preaching. During the project itself, the delivery of expository preaching and modeling of the method before the leaders served as a means of sharpening and strengthening my skills. During the fifteen-week process, options to provide feedback were given (both audibly and visually through meetings and surveys) and this likewise challenged and strengthened me as an expositor.

The second goal of this project served as a means to educate the church body on the importance and effectiveness of expository preaching and teaching. During the first week, surveys were distributed that asked serious questions about preaching and teaching styles, but also caused the people to think critically on the issues. This was the beginning of a six-week sermon series on the subject of expository preaching. The results for this goal were measured through a questionnaire that involved a pre-test and post-test in order to track the data. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale indicating strong agreement, agreement, uncertain, disagreement, and strong disagreement.

The third goal of the project focused on educating preachers and teachers within the church on how to accurately develop and deliver an expository message. During our six-week teacher training class, each participant was asked to develop an expository message from Ephesians 2:1-10. Each participant delivered their final copy to the last class as requested. During our final class, a presentation of an entire process of an expository message from Ephesians 2:1-10 was presented. Each class member was given a completed sermon from the same text to compare with their own expository message in order to better equip them in the future development of expository Bible studies. The leaders were also asked to fill out a questionnaire that was designed in the same five-part

Likert scale as used with the entire congregation. This was used to chart movement among the leaders during the training class.

A proper skill in development will then lead to a healthy delivery of the message. The second part of this goal attempted to enhance preachers and teachers within the church on how to effectively present an expository message. During the six-week course for teachers, two different presentations were presented to the class. One will consisted of a topical message and the other was an example of an expository message. Following each of the messages, the class was led through a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. During the class, the participants were also asked to examine my personal pulpit model as I preach each week before the congregation. The goal was focused on the development of a pattern of expository habits within each teacher's method of study and presentation.

The fourth goal sought to enhance preachers and teachers within the church on how to effectively defend the faith through expository teaching. During the six-week training class for teachers, we examined the key marks of two mainline cults (Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons). It was our goal to show how faithful exposition exposes the errors of each cult belief system. During this process, we also demonstrated the frailty of proof texting without pulling the entire passage together through solid exposition. This practice was proven as a weak technique that is often employed by cult movements.

### **Definitions**

The purpose of this project was to implement the methods of expository preaching and teaching on all levels of the church ministry of Pray's Mill Baptist Church in order to produce mature believers who know the Word of God. Through right preaching and teaching of Scripture, the church will become mature and sound in their understanding of God's Word. The definition for expository preaching given by Haddon Robinson is as follows:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher applies to the hearers.<sup>8</sup>

True Christian preaching always seeks to make the main point of the text the main point of the sermon preached. Expository preaching is the type of Christian preaching that begins with the text and moves through various different stages before finally being delivered to the people. The goal of expository preaching is to minimize the preacher's opinion while placing a spotlight upon the truth of the inspired Word. The method of exposition examines the passage within the context of the culture, the historical surroundings, and the grammar usage of the author. Authorial intent is a vital issue within the realm of expository preaching that should guide the interpretation of a text.

### **Conclusion**

The following chapters discuss the research, project details, and results. It is my earnest desire that this project served as means of edification and equipping of Pray's Mill Baptist Church in the area of biblical preaching and teaching of God's Word. Furthermore, it is my earnest desire that this project will serve as an encouragement to other expositors who find themselves on a similar journey in the life of a congregation entrusted to them by the Great Shepherd.

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<sup>8</sup>Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching – The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 21.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS  
FOR INTEGRATING THE PRACTICE OF  
EXPOSITORY PREACHING  
AND TEACHING

**The Problem of Preaching in the Life  
of the Modern Church**

True Christian preaching must be recovered. The glory of God and doctrinal depth must once again be central to the pulpit ministry. Unfortunately, that has been replaced in our culture with models of preaching that seem more attractive to the audience and sub-church culture, while remaining easy to package through marketing and social media networks. Mark Dever rightly states, “A church in which there is expositional preaching will be a church that is encouraging Christian growth – as we listen to God speaking from His Word into our lives.”<sup>1</sup> No matter how fancy the scheme or how attractive the package, if the Bible is not being fully explained on a regular basis to the people, something other than faithful Bible preaching is taking place.

**The Church’s Preoccupation  
with Unhealthy Church Growth Models**

Today, in our modern church culture, the priority of preaching has been replaced with church growth trends. While this is not the case with every church, it is the common practice of our day. Steve Lawson, in his book *Famine in the Land*, describes this serious problem:

A new way of “doing” church is emerging. In this radical paradigm shift, exposition is being replaced with entertainment, preaching with performances, doctrine with drama, and theology with theatrics. The pulpit, once the focal point of

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 191.

the church, is now being overshadowed by a variety of church-growth techniques, everything from trendy worship styles to glitzy presentations and vaudeville-like pageantries. In seeking to capture the upper hand in church growth, a new wave of pastors is reinventing church and repackaging the gospel into a product to be sold to “consumers.”<sup>2</sup>

We may not be living in 1954, when the Southern Baptist Convention promoted a campaign of church growth under the banner, “A Million More in ’54,” but the church has become extremely focused on packaging ministries into a neatly wrapped gift to the community rather than remaining focused on the exposition and explanation of Scripture. In 2010, Andy Stanley spoke at the SBC Pastors’ Conference. In his message, he constantly repeated these words, “If you make your church better, they will come and make your church bigger.” While much of his point was to pursue excellence in all areas of ministry, the overall flavor of the sermon was geared to a “seeker sensitive” approach. Long before the church worries about the peripheral issues of our ministry packaging, we must put a heavy concentration upon the exposition and application of the Bible. People need to hear from God before they are overwhelmed with how organized our signage is or how fancy our technology team has become.

Rather than making people feel “welcomed” or “good” in their present state of sinfulness, the church must return to the centrality of preaching in order to properly diagnose and deal with man’s problem. “The business of the Church, and the business of preaching – and she alone can do this – is to isolate the radical problems and to deal with them in a radical manner.”<sup>3</sup> Although from an outside glance, these days seem profitable and successful for the evangelical world. The church culture boasts of large mega-church facilities residing in former NBA arenas and enormous book publishing sales. However,

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<sup>2</sup>Steven J. Lawson, *Famine in the Land* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 25.

<sup>3</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 32. Lloyd-Jones also pointed out that the church is not in competition with other agencies of our culture. He writes, “The church is a special and a specialist institution and this is a work that she alone can perform.”

these factors should not be the measuring stick of health and vitality. The fact is, our present evangelical condition is weak, biblically illiterate, and spiritually shallow. As in the days of Nehemiah, Amos, and the Reformers – we need the Bible.

### **The Broken Models of Biblical Preaching**

Ligon Duncan describes expository preaching as “the faithful explanation and application of the Bible.”<sup>4</sup> Since preachers are called by God to “feed the sheep” and those sheep have been entrusted to our care, it is essential for us as preachers to choose a model where we communicate a “biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context.”<sup>5</sup> The New Testament is filled with Scripture that address the subject of preaching and the need to rightly divide the Word of God. The preaching models that are often serving local churches in our present day evangelical landscape are more like broken cisterns and wells without water.

Topical preaching begins with a subject and then seeks to find support from the Bible. As the topical sermon is developed, random verses of Scripture are used as a proof text to the preacher’s sermon title. The danger in this approach is that when passages of Scripture are isolated out of their context, there is a much higher risk of faulty interpretation and application. Expository preaching is not free from such dangers, but the reality is, topical preaching is much more prone to loose interpretations. John Broadus warns of the dangers of topical preaching by suggesting that the preacher may be “tempted to think more of his ideas and his sermons than of ‘rightly dividing the word of

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<sup>4</sup>Ligon Duncan, “The Primacy of Preaching,” in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea For Preaching*, ed. Don Kistler (Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2002), xi.

<sup>5</sup>Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching – The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 21.

truth' and leading people into the Kingdom of God.”<sup>6</sup> Topical preaching may be packaged well and marketed to the culture, but it falls far short of the intent of the human author, which is directed by the Holy Spirit. Although there may be a need to present a doctrinal sermon by using this approach, it should be limited to a rare circumstance. Walter Kaiser writes, “So strong is this writer’s aversion to the methodological abuse he has repeatedly witnessed – especially in topical messages – that he has been advising his students for some years now to preach a topical sermon only once every five years – and then immediately to repent and ask God’s forgiveness!”<sup>7</sup>

Other preaching styles exist that offer attractive means of presenting the truth of the Bible. Such models include, biographical, textual, doctrinal, and thematic preaching. These models offer different ways of presenting the truths of Scripture, but unlike expository preaching, these models can often lead to confusion, misapplication, and religious entertainment. The goal of the preacher is not performance nor should the goal of the congregation be focused on their own fleshly desires. Preachers should not preach for applause and congregations should not seek out preaching as a means of entertainment. The goal of the preacher should be to present the truths of Scripture in order to instruct, correct, rebuke, and encourage the congregation through God’s appointed means – the Word of Truth.

### **The Priority of Scripture in the Life of Israel**

#### **The Speaking God and His Word that Speaks – Exodus 19-20**

From the very beginning, God has demonstrated Himself as the speaking God.

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<sup>6</sup>John Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), 57.

<sup>7</sup>Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology – Biblical Exegesis for Preaching & Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 19.



He spoke in creation (Gen 1). All throughout the first chapter of divine Scripture, the phrase, “And God said,” is repeated. This same God spoke to Moses in the burning bush (Exod 3). In Exodus 3:4, the Word of God reveals that “God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’” All through the history of Israel, God spoke through prophets as He prepared the way for the coming of Jesus – the prophet greater than Moses.

Albert Mohler writes, “The Bible bears witness to itself as the written Word of God, a claim that springs from the fact that God has spoken. In the Old Testament alone, the phrases ‘the Lord said,’ ‘the Lord spoke,’ and ‘the word of the Lord came’ appear at least 3,808 times.”<sup>8</sup> The fact that God has spoken in creation and in divine ways to men such as Moses is easily verified through the many biblical and extra-biblical historical writings. However, God’s communication to humanity is not a thing of the past. In fact, He continues to speak through His Word. Mohler goes on to write, “This confession brings the preacher face-to-face with the Scripture as divine revelation, for the authority of Scripture is none other than the authority of God Himself. As the Reformation formula testifies, ‘where Scripture speaks, God speaks.’”<sup>9</sup>

In Exodus 19-20, God provided Moses with specific instructions regarding the event surrounding the giving of the Ten Commandments upon Mount Sinai. The people did as God directed them, and then Moses went up to the top of the mountain where God gave the tablets of stone to him with the recorded Law of God. Although the Law of God had been in effect from the beginning of creation, which is evident in the moral law that was in effect in the Garden of Eden, God wrote down the Law for the people at Sinai as a testimony of His truth and His character. The people of Israel centered their lives upon the Word of God. They received it from Moses, they broke it in rebellion, they were held

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<sup>8</sup>R. Albert Mohler, *He Is Not Silent* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 41.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

accountable to it by Moses and the prophets who would appear in later days. God's Word was to be seen as definite, immutable, and authoritative. This is why God wrote it in stone. When Moses came down the mountain, he returned to the people with God's Word – not Moses' word. God presented the people with the Word, and the people said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do" (Exod 24:3). The Ten Commandments, God's Word to the people, were intended to govern the lives of God's people.

Philip Ryken writes, "God did not give Israel the Ten Commandments until chapter 20. Chapters 1-19 come first, and they tell the story of salvation by grace – God fulfilling his covenant promise by bringing Israel out of Egypt. Then comes chapter 20, in which God gives his people a law by which to live."<sup>10</sup> The people of Israel never matured to a point where the Ten Commandments were too old fashioned to govern their lives. No matter what geographic location they found themselves in or what modern advancements they enjoyed, from the days of the Tabernacle to the Temple – Israel was always bound to the law of God. The prophets, beginning with Moses, preached it to the people and that ultimately led to the day when the prophet greater than Moses preached the law of Christ – the fulfillment of God's law. God spoke in His creative acts. God spoke through tablets of stone to Israel. He spoke through the prophets to the people of Israel. He spoke through Christ as the "Word who became flesh" (John 1:1, 14). God continues to speak through His Word today. Just as Israel centered their lives upon the Word of God – we must do so in our present day through faithful preaching and teaching of Scripture.

It should be noted that in Exodus 24:1-3, Moses came and reported to the people all that God had instructed. Moses apparently took seriously the idea of rightly handling the Word of God in his special day and circumstance. Moses didn't come down

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<sup>10</sup>Philip Ryken, *Exodus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 597.

and give an overview. Moses didn't come and tell stories about the flashing of lightning and the rolling of thunder. Moses came and reported to the people all of God's Word. The task of Moses is the task of the New Testament preacher today – our job has not changed.

### **The Sufficient Word – Psalm 19**

John MacArthur writes, “The Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura* has to do with the sufficiency of Scripture as your supreme authority in all spiritual matters. *Sola Scriptura* simply means that all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life is taught either explicitly or implicitly in Scripture.”<sup>11</sup> As God gave the Israelites the law at Mount Sinai through Moses, they learned what God expected in a more clear fashion and they also saw the character of God revealed in the law. Moses started writing (Exod 24:4), and although God continued to speak through prophets to the people, they were also receiving the unfolding of God's divine Word as He inspired the canon of Scripture. God continued to use others to write down and record His message of truth for His people.

Psalm 19 was written through the hand of King David. David was called a man after God's own heart, but he was also a man who walked a path of disobedience where he received the chastening hand of God. In Psalm 19, we are provided a glimpse into David's hunger for God's Word. In the days of Moses, God gathered the people around His Word. In the days of David, the people of God continued to need God's Word. Psalm 19:7-14 is a testimony of the sufficiency of God's Word for God's people. This beautiful Psalm reveals the sufficiency of God's Word that transcends time and culture. David had walked with God closely, experienced distance from God because of his sin, and he had likewise experienced the sweetness of a restored fellowship between

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<sup>11</sup>John MacArthur, “The Sufficiency of the Written Word,” in *Sola Scriptura* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust, 2009), 79.

himself and God. It is in this text that David records the sufficiency and the nourishment of God's Word in the lives of His people.

The children of God have received specific instructions of how to live their lives. God has supplied the answers in His Word – and it alone remains sufficient. From Psalm 19, we see that David makes reference to key areas of life and points out the sufficiency of God's Word. From the knowledge of God and His saving plan through Christ to the daily choices we make – the Word of God is capable of guiding us and instructing us in our journey of faith. The Bible and the Bible alone (*Sola Scriptura*) is sufficient to provide us with all truth essential for salvation. Whether explicitly or implicitly, everything necessary for faith and life can be found in Scripture.<sup>12</sup> The people of Israel seemed to grasp this truth at times, and like our present culture, they also walked away from God while trusting in their own way of life and worship. That cycle would continue to unfold all throughout Israel's history, and although God would chasten them for disobedience, He would always remain true to His covenant, which was recorded in His sufficient Word.

David declared that the Law of the LORD is perfect and it converts the soul. The word “perfect” used here by David is the Hebrew word תָּמִּיּם, which literally means to be complete. As David examined the Word of God, he noticed that it lacked in nothing. It was a complete testimony of God and His saving plan. The Word of the LORD, according to David, was not insufficient in any area of life or worship. The only source available to man whereby he can see himself, his sin, his need, his inability, and the sweet salvation that comes through Jesus Christ is the Word of God. It is the Law of God that reveals man's inability and points to the Christ, the One who has fully

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<sup>12</sup>Sam Storms, “Authority and Method in Theology,” <http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/authority-and-method-in-theology> (accessed February 4, 2012).

completed the Law of God in ways that Adam nor any other man is capable.

### **The Word of God as Guiding Light to Israel – Psalm 119**

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in our Bible and has been called the longest “chapter” in the entire Bible as well. The lengthy psalm is rich and full of great truths that demonstrate the importance of God’s Word for the nation of Israel. John Phillips points out, “The psalmist uses eight synonyms for the Word of God . . . . He uses the word *Torah* (‘law’ or ‘instruction’) 24 times; *Edoth* (‘testimonies’) 19 times; *Mitsoth* (‘commandments’) 22 times; (‘judgments,’ ‘decisions,’ or ‘appointments’) 22 times; *Debar* (‘Word’) 22 times; and *Imrath* (‘word,’ ‘promise,’ or ‘saying’) 20 times.”<sup>13</sup> In fact, they cherished the righteous rules and commands of the LORD God of Israel. This psalm reveals the insight of someone who loves God and as a result – loves His commandments. This psalm points out the connection between the love for God and the love for His Word.

For the children of Israel, the Word of God was a light to lead them through the dark paths of this sinful world. God had provided His lamp to His people, and they viewed it as a treasure. The psalmist writes in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The psalmist was pointing out that the Word of God is profitable to guide him along the dark path in order to prevent his feet from falling. In Psalm 119:130, the psalmist writes, “The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” The point the psalmist was making about the Word is that it gives light and imparts understanding. That point was referenced by John Newton in his famous hymn, *Amazing Grace*, as he said, “I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.” God’s Word gives light and enables the spiritually blind man to

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<sup>13</sup>John Phillips, *The John Phillips Commentary Series*, vol. 2, *Exploring Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), 261.

see and understand the gospel.

Psalm 119 is an acrostic consisting of twenty-two stanzas, each containing eight verses. It was originally composed in this format for the purpose of memorization. The Israelites loved the Word, and they spent much time internalizing it in order that they would be able to recall it in decision making moments of their individual lives. They placed much priority upon the Word and viewed it as a lamp for their lives. The law of God is emphasized in this psalm, and one of the overarching purposes of the law is to reveal the guilt and inability of man to reconcile himself to God the Father. Through the lamp of God's Word, the Israelites were led to reconciliation and given the knowledge of God that is valuable for their practical and spiritual lives (Ps 119:107-12). The psalmist points out in Psalm 119:160 that the Word of God is "truth" and "endures forever." Unlike a lamp that burns for a short time and then fades away, the lamp of God's Word burns bright with an everlasting light that leads, guides, convicts, stirs the heart of man, and lifts people to the heights of praise. Psalm 119 provides a clear testimony regarding the importance of God's Word in the life of the Israelite people. Commenting on Psalm 119:105, John Calvin writes, "Let us, then, be assured that an unerring light is to be found there, provided we open our eyes to behold it. The Apostle Peter (2 Epist. i.19) has more plainly expressed the same sentiment, when he commends the faithful for taking heed to the word of prophecy, 'as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.'"<sup>14</sup>

### **The Dependence of Israel upon God's Word – Nehemiah 8**

The way people respond to God's Word often demonstrates the level of importance that God's Word has in their lives. A survey of Nehemiah 8 provides a clear picture of how Israel revered God's Word, but a closer examination demonstrates the

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<sup>14</sup>John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Book of the Psalms*, trans. and ed. James Anderson, vol. 6 of *Calvin's Commentaries* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 480.

reverence, respect, and careful handling of God’s Word by the leaders. When people gather with expectancy for God’s Word it shows their hunger for God. The way people explain God’s Word shows their respect for God. In this chapter, the people are hungry for God and leaders reverence God, and the whole scene provides important information for us as we gather for the Word of God each week. “The whole community, v 2 emphasizes, gathered to hear it; they anticipated the reading with a sense of reverent expectancy (6); and they listened attentively throughout the lengthy exposition (3). As the sequel shows, such an attitude allows God’s word to have its maximum impact on the hearers.”<sup>15</sup>

All people, both men and women, and all who could understand gathered in the square before the Water Gate to hear the book of the Law of Moses. The text explains that they all listened from “early morning until midday” as the Word was explained. The people listened attentively as they expected to hear from God. If a congregation will not listen with an expository ear, the best expositors in the world will not be able to effectively feed them the truth. Skill in explaining the Word is necessary for God’s people to receive the truth, but it is also extremely important for the congregation to have attentive and expository ears for God’s Word. The people of God in Nehemiah’s day had ears that were ready to listen to God speak as they gathered in the square to hear Ezra read from God’s Word.

As the priests assisted Ezra in the explanation of the Word of God, the people were given the ability to understand (discern) the meaning of the Word of God. The general law of God had been made fresh and personally applicable by the explanation of the priests. The account goes on to describe the priests reading the law of God clearly so that they “gave the sense” and caused the people to understand. The phrase, “gave the

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<sup>15</sup>D. A. Carson, "Nehemiah," in *New Bible Commentary*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), Logos Bible Software.

sense” is one single Hebrew word, שָׁקַל, which means (“to give insight”). It becomes clear that the priests were doing more than reading, they were explaining the Word to the people. The task given to these men in Nehemiah 8 is strikingly similar to the task of the modern preacher who stands up before people with the task of explaining it each week. In fact, one of the distinguishable qualifications for the pastor is that he is able to teach the Word. This refers to explaining the text in much the same way as the priests did in this Old Testament setting.

This chapter provides us with a fresh reminder of the importance of God’s Word for the people of Israel. It should be just as important for the modern church congregation who gathers each week to hear God speak. It does not matter if you are a Levite priest in the days of Nehemiah standing on a “platform of wood” built especially for the occasion of speaking for God or if you are a modern day pastor who stands up before crowds of people in a modern sanctuary with track lighting and a glass podium, the task of preaching has not changed. John Stott has rightly described the job of the preacher by saying, “Our task is to enable God’s revealed truth to flow out of the Scriptures into the lives of the men and women of today.”<sup>16</sup>

### **The Priority of Scripture in the Life of the Early Church**

#### **The Preaching of Scripture is Central to the New Testament Church – Acts 2**

Acts 2 presents a refreshing picture of the early church centered upon the preaching and teaching of Scripture. Rather than being focused on peripheral issues or cultural events, the church is pictured as captivated by the voice of God coming through His divine revelation of holy Scripture. In Acts 2:42, the apostles are described as

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<sup>16</sup>John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 138.



teaching their doctrine to the church. While the church was young and still growing rapidly, the apostles were appointed by God to feed the church through God's Word. The early believers "studied continually to profit by hearing the apostles."<sup>17</sup> The doctrine of the apostles was an explanation of the Old Testament passages with a fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In other words, they would take Old Testament Scripture and connect the dots to Jesus as the Christ of God. In order to best accomplish this in the days of the apostles and in our present day, the responsibility of the preacher is to deal with passages in their context and through a historical grammatical lens of interpretation. This will help in preventing faulty interpretations.

After Peter failed Jesus by denying him three times, he was later restored. In that moment of restoration, Peter was given the instruction to "feed my sheep." Just as the apostles had been instructed by Jesus, so they passed along that instruction to the new Christians.<sup>18</sup> From the very beginning of the early church, the people gathered around the preaching and teaching of Scripture. The fact is, they did not have a fully developed Bible, so the preaching and teaching was centered in the Old Testament texts. It becomes clear that the hermeneutic used by the apostles was Christocentric.

By "Christocentric" I am referring to the interpretation of holy Scripture through the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. While Jesus may not be the specified subject and reference of all Scripture, He remains the foundation and ultimate fulfillment of all biblical texts. This method is displayed in Acts 8 when Philip preaches the gospel to the Ethiopian Eunuch from a scroll of Isaiah 53. Apparently Philip had learned this approach well from the apostles. The apostles had a pattern of preaching the Scriptures (they had access to only the OT text) and pointing to Jesus Christ as the fulfillment (Acts

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<sup>17</sup>John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. and ed. Henry Beveridge, vol. 18 of *Calvin's Commentaries* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 126.

<sup>18</sup>John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 119.

2, 4, 7, 8). In Peter's famous sermon at Pentecost, he literally quoted David from Psalm 16 and pointed to Jesus. In Acts 4, upon being released from prison, the apostles quoted Psalm 2 and pointed to Jesus Christ. In Acts 7, when Stephen is preaching before the Sanhedrin, he quotes extensively from the Old Testament and points to Jesus Christ. This remains the normative pattern of the early church through the apostles' preaching.

The apostles and early disciples understood the importance of preaching. The leaders faithfully proclaimed the Word and the church submitted to their preaching. John Piper has rightly declared, "Preaching is God's appointed means for the conversion of sinners, the awakening of the church, and the preservation of the saints. If preaching fails in its task, the consequences are infinitely terrible."<sup>19</sup> From the very beginning of the early church it is clear that they embraced the preaching of Scripture as the centerpiece of everything from discipleship to missions. Mark Dever writes, "The first mark of a healthy church is expositional preaching. It is not only the first mark; it is far and away the most important of them all, because if you get this one right, all of the others should follow."<sup>20</sup>

As one considers the methods the early church followed, their methods must be observed in the light of our modern church era. Modern believers have the completed canon of Scripture, which the early church did not have. Contemporary Christians enjoy the opportunities of standing on the shoulders of the apostles and the early church fathers. Today's contemporary Christian has the privilege of modern advancement in print and media technology as well as church buildings. Although the church enjoys the modern advancements of technology, the primitive methods of preaching and the centrality of preaching in the life of the church should not be abandoned. Although modern believers realize that some of what appears in Acts is descriptive rather than prescriptive, there is

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<sup>19</sup>John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 54.

<sup>20</sup>Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 39.

no substitute for the preaching and teaching of God’s Word. Commenting on Acts 2:42, John MacArthur writes, “This verse simply states that the early church followed the apostles’ teaching as their rule of faith. Once again, this passage says nothing about apostolic succession and contains no hint of a guarantee that ‘the apostles’ teaching’ would be infallibly preserved through any means other than Scripture.”<sup>21</sup> That is simply God’s plan for the advancement of His gospel and the growth of His church.

### **God Calls His Elect People through the Preaching of Scripture – Romans 10:17**

The basic and most foundational understanding of the church is found in the definition itself. The word, ἐκκλησία is a Greek word meaning – “assembly.” The NT writers are unlikely to have had the idea of “called out” in mind when they spoke about the *ekklēsia*.<sup>22</sup> However, the church is the “assembly of God” or the group of people who have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light. All through Scripture, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, God is calling out His people for His divine purposes. The Scripture references the people of God by the titles such as *church* (Acts 20:28; Matt 18), *elect* (1 Pet 1:1-2), *flock* (Acts 20:28), *body of Christ* (1 Cor 12:20), and several other references. Peter describes the people of God by writing, “But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet 2:19 AV). The point is, God’s people have been “called out” and are clearly “set apart” from the rest of the world. The question remains, how did God call His people out of a life of darkness and into His marvelous light?

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<sup>21</sup>John MacArthur, “The Sufficiency of the Written Word,” in *Sola Scriptura* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust, 2009), 82.

<sup>22</sup>Friedrich G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), 401.

In Romans 10:17, the apostle Paul writes, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). The apostle makes the clear point that God calls people to faith through the hearing of Scripture. He makes it abundantly clear, in the context of Romans 10:17, from verses 14-17, that a preacher must preach the gospel in order for those who have not yet believed to hear and respond to God’s call. That is why the early church was centered upon the preaching of Scripture in Acts 2 and that is likewise why the apostle Paul went to such great lengths in his missionary journeys to preach Christ. “It is the teaching of Scripture that we are saved ‘through sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*’ (2 Thess. 2:13, emphasis added). The gospel is ‘word’ (*logos*), ‘discourse’ (*rhema*), ‘message’ (*kerygma*), and ‘doctrine’ (*didache*).”<sup>23</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes, “Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire.”<sup>24</sup>

As God raises up preachers and sends all Christians out with the good news, He uses the means of preaching the good news to save those who believe. It is God’s plan to use the preaching of the gospel to awaken the lost to life in Christ. “God’s Word evokes in the heart a sincere sorrow for having provoked God by our sins, inspires a holy hatred of those sins, and awakens an urge to flee from them.”<sup>25</sup> Although preaching is the appointed means of bringing sinners to faith, salvation does not come through the act of preaching itself. It is through the substance of what is being preached, the message of the cross, that God raises the spiritually dead to life. Although the world views it as utter foolishness, it is the power of God unto salvation. Paul was utterly convinced of the power of the gospel as he proclaimed the message of the cross in each city through his

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<sup>23</sup>Joel Beeke, “The Transforming Power of Scripture,” in *Sola Scriptura* (Lake Mary FL: Reformation Trust, 2009), 125.

<sup>24</sup>Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 97.

<sup>25</sup>Beeke, “The Transforming Power of Scripture,” 133.

missionary travels. In commenting on this verse, John Calvin writes, “And this is a remarkable passage with regard to the efficacy of preaching; for he testifies, that by it faith is produced.”<sup>26</sup>

Although some people believe that unbelievers in the jungle of Africa are saved through ignorance of the truth, the Word of God teaches the exact opposite. It is through faith in Christ that comes through the power of the gospel that a person is brought to spiritual life and is born again (Rom 10:17). This is the hope of the missionary, pastor, and evangelist throughout their ministry. God sovereignly awakens people to life by the power of the gospel preached rather than through the charisma of an individual’s personality. Donald Gray Barnhouse has accurately stated, “The interrelationship of faith and the hearing of the Word of God is at the heart of the whole process of transforming an individual from a child of wrath into a child of God.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it is apparent that Bible preaching must be the central focus of the church and the mission field.

### **Reading and Explaining Scripture is the Duty of the Pastor – 1 Timothy 4:13-16**

Timothy served as pastor to the church at Ephesus. That was a major task that is illustrated from Paul’s word to him in 2 Timothy 4:1-5. However, as a pastor, Timothy was to make sure he focused on the foundational items of the church. These items include a public reading and preaching of God’s Word. It is God’s plan for the church to hear the Word read and explained on a regular basis. Paul provides clear instruction to Timothy, a young pastor in Ephesus, on the importance of this task. “The *reading of Scripture* is presumably public reading with a view to instruction of the hearers, few of

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<sup>26</sup>Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles*, 401.

<sup>27</sup>Donald Gray Barnhouse, *Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), 4:94.

whom would have been capable of reading for themselves.”<sup>28</sup> The word προσέχω translated (“devote”) here in verse 13 gives the idea of continuing to give oneself to something with consistency. During the boom of the early church growth period, God called the church to select seven spiritual men who were capable of overseeing the practical needs of the church. The purpose was to free up the apostles so they could give themselves to the task of preaching. God desires for preachers to remain steadfast and committed to the consistent ministry of the Word.

Paul commanded Timothy to read the Scripture and to exhort the people. The word παράκλησις translated (“exhortation”) carries the meaning of calling someone alongside to help. In this case, the pastor, Timothy, was being called alongside the church at Ephesus to console and encourage them. Just as God the Father is called “the God of all comfort” in 2 Corinthians 1:3, and Christ is considered our source of “encouragement” in Philippians 2:1, Timothy (as pastor of Ephesus) was called alongside the church to provide them with spiritual comfort and encouragement. That encouragement was connected to the Word of God.

In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul also commands Timothy to διδασκαλία, meaning (“teach”) the people from God’s Word. D. A. Carson writes, “Probably Paul does not mean for the exhortation to precede the instruction, but the reverse in actual public work. Exhortation needs teaching to rest it upon.”<sup>29</sup> Paul had already laid out the qualifications for the two offices in the New Testament church in 1 Timothy 3. One of the main differences between the office of deacon and the office of elder is that the elder must be gifted by God for teaching. If the gift is not present, no matter how qualified the man is in other areas, he should not be set aside for the teaching office of the local church. This

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<sup>28</sup>D. A. Carson, “1 Timothy,” in *New Bible Commentary*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), Logos Bible Software.

<sup>29</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 4 (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the SBC, 1931), 581.

word διδασκαλία (“teach”) appears fifteen times in the Pastoral Epistles penned by Paul. Preaching is God’s appointed means for awakening dead sinners to life and making disciples within the life of the local church. Paul took that seriously and desired Timothy to take it seriously as well. That pattern continued throughout church history. Reformers such as Martin Luther were relentless in their teaching and preaching of God’s Word. Luther called the Word of God “The external Word.” It was that “external Word” that dominated Luther's passions. Fred Meuser observes, "In 1522 he preached 117 sermons in Wittenberg and 137 sermons the next year. In 1528 he preached almost 200 times, and from 1529 we have 121 sermons. So the average in those four years was one sermon every two-and-a-half days."<sup>30</sup> Why did Luther spend so much time preaching the Bible? It was based on the command that Paul gave to Timothy. The preacher is to exposit the truths of the Bible to those who are listening. Furthermore, the preacher is to lift the congregation to the heights of praise through faithful explanation of the text of Scripture. When the Word of God is rightly explained, it will cause the eyes and ears of believers to dance with joy at the reality of God’s amazing grace. Faithful preaching will cause the heart of genuine believers to swell with excitement in the reality of God’s saving and sustaining power.

### **Proper Study is Required for Faithful Preaching – 2 Timothy 2:15**

One of the great temptations of the pastor is the lack of preparation. This problem comes through laziness or over emphasis upon other practical areas of his ministry. Many scholars believe that Paul was warning Timothy to stop neglecting his gift of teaching in 1 Timothy 4:13-16 and that his neglect was based on some laziness that he had developed in his personal life. In either case, he had neglected it. Paul’s

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<sup>30</sup>Fred W. Meuser, *Luther the Preacher* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), 37-38.

second letter pointed to the need to be prepared for teaching.

It was Jonathan Edwards who once said, “Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.”<sup>31</sup> The phrase in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Do your best to present yourself to God” is centered upon the diligence of Timothy’s preparation and practice of preaching. “Do your best” comes from the Greek word σπουδάζω meaning diligence. Timothy was to give himself to faithful preparation in order to be a faithful preacher who would not be ashamed.

When Paul writes to Timothy to make sure he is “rightly handling the Word of truth” – exactly what does he intend by that statement? The Greek word translated “rightly handling” is ὀρθοτομέω, which means to teach the truth directly and correctly. Martyn Lloyd-Jones points out that some men “are always looking for ‘ideas’. They want a theme, an idea; and then they philosophise on that, giving expression to their own thoughts and moralisings. That is utterly to abuse the Word of God.”<sup>32</sup> The task of the preacher is to learn what God is emphasizing and then place much attention upon that truth with close evaluation of the original author’s intent in the historical, grammatical context. Paul understood that the job of preaching for the pastor was of massive importance and for that reason he instructed Timothy to “rightly handle the Word of truth.”

When Paul speaks of “the Word of truth” he is not speaking of a collection of subjective information. The apostle Paul is pointing out the infallible truth of God’s Word that should be viewed as both living and fixed, immutable, or concrete. While the

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<sup>31</sup>Steven J. Lawson, *The Unwavering Resolve of Jonathan Edwards* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust, 2008), 160.

<sup>32</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 40<sup>th</sup> ann. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 214.



Word of truth is living (Heb 4:12), it is immutable. Since our God never changes – the book that He has inspired never changes. Therefore, when any preacher is studying to preach or teach the Word of truth, it is a task that must be carried out with great humility and commitment to the single meaning of the text. “We must be honest with our texts; and we must take them always in their context. That is an absolute rule.”<sup>33</sup> No preacher has any right to point out multiple meanings. There are no other meanings outside of the divine meaning that was inspired by God through the original author. That meaning can be applied to any context, any culture, in any period of time, but should never be altered or changed.

When Paul instructs Timothy by saying he must approach the Word of God by “rightly handling the Word of truth” he is speaking of his consistent model and delivery methods. Paul was driving an essential point home to Timothy about how he was to present, preach, and apply God’s Word. As a pastor, Timothy was to give himself completely to the important task of explaining the text of Scripture to his congregation in Ephesus. That closing statement, “rightly dividing the word of truth,” perfectly defines expository preaching. While difficult to translate into English, it essentially means “handling aright the word of truth; declaring the word of truth without distortion; rightly administering the word of truth; holding a straight course in the truth; giving the truth a right of way.”<sup>34</sup> Although many models exist today in our advanced and modern culture, what method supersedes rigid exposition and fulfills 2 Timothy 2:15? Paul excelled in Bible exposition and desired for Timothy to “rightly handle the Word of truth.” If that was Paul’s desire for young Timothy, it should be our earnest desire to do likewise in our approach to God’s Word.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>S. F. Olford and D. L. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 72.

## **The Word of God is Sufficient for the New Testament Church – 2 Timothy 4:2**

If a person visits a mechanic in his shop, he will discover that he has many tools for diagnosing and working on automobiles. If his specialty is the engine, he will likely have many tools specifically designed for repairs on the engine block or related parts. If the mechanic specializes in transmission repair, he will have many tools that are designed for that purpose. When it comes to the preacher, he really has one single tool. If the mechanic visits the office of the pastor, he will likely see many different books, commentaries, computers, and other electronic devices. Although these items can be considered tools of his trade, at the end of the day, the pastor has only one tool – the Bible. That is why Paul instructed Timothy by saying, “Preach the Word.” Paul understood that the Word of God is completely sufficient for all of life and worship. Stephen Olford writes, “When Paul gave expression to this solemn exhortation he was speaking with all the authority of heaven. He knew that the life, growth, health, and strength of the church depend on expository preaching.”<sup>35</sup> Paul argued that preaching should not be from “man’s wisdom” or cleverly constructed clichés, but from the Word of truth that can be trusted. That is why he instructed Timothy to preach the Word rather than some other source of wisdom and learning.

John MacArthur points out that Paul was setting in order the pattern for the church to follow. This was not just a suggestion regarding “a way” to do ministry. According to Paul, this was the central focus and foundational mark. John MacArthur writes, “In establishing the pattern for the church, he instructed Timothy to ‘preach the Word’ (2 Tim. 4:2). God has used the faithful efforts of expository preachers of His Word to bring honor to His name and to increase the faith of His saints (1 Cor. 2:5)

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 69.

throughout history.”<sup>36</sup> The purpose of preaching goes well beyond the awakening of the church from the dead. The Word of God is completely sufficient and should be preached faithfully in order to reprove, rebuke and exhort the church. The best method for reproofing another believer is through the sacred Scripture. If a pastor seeks to reprove someone based on his own ideas or convictions, it will not have a lasting effect. However, if that correction comes through the inerrant Word of God, it will produce change wrought by the Holy Spirit.

Beyond correction, Christians need to hear a relevant message that encourages them as they walk through the difficulties of life. The Bible transcends time and should be proclaimed with that conviction. As the preacher plans the exposition of the text for his sermon, the Holy Spirit is planning to encourage people in the congregation. In considering the complexity of the church and their need for encouragement, Dr. Hershael York writes, “Their lives are often unhappy as they struggle with issues of work, family, divorce, remarriage, blended families, aging, health, ethics, sex, lifestyles, and finances. When they come to church, they want and need to hear ultimate truth.”<sup>37</sup> That ultimate truth comes only through the Word of truth and that is why one must turn to the Bible for answers to the complexities of life.

### **God Still Speaks through His Word – 2 Timothy 3:16**

As man surveys human history, it becomes crystal clear that all of the false religions of the world worship some type of deity. What separates the false gods from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the God of holy Scripture)? The answer is found

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<sup>36</sup>John MacArthur Jr., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1997), 37.

<sup>37</sup>H. W. York, and B. Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 6.

in Psalm 115. The Psalmist writes, in verses 4-5, “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak.” One of the most powerful distinguishing truths about the true and living God of Scripture is that He is the speaking God. He has spoken from the beginning. It was through His spoken word that He created the world. He spoke to the prophets by His word. He has spoken throughout history and He continues to speak through His Word today. While many people doubt whether God still speaks today, one must be reminded that in Scripture a “contrast is pressed between the mute, dumb idols that sit there like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and the one, living, *speaking* God.”<sup>38</sup>

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul declares that God’s Word is “breathed out” by God. It is the Word that God has written through man. In other words, God has chosen to use man in the process of compiling the Bible, but all Scripture, in totality, is breathed out by God and inerrant. Since the source of the Bible is God – the Scripture will never fail nor will it become insufficient or irrelevant. The Scripture will span the ages, cross geographical borders, and remain sufficient for all cultures. Robert Smith writes, “Scripture is just as God breathed as the body of Adam that received the breath of God; Scripture is just as God breathed as the corpses in the valley of dry bones that became a resuscitated army when the *ruach*, or breath of God, was breathed into them.”<sup>39</sup>

Paul goes on to say, in 2 Timothy 3:16, that all Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” Just as Paul informs us of the power of God’s Word for correction and encouragement in 2 Timothy 4, he previews that text with similar words in 2 Timothy 3:16. Paul desired Timothy to understand that God’s Word should be preached in such a way that people learn, are

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<sup>38</sup>Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 57.

<sup>39</sup>Robert Smith Jr., *Doctrine That Dances* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 13-14.

confronted, corrected, and trained. That is true for the man of God (Timothy himself), but it is also true for the people that Timothy would pastor. After the Word had confronted and changed Timothy, he would then take preach it to the church. “First, he commends the Scripture on account of its authority; and secondly, on account of the utility which springs from it.”<sup>40</sup> The Word remains unchanged in our present day and it still has the power to confront, correct, and train believers for the glory of God. Since God’s Word is our final authority and the single tool for the preacher of God’s Word, it must be concluded that the best method for correction, instruction, training, and spiritual oversight is expository teaching and preaching.

As Paul explained to Timothy that the Scripture is literally exhaled by God and is completely God’s Word from beginning to the end, he expected Timothy to embrace that reality and preach the Word. Joel Beeke writes, “Paul’s command to Timothy is to ‘Preach the Word’ (2 Tim. 4:2). The command defines the task. Timothy is to open, explain, and apply the Holy Scriptures, which he has known from childhood (2 Tim. 3:15). He is to be a *minister* or *servant* of the Word. The Scriptures must be to him what a master is to a slave: all-commanding, all-providing, all-determining.”<sup>41</sup>

If every word, sentence, and paragraph is inspired by God, the totality of Scripture must be explained to the people. The most effective and accurate approach to this task is expository preaching. Expository preaching should be considered the first and most essential mark of the life of the church, because all other doctrines are connected and affected by the health of this central mark. “We are on the wrong track if we think of expository preaching merely as a preaching style chosen from a list (topical, devotional, evangelistic, textual, apologetic, prophetic, expository) . . . . As John Stott says, ‘All true

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<sup>40</sup>John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Galatians through Philemon*, trans. and ed. William Pringle, vol. 21 of *Calvin’s Commentaries* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 248.

<sup>41</sup>Beeke, “The Transforming Power of Scripture,” 123.

Christian preaching is expository preaching.”<sup>42</sup> As the life of Israel and the early church of the New Testament exemplifies, the Word of God should be taken seriously. Nothing less than the faithful exposition of the Bible will be sufficient for ministering to the needs of the bride of King Jesus. A firm commitment to expository preaching should be made by every preacher and church for the glory of God.

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<sup>42</sup>Alistair Begg, *Preaching for God's Glory* (Grand Rapids: Crossway, 1999), 28.

## CHAPTER 3

### AN EXAMINATION OF THE TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO INTEGRATING THE PRACTICE OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND TEACHING

#### **Popular Preaching Styles Examined and Critiqued**

Preaching is essential to the life of the church, because it remains the chosen method that God uses to establish, equip, and edify His church. When a man seeks to explain the text of Scripture to the congregation, it is essential that he speak with authority. John Broadus explained this by saying, “Every preacher who is to accomplish much must, in his manner and degree, speak with authority.”<sup>1</sup> There is no authority vested in man that exceeds the Word of God. Since preaching is essential to the life of the church, what should be the preferred method for preachers? As Paul instructed Timothy to “preach the Word,” we must examine the different methods in order to see what type of preaching best accomplishes the task intended by God.

#### **Topical Preaching Reviewed**

Topical preaching is a method of preaching that approaches a subject and then searches through the Bible to locate biblical passages that support the selected topic. According to Henry Grady Davis, the topical sermon is the use of several biblical texts rather than just one main text.<sup>2</sup> J. Daniel Baumann suggests that topical preaching may

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<sup>1</sup>John A. Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1876), 23.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), 32.

not even choose to use a text of Scripture at all. According to Baumann, “Let us define a topical sermon as the elaboration of a topic, a textual sermon as the elaboration of a short text, and an expository sermon as the elaboration of a longer passage of Scripture.”<sup>3</sup>

Since we know that all true Christian preaching must be an explanation of the Scriptures, we must narrow the definition of topical preaching. Therefore, topical preaching is a method of preaching that seeks to explain a topic from one or more texts of Scripture from a structure that is driven by the nature of the topic under consideration. John Broadus defined topical preaching as sermons “in which the divisions are derived from the subject. The topic may be derived from the text, but the divisions come from the subject. The subject is divided and treated according to its own nature.”<sup>4</sup>

Every preaching style has strengths and weaknesses. Some of the strengths of topical preaching consist of the relevant approach to current events. If a large homosexual agenda is being played out on the mainstream news outlets, a series on homosexuality in the life of the church could be very helpful to the people, especially the practical aspects of how to reach them with the gospel. Francis C. Rossow, suggests that topical preaching can be helpful to the homolitician based upon the idea that better sermons can be expected from subjects chosen by the preacher as opposed to being assigned by some outside factors. Those outside factors could include the rut of a lengthy expository series through a book of the Bible or an assigned topic for a conference or by request from those in the congregation. If more passion is delivered through topics chosen by the preacher, this could be a true strength of a topical preaching methodology. According to Francis Rossow, “Preaching is rather the stirring proclamation of objective

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<sup>3</sup>J. Daniel Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 101.

<sup>4</sup>John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), 55.



biblical truth warmed, charged, by the preacher's God-manufactured personal sanctification, enthusiasm, insight, experience, and emotional involvement."<sup>5</sup>

Topical preaching may be attractive to people, easy to market, and spark passion in the heart of the preacher, but it also has weaknesses that must be examined. "The preacher easily becomes interested in finding subjects that are interesting and readily yield a good oration rather than those that have a true Christian and scriptural basis or those that come close to the needs of the people."<sup>6</sup> Paul warned Timothy that there would come a time where people would not endure sound doctrine. Paul wanted Timothy to realize that people would actually leave his ministry and seek teachers who would speak into their ears what they desired rather than the truth of God's Word (2 Timothy 4:1-5). The same types of people referenced by Paul are found in today's modern church, and they are seeking to fulfill their selfish desires. Walt Kaiser claims that these people find what they are looking for. According to Kaiser, these people find sermons that are "witty and clever messages on the widest-ranging topics interspersed with catchy and humorous anecdotes geared to cater to the interests of those who are spiritually lazy and do not wish to be stirred beyond the pleasantries of hearing another good joke or story."<sup>7</sup> Therefore, one sure danger of topical preaching is a lack of substantial biblical content that is overshadowed by irrelevant information.

Topical preaching often fuses together texts to accomplish the goal of the topic. This methodology can lead to a misinterpretation of the text, and while this is a danger for any preaching style, it becomes more dangerous due to the lack of contextual guidance during the interpretation process. According to John Broadus, the topical

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<sup>5</sup>Francis C. Rossow, "Topical Preaching," in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 87.

<sup>6</sup>Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 57.

<sup>7</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 20.

preacher “is tempted to think more of his ideas and his sermons than of ‘rightly dividing the word of truth’ and leading people into the Kingdom of God.”<sup>8</sup> The job of the preacher, ancient or modern, has not changed. The duty of all heralds of God should be to quote God and explain His Word. John Stott writes, “If God had not spoken, we would not dare to speak, because we would have nothing to say except our own threadbare speculations. But since God has spoken, we too must speak, communicating to others what he has communicated in Scripture.”<sup>9</sup> The main deficiency of topical preaching is the fact that it normally begins with a topic rather than the text. This formula often allows the topic to drive the hermeneutic and interpretation of the text(s) rather than the text revealing the topic.

### **Doctrinal Preaching Reviewed**

All true Christian preaching is doctrinal preaching in the sense that the doctrinal truth is being presented from the pages of Scripture. The recovery of doctrinal preaching is essential to the renewal of the church.<sup>10</sup> William J. Carl III offers the following definition of doctrinal preaching:

Doctrinal preaching, then, is Christian preaching grounded in the biblical witness to Jesus Christ; it starts with text, doctrine, or cultural question, but tends to focus on one or more Christian doctrines regardless of its starting point.<sup>11</sup>

Doctrinal preaching can be presented through two main styles. Those styles can be described best as (1) topical and (2) expository. For instance, if a preacher

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<sup>8</sup>Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 57.

<sup>9</sup>John R. Stott, “A Definition of Biblical Preaching,” in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 24.

<sup>10</sup>Timothy George, “Doctrinal Preaching,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 93.

<sup>11</sup>William J. Carl III, “Doctrine,” in *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 102.

is interested in preaching a series on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as an exhaustive study he may have multiple biblical texts per week in his sermon under different headings such as “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Inspiration” and “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Conversion.” On the flip side of the coin, it remains possible for the preacher to focus on a single passage of Scripture under one main heading such as “The Role of the Holy Spirit in Conversion” in the form of an expositional sermon. This could go on for several weeks as the preacher unfolds the role, function, and position of the Holy Spirit among the Trinity. Robert Smith Jr. defines doctrinal preaching as, “The escorting of the hearers into the presence of God for the purpose of transformation.”<sup>12</sup> He goes on further to suggest that the “operational definition of doctrinal preaching is the magnifying of Jesus Christ through the explanation and application of the basic truths of the Christian faith.”<sup>13</sup>

The strengths of doctrinal preaching can be identified in two main areas, (1) depth and (2) substance. The church today has serious problems in the area of preaching. Much of today’s evangelical preaching is lacking in serious biblical depth. While that was a difficult and broad statement to substantiate in years past, with the Internet and the advancement of social media, preaching is readily available from hundreds of sources at the click of a few buttons. One of the central strengths of doctrinal preaching is the focus on biblical depth in each sermon. Rather than skiing across the surface of fallen man’s pragmatics, doctrinal preaching places much effort in mining the riches of biblical doctrines from the depths of God’s inerrant Word. Steve Lawson writes “Sad to say, pressure to produce bottom-line results has led many ministries to sacrifice the centrality of biblical preaching on the alter of man-centered pragmatism.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Robert Smith Jr., *Doctrine that Dances* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 25.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Steven J. Lawson, *Famine in the Land* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 25.

Another key strength of doctrinal preaching is the foundational substance of each message. While scholars and homileticians argue over the Christocentric hermeneutic, all biblical doctrines are somehow connected to Christ. If the doctrine is marriage, Jesus is the foundation. If the doctrine is ecclesiology, Jesus is the centerpiece. If the doctrine is pneumatology, Jesus is connected at the heart of the Trinity. From demons to death, persecution to prayer, and worship to weddings, Jesus will be connected directly or by ultimate fulfillment of every biblical doctrine. Therefore, doctrinal preaching avoids the structure of “7 Steps to Financial Peace” and moves to the heart of giving, which is ultimately found in worship of Christ and the Great Commission. Doctrinal preaching seeks to go beneath the surface level of shallow theology that plagues many churches.

Every approach to preaching has its weaknesses, and doctrinal preaching is no different. The two main weaknesses of doctrinal preaching are (1) the tendency to be enslaved by the errors of topical preaching and (2) the temptation to preach to the mind of man while being disconnected from his heart. As discussed in the definition of doctrinal preaching, one of the methods employed to achieve this style is through a topical sermon. Although there is certainly a place for topical preaching, there is no grace given to the errors and weaknesses of a topical preaching style.

One of the errors of topical preaching is the removal of the text from the surrounding context and interpreting it through the lens of the topic rather than the context. Not every topical sermon preached is guilty of this error, but many times when verses are located through a topical search of a key word, copied and pasted out of a digital copy of the Bible and explained through the lens of the selected topic – it can lead to a faulty interpretation. This same error can apply through doctrinal preaching as well. In attempting to explain the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion, a selected text can be removed from its context and explained inappropriately due to the missing contextual clues, vocabulary, and larger context of the book which all lead to the original author’s

intent. Therefore, it is the duty of the preacher to ensure that all texts used in a doctrinal sermon delivered through a topical method are interpreted and explained in conjunction with the original author's meaning from the original context.

Another key weakness of doctrinal preaching is connected to the strength of biblical depth in the presentation. Many good expositors and gifted theologians have been guilty of presenting truth without illustration or application. In their attempt to lift up the unadulterated truth of Scripture to the people, they have failed to apply it to their lives in such a way as to urge personal impact and change. Robert Smith Jr. writes, "I just want to remind preachers constantly that doctrinal preaching not only informs our learning but also influences our living."<sup>15</sup> If the preacher is disconnected from the audience because of a lack of application or the use of technical vocabulary, the results will be minimal. While biblical preaching is not manipulative in its approach, all true Bible preachers should strive to see God's appointed means take place in the lives of those who hear their preaching.

In Nehemiah 8, Ezra and the Levites went to great lengths to make sure the people understood God's Word. According to Nehemiah 8:8, "They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading." The word "clearly" is the Hebrew word פָּרַשׁ, which literally means to proclaim clearly or to make distinct. In other words, Ezra and the Levites were proclaiming the truth of God's Word in such a way that they made the truth clearly appear before the eyes of the people. Nehemiah 8:12 reads, "And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them." As the text reveals, the people understood God's Word, and their understanding led to obedience to the LORD. A right understanding produced right obedience. The doctrine of the Bible touched the hearts of the people and produced

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<sup>15</sup>Smith, *Doctrine that Dances*, 16.

action. Warren Wiersbe is exactly right when he writes, “You should also preach to reach below the surface of the listener. Never be satisfied unless the Spirit applies the Word to hearts and people respond in one way or another. Their response may even be negative! Paul’s synagogue messages turned some people into converts and others into scoffers or enemies.”<sup>16</sup> It is a grievous error to preach above the understanding of the people, and that can be a real temptation of doctrinal preaching. In every sermon, homily, family devotion, wedding sermon, and evangelistic crusade, the Word of God must be clearly explained to the people if we expect the people to be changed by the power of the Word. John Stott said, “The low level of Christian living is due more than anything else to the low level of Christian preaching.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Allegorical Preaching Reviewed**

In discussing allegory, it is essential to divorce allegory as a genre from the interpretive method that utilizes the same title. The Greek term ἀλληγορέω is only used one time in the Scripture. Scholars debate the actual meaning of the word as it appears in Galatians 4:24. As it relates to the genre of allegory as a literary method, it is essential to realize that the author controls the meaning. John Bunyan can be referenced as a substantial example of someone writing within the allegorical genre. Bunyan himself wrote in such a way as to communicate a “deeper” meaning than what is readily visible from the terms he selected in his famous allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. However, the interpretative method known as allegorical interpretation is a method of assigning a meaning to a text that is something other than the plain and literal meaning of a text as revealed by the context and the original author’s intent. Chip Thornton, in his

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<sup>16</sup>Warren Wiersbe, *The Elements of Preaching : The Art of Biblical Preaching Clearly and Simply Presented* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), 46-47.

<sup>17</sup>John R. Stott, “Christian Preaching in the Contemporary World,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (October-December 1988): 365.

dissertation titled “Allegorical Tendencies in Preaching and their Relation to the Doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture” makes a valid point by saying, “While allegory is a literary form, the allegorical method is a system of interpretation. In the former, the author makes the allegory; in the latter, the interpreter makes it.”<sup>18</sup> John Broadus writes,

The background to allegorical interpretation can be traced back to Augustine and the church fathers. Although the allegorical interpretation can be traced back to the Stoics, it became more widely known and practiced through church history by men such as Origen and Augustine. While Origen had a command and understanding of the literal meaning of the Bible, he often overlooked it in order to attract people outside the faith through “deeper” or “spiritual” meanings. Origen was known to suggest that the Bible was made up of the literal meaning, which was the plain, historical sense;<sup>19</sup> the moral meaning which he referred to as an ethical sense;<sup>20</sup> and the spiritual meaning which he referred to as the “heavenly meaning.”<sup>21</sup> As to interpretation of Scripture, he dignified and appeared to justify the practice of allegorizing. It is an utter mistake to say, though a mistake often repeated, that he was the *father* of this practice. His teacher, Clement, gives us instances of it.<sup>22</sup>

While the school of Alexandria become identified with Origen under the umbrella of allegorical interpretation, the school at Antioch was the polar opposite on that issue. J. N. D. Kelly writes, “Despite difference of emphasis, the whole school was united in believing that allegory was an unreliable, indeed illegitimate, instrument for interpreting Scripture.”<sup>23</sup> From early in church history, the two schools of interpretation challenged one another, and friction has remained on this issue up to our present day.

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<sup>18</sup>Chipley McQueen Thornton, “Allegorical Tendencies in Preaching and their Relation to the Doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture” Ph.D. diss. (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 47. See also Mikeal C. Parsons, “‘Allegorizing Allegory:’ Narrative Analysis and Parable Interpretation,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 15 (1988): 150.

<sup>19</sup>Origen, *De Principiis* 4.1.11, trans. Frederick Crombie, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, American ed., vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 359.

<sup>20</sup>Origen, *De Principiis*, 4.1.12 (4:360-61).

<sup>21</sup>Origen, *De Principiis*, 4.1.13 (4:361).

<sup>22</sup>Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching*, 53.

<sup>23</sup>J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1978), 76.

For instance, Augustine titled a heading in *On Christian Doctrine* 3.27 as “One Passage Susceptible of Various Interpretations.” It is obvious throughout Augustine’s writings that he did not hold to the single meaning of the biblical author. His understanding of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 is the most well-known: The man signifies Adam; Jericho signifies the moon (man’s morality); the thieves signify the devil and his angels; the Samaritan signifies the Lord; the oil signifies hope; the wine signifies a fervent spirit; the inn signifies the church; the next day signifies the resurrection.<sup>24</sup>

These two veins of interpretation have continued to influence preaching through the centuries. In our modern day, forms of allegorical interpretation continue to spring up under differing names or methods that fall prey to this dangerous mistake. For instance, it is important to preach the gospel from the Old Testament, but it is an allegorical error to impose Christ on every Old Testament verse of Scripture without any validity from a New Testament author. While we can rest assured that Christ is connected to every text of Scripture in some way, it would be an error to impose a different meaning of every Old Testament text upon the original author.

Christocentric preaching is a very popular method of preaching today that elevates Christ and the gospel from all texts in the Bible. All Christian preachers must point to Jesus, but they must be careful not to change the meaning of the original author through the process of exegesis, exposition, proclamation, application, and illustration of the text. The point of the human author must be preserved. Anytime a text of Scripture is twisted outside of the intent of the human author, no matter how close it may be, the entire meaning of that text has been compromised. Walt Kaiser writes, “Therefore, in our summaries we should point out these later developments for the sake of updating and putting everything in its fullest context. However, in no case must that later teaching be

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<sup>24</sup>Augustine, *Questiones Evangeliorum* 2.19, in *C.H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1961), 2.



used exegetically (or in any other way) to unpack the meaning or to enhance the usability of the individual text which is the object of our study.”<sup>25</sup> It is the duty of the preacher to unpack what God has arranged in the text through a historical, grammatical method of interpretation that honors the author’s original intent.

### **Expository Preaching Reviewed**

The model for preaching today is constantly being redefined and repackaged. The normative model in our advanced culture is often tied to entertainment and felt needs of members who are seen as consumers in a marketplace known as “the church.” Therefore, many people today are asking the question, “Where can we look for a solid model for preaching the Bible?” Dr. Steven Lawson writes, “One need look no further than to the first church in Jerusalem, born on the Day of Pentecost and firmly planted in the soil of newly converted hearts. Today’s church leaders would do well to revisit this congregation to rediscover the strategy of its earliest leaders, the apostles.”<sup>26</sup>

The first priority and highest interest of the apostles and early church members was the preaching and teaching of Scripture (Acts 20:26-27). From those early days, God used His Word to powerfully drive the growth of the church. As we survey history, we see that the great revivals and reformations of history were ushered in through faithful preaching of the Bible. However, in our present day, while there is certainly a drought in relation to solid Bible exposition, there is also a resurgence of expository preaching. One of the problems surrounding the resurgence of exposition is in relation to the definition itself. A clear and concise definition and methodology of expository preaching is needed.

Some preachers use the word “expository” in a very loose sense of the word. John Calvin once defined expository preaching as the “explication of Scripture, unfolding

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<sup>25</sup>Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 161.

<sup>26</sup>Lawson, *Famine in the Land*, 27.

its natural and true meaning, while making application to the life and experience of the congregation.”<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, many bad definitions are thrown around under the banner of “expository preaching” in our day. For instance, Webster’s dictionary defines expository as “the setting forth of the meaning or purpose of a writing.” That is true on one level, but the same definition could be used for topical preaching. In a much more specific manner, Merrill Unger defined expository preaching as the “real and essential meaning” of a passage of Scripture “as it existed in the mind of the particular Biblical writer and as it exists in the light of the overall context of Scripture.”<sup>28</sup> Perhaps one of the best definitions of our modern day is by Haddon Robinson. He defines expository preaching in the following way:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.<sup>29</sup>

Prior to the modern era of preaching, the early church was built upon the solid exposition of God’s Word. “The history of the word, like that of *homiletics*, points back to the fact, which is also well known otherwise, that preaching was originally expository. The early Christian preachers commonly spoke upon passages of considerable length, and occupied themselves largely with exposition.”<sup>30</sup> In Acts 2, the church is made visible by gathering together for worship under the apostles’ teaching. While the church gathered for singing, praying, church discipline, baptism, and the observance of the Lord’s supper, the primary functional element that was central to all the church did was the preaching of

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>28</sup>Lawson, *Famine in the Land*, 18-19.

<sup>29</sup>Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching – The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 21.

<sup>30</sup>Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 20.

the sacred Scripture. The early church was driven by the Holy Spirit “by leading the apostles to be prolific in their teaching ministry. Sound doctrine enriched every aspect of this church’s life.”<sup>31</sup>

Expository preaching, as J. I. Packer observes, is “letting texts talk.”<sup>32</sup> It is the job of the preacher to elevate to the hearer the truths contained in the text rather than his own ideas or opinions. As Haddon Robinson makes abundantly clear, expository preaching is “derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context.”<sup>33</sup> In order to “exposit” a text, a preacher must go down into the text and then lift up the grand truths as the original author intended. Like a miner who goes deep into the earth in search of gold, the preacher must enter deep into the text in order to lift up the valuable meaning of the text to the congregation. This process must involve reading the text, interpreting the language (including words) of the text, explaining the text, and applying the text to the modern audience.

All of this must be done in such a way as to carefully guard the original author’s intent, which is the meaning that the Holy Spirit intended for the passage of Scripture under examination. If the original author is overlooked, not only is it possible that his original intent will be missed, but it will assuredly result in a perversion of God’s intended meaning. This thought should captivate our attention and cause us to be ultra sensitive to the text that God has inspired. Ian Murray quoted the great expositor, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones as describing expositional preaching as the type of preaching “which addresses specific truths from God to man. The expository preacher is not one who ‘shares his studies’ with others, he is an ambassador and a messenger, authoritatively

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<sup>31</sup>Lawson, *Famine in the Land*, 28.

<sup>32</sup>Alistair Begg, *Preaching for God’s Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999), 9.

<sup>33</sup>Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 21.

delivering the Word of God to men.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Technical Aspects of Biblical Hermeneutics Examined and Critiqued**

The pursuit of faithful preaching is clearly hitched to faithful hermeneutics. If a preacher has flawed hermeneutics he will likewise come to incorrect conclusions and interpretations. Biblical hermeneutics will involve different component parts such as interpretation of the words, an examination of the original author’s intent, an examination of the context of the passage, and the revelation of the true meaning of the text. While different approaches and techniques can be used, there is no shortcut around hermeneutics in preparation to preach the Bible faithfully.

#### **The Importance of Words in the Text**

Words have meaning and when preparing a sermon on a selected text of Scripture, it is essential to observe, study, and preach the text in such a manner as to deliver the meaning of the words in the text. When preparing to preach, it is the duty of the preacher to pay close attention to the words in the passage. When words are overlooked in the study, the meaning of the text can be compromised in the pulpit. Martin Luther once said, “First I shake the whole tree, that the ripest may fall. Then I climb the tree and shake each limb, and then each branch and then each twig, and then I look under each leaf.”<sup>35</sup>

The great preacher of history, John Broadus, writes,

The word *text* is derived from the Latin *texere*, to weave; which figuratively came to signify to put together, to construct, and hence to compose, to express thought in continuous speech or writing. The noun *textus* thus denotes the product of weaving,

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<sup>34</sup>Richard Mayhue, “Rediscovering Expository Preaching,” in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 12.

<sup>35</sup>John F. MacArthur, “A Study Method for Expository Preaching,” in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 211.

the web, the fabric, and so in literary usage the fabric of one's thinking, continuous composition, written or, in later times, printed.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, the web of words that an author would weave together would conceal and reveal the meaning of the text. According to Broadus, "Thus the author's own work came to be called the *text*, that is, the continuous, connected composition as distinguished from the fragmentary notes and comments of the editor or speaker."<sup>37</sup> It is from this backdrop that the preacher must pursue a text of Scripture in order to unpack the meaning of each word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph. There is no substitute for faithful study of God's Word.

The difference between exegesis and eisegesis is found in the way the text of Scripture is approached. In exegesis, the preacher examines every detail of the text in order to exposit the true meaning. In eisegesis, the preacher imposes a meaning on the text that is different from what the words and sentence structure is designed to mean. John Broadus writes, "To interpret and apply his text in accordance with its real meaning, is one of the preacher's most sacred duties."<sup>38</sup> It is an unfortunate practice that many small groups in churches approach the sacred Word of God by asking questions such as, "What does this verse mean to you?" It is not man's duty to assign meanings to words contained in God's inerrant Word. The words in each passage should never be disconnected from the surrounding context. The context reveals the vein of thought that runs through each passage connecting words, sentences, paragraphs, and books. Walt Kaiser describes the "thread of thought" that the exegete must search out in the process of exegesis. Kaiser writes, "The exegete must feel that his primary obligation is to find this thread of thought which runs like a life stream through the smaller and larger parts of

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<sup>36</sup>Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 19.

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

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 32.

every passage.”<sup>39</sup>

### **The Importance of the Original Author of the Text**

The Bible is God’s Word written down through the hands of chosen men. While these men were free to write from their own heart and emotions, God was moving upon them to record exactly what He desired to be preserved as His inerrant and infallible Word. According to the Scripture in 2 Peter 1:21, the Word was not written by the “will of man” but was the result of God moving upon men by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as we approach every text of Scripture we must do so by examining the intent of the human author. God used each individual person, just as He created them, with their different personalities, emotions, and intellect to communicate His truth to mankind. The intent of the human author is where we will see the single meaning of the text of Scripture and the true meaning as God intended it from the beginning.

Sidney Greidanus writes, “Asking for the author’s purpose is a conscious attempt to curb subjectivism in interpretation.”<sup>40</sup> Preachers, due to circumstances, opinions, or personal convictions are often tempted to interpret a text of Scripture through a very subjective lens. This is often due to a lack of effort placed upon the examination of the human author and the intent that can be discovered through the grammar choice, historical background, and contextual clues. Sidney Greidanus makes a great point by writing, “A major reason for seeking the purpose of the author is, therefore, consciously to shift attention away from ourselves to the Scriptures, away from our concerns to the author’s concerns, away from our own purposes to the author’s purpose.”<sup>41</sup> The purpose of the author is vital and it is a dangerous error to divorce the intent of the author from

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<sup>39</sup>Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 71.

<sup>40</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 106.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 107.

the actual meaning of the text.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones comments on this issue by writing, “Nothing is more important than this. Ask questions such as, Why did he say that? Why did he say it in this particular way? What is he getting at? What was his object and purpose? One of the first things a preacher has to learn is to talk to his texts.”<sup>42</sup> As Lloyd-Jones points out, the focus of the preacher is to be on the goal, ambition, and intent of the original author. This is essential to discovering the true meaning of the text of Scripture. Carl F. H. Henry rightly states, “A wide gulf separates those interpreters ready to believe whatever the inspired writers intended to teach from those who would impose upon Scripture a historicist perspective.”<sup>43</sup>

*The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* was drafted in the fall of 1978 in effort to battle against the theological liberals who were in control of many evangelical organizations and churches. Theological liberalism had invaded the educational institutions and infiltrated the church level of evangelical Christianity. It was the goal and intent of that document to elevate the absolute inerrancy of God’s Word. In that historical document, the following statement summarizes the importance of the human author by saying, “Thus what Scripture says, God says; its authority is His authority, for He is its ultimate Author, having given it through the minds and words of chosen and prepared men who in freedom and faithfulness ‘spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit’ (2 Pet 1:21).”<sup>44</sup>

It should be further noted that the human author is not an inspired person, but

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<sup>42</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 40<sup>th</sup> ann. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 214-215.

<sup>43</sup>Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 4 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 175.

<sup>44</sup>International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (Chicago: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy), 1978.

was used to write an inspired text. Many texts were composed by men such as the apostle Paul that were not the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if we were to locate a third letter to the church at Corinth today, there is no reason to form a Bible summit and lobby for it to be joined to other inspired texts and included in God’s Word. What we have today is the fully completed and preserved canon of Scripture and it alone stands sufficient and distinct from all other texts of literature – even other texts written by a biblical author. Article one of the *Baptist Faith & Message* speaks of men writing the Bible who were “divinely inspired.” What we should understand by that statement is that those men were “divinely inspired” in writing the biblical text, but not in writing every text, every letter, or even their grocery list. God, in His sovereign way, has managed to preserve the sacred Scripture through time in ways that no other text by any other author in history has been preserved. Therefore, when we are reading the Bible, we are reading the Word of God. As we come to the point of distinguishing the human author’s intent, we will therein discover the intent of God and the meaning of the text of Scripture.

### **The Importance of Contextual Interpretation**

John Stott claims that in order for preaching “to be authentically Christian it must be expository.”<sup>45</sup> In order for preaching to be authentically expository, it must be approached from the historical context before applied to the modern audience. Stephen Olford makes an important assessment by saying, “Before getting to the heavy and detailed study of specific elements of the text, it is helpful to step back from the text and ask some contextual questions.”<sup>46</sup> The background of the text and the details of the surrounding text will contain vital information that will affect the meaning of the

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<sup>45</sup>John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 135.

<sup>46</sup>Stephen F. Olford and David L. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 111.



specified text that is under the spotlight of study. It would be a hermeneutical error to isolate individual words and phrases from the surrounding context.

In order to begin the process of textual study within the framework of hermeneutics and theological examination, the context must be examined closely. The type of genre, the sections of the book, and then the paragraph of the text must be examined in connection with the overall passage. This process can fall prey to two errors. First, the error of assigning meaning to a passage by taking later passages and imposing it on the older passage simply because it is connected through a theological or canonical grid. Walt Kaiser writes, “It is a mark of *eisegesis*, not *exegesis*, to borrow freight that appears chronologically later in the text and to transport it back and unload it onto an earlier passage simply because both or all the passages involved share the same canon.”<sup>47</sup> The second error that becomes common at this stage in hermeneutics is the tendency to isolate or divorce vocabulary from their surrounding text. Grammar studies are profitable to understanding the meaning of a passage, but that grammar must be married to the context in order to properly deliver the author’s intended meaning.

Just as the individual vocabulary of a passage should not be divorced from the context of the paragraph where it is found, the paragraph should not be separated from the section of the book where it resides. This error will result in the same theological error as the vocabulary problem. Walt Kaiser warns the interpreter by saying, “Without the benefit of knowing the connection between the paragraph under consideration and the section of the book in which it is found, the exegete will often be at sea in interpreting a passage.”<sup>48</sup>

When approaching the text of Scripture under consideration, the interpreter must have a good understanding of the sectional and theological context of the entire

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<sup>47</sup>Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 82.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.

book where the text is found. This will help him with discovering the vein of thought the author has in mind in the selected passage. J. Sidlow Baxter writes, “Like a great ocean, the wonderful contents of the Bible are before us, but we do not want to be merely sailing anywhere-or we shall get nowhere!”<sup>49</sup> When the preacher begins the study with a thorough understanding of the surrounding context, he will be able to rightly discern the author’s meaning, but any negligence in this process will leave the preacher with inappropriate conclusions that do not align with the original author’s meaning. Stephen Olford concludes, “Having a sense of the whole book, its divisions, and then the immediate context helps the preacher to get at the *purpose* of the text in context.”<sup>50</sup>

### **The Importance of the Single Meaning of the Text**

According to Chip Thornton, “A text has but one meaning, nothing more and nothing less.”<sup>51</sup> Throughout the history of preaching, many attempts have been made to popularize a layered approach to the meaning of Scripture. Grant Osborne, in his book, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, provides a lengthy approach consisting of ten stages that lead the interpreter to the actual meaning of the text of Scripture. However, he observes that the contextual or theological research moves the interpreter “from the textual meaning (what the Bible meant) to the contextual meaning (what the Bible means for us today).”<sup>52</sup> Such use of the word “meaning” as a synonym for application in the realm of hermeneutics can lead to interpretative errors.

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<sup>49</sup>J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 10.

<sup>50</sup>Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching*, 112.

<sup>51</sup>Thornton, “Allegorical Tendencies in Preaching,” 90.

<sup>52</sup>Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2006), 32.

Many different men, dating back to Augustine and Origen, have been guilty of shifting the meaning of a text away from the original author. More modern examples have been Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth, and Rudolf Bultmann. Friedrich Schleiermacher has been referred to as the father of modern hermeneutics. It was his style of biblical interpretation that was influenced greatly by the Enlightenment period. E. D. Hirsch, in his *Validity in Interpretation*, points all meaning and all other factors of the text, such as significance, back to the human author.<sup>53</sup> Walt Kaiser's point transcends the position of Hirsch, as he explains:

No one denies that texts may legitimately have consequent extensions into later times, cultures, and settings. Normally we refer to these extensions of the single meaning of the text as applications, or implications of the general principle (or the universal term) that comes from the author's single meaning. The point where our differences arise comes when we ask if the extensions of that meaning, which we obtain from exercising the normal rules of grammar, must be applied **by a continuous extension and from an application of the same sense**, or may the implications announced also be **different and separate** from the grammatico-historical meaning?<sup>54</sup>

Sidney Greidanus denies the single meaning of the text by suggesting that God often has a more broad meaning that transcends the meaning intended by the original human author. He writes, "In the history of interpretation this phenomenon of meanings beyond the author's original intention has been called the *sensus plenior*, the fuller sense."<sup>55</sup> Greidanus points out the danger of eisegesis in this area of interpretation and then goes on to suggest that this "fuller sense" must be connected to clear subsequent biblical revelations. What seems to be a solid warning by Greidanus is then overshadowed by his own interpretative errors as he flatly denies the single meaning of

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<sup>53</sup>E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 39.

<sup>54</sup>Walter Kaiser, "The Promise of Isaiah 7:14 and the Single-Meaning Hermeneutic," *Evangelical Journal* 6(1988):58 (emphases original).

<sup>55</sup>Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, 111.

the author. In Greidanus' attempt to explain the future view of prophetic writings, he overlooks the ability of a sovereign God to reveal specific events to the human author. Greidanus writes, "Gen. 3:15, 'I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel,' has a fuller sense, in the light of the New Testament revelation, than the author of Genesis would ever have realized."<sup>56</sup>

Greidanus jumps to these conclusions without any biblical evidence to prove that Moses was unaware of what he was communicating. Was Moses at least looking through the glass darkly or was he merely writing one thing with one intention while God was writing something else beneath the surface for a later revelation? There is no concrete evidence to suggest that Moses was ignorant of the ultimate fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. We do have evidence of David looking into the future with his prophetic revelation as recorded in Acts 2. As Peter quotes David's prophecy from Psalm 16:8-11 regarding the resurrection of Christ, he then follows up the quotation by saying, "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." David had one intention, and it was obviously connected to the bigger picture of the resurrection of Christ.

Robert Stein upholds the single meaning of the author and rejects the *sensus plenior* method that is embraced by Greidanus. He concludes, "To deny that the author determines the text's meaning also raises an ethical question. Such an approach appears to rob the author of his or her creation. To treat a text in complete isolation from its author's intended purpose is like stealing a patent from its inventor or a child from the

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 111-12.

parent who gave birth.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore, when approaching the Bible, we must do so with absolute caution and reverence since this is the Word of God. It would be detrimental to the author’s intent, the doctrine of inerrancy, and the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture if one concludes that the Bible has multiple meanings that differ from a single meaning in which the human author originally intended as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

### **The Most Accurate Method of Biblical Interpretation and Preaching Explained**

It is my conclusion that the most accurate biblical interpretation model is based upon a method that seeks to discover the single meaning of the original author from the context of God’s holy and inspired Word. This model is most often referred to as a literal-historical-grammatical interpretation. Within this model, I believe it is essential to embrace a solid position of biblical inerrancy in order to demonstrate that God has written His Word through chosen men of history and has likewise preserved it for us today. Furthermore, a literal interpretation that approaches God’s Word from a “word for word” translation is preferable. This approach is often referred to as formal equivalence and seeks to honor the true meaning of the text. A literal interpretation prevents spiritualizing a text through allegorical methods that change the meaning from what God intended through the human author.

The method explained by Walt Kaiser seems to be the closest approach to true exposition, and it safeguards the single meaning of the author in the process. Although other men such as Sydney Greidanus spotlight the gospel as they interpret the Old Testament Scripture, his approach can cross the line into eisegesis and allegorical interpretation if not carefully guarded. Rather than reading the New Testament back into the Old Testament, Walt Kaiser’s approach elevates the truth of the text as revealed by

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<sup>57</sup>Robert Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 22.

the inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon the original author. When interpreting the Bible, the original author is a huge factor that must never be overlooked.

From this method of interpretation, it is also my conclusion that the Bible should be preached expositively. Preaching is something that should be identified with the church of Jesus Christ. Preachers are called to proclaim a message of truth known to us as the gospel. Divinely commissioned preachers explain the Bible through their own personality, but their source of ultimate truth is not found in themselves. Albert Mohler writes, “The preacher dares to proclaim truth on the basis of God’s sovereign self-disclosure. God has spoken, and He has commanded us to speak of Him.”<sup>58</sup> Expository preaching, as mentioned in the earlier sections of this chapter, honors God’s Word, builds from the immediate context, controls the outline, elevates authorial intent, prevents allegorical interpretation, and forces the preacher to preach the whole counsel of the sacred Scripture. While there may be seasons within a church where rigid exposition must be set aside for doctrinal studies or a certain preaching series relevant to the needs of a congregation, as a steady diet the church should receive oversight from men who feed God’s flock from a verse-by-verse approach.

Although seasons arise in the church where a non-expository biblical study should be the focus of the people, from children to adults, the most healthy method of Bible study and Bible preaching is exposition (a verse-by-verse approach). While many churches fancy themselves as being serious about God and the pursuit of Him through His Word, many of those churches are extremely shallow in their knowledge of God. Doctrinal depth has often been replaced by pragmatic schemes and church growth techniques of man. These techniques veil the attributes of God and muzzle the grand truths of Scripture in their fleshly attempt to draw larger crowds. John Piper writes, “And

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<sup>58</sup>Albert Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 14.

even those who go to church – how many of them can say when they leave, ‘I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory’ (Ps. 63:2)?”<sup>59</sup> Among those who leave the sanctuary with a serious mind for God and heart for His Word, have they been given a good example of how to study God’s Word? Did the pastor and Bible teachers exemplify on the Lord’s day the correct model for biblical interpretation? These are questions that must be dealt with and this is why serious exposition must not be treated as an option on a buffet of teaching methods.

Although the name John Calvin has become a buzz word within many evangelical circles regarding a system of soteriology known as “Calvinism,” anyone who studies John Calvin’s life and ministry will learn that he had a relentless approach to an expository preaching method of God’s Word. It took Calvin over four years to cover the book of Acts. He covered 1 and 2 Thessalonians in 46 sermons. It took Calvin 186 sermons to cover 1 and 2 Corinthians and another 86 sermons to complete the Pastoral Epistles. In preaching through the book of Galatians, it took him 43 sermons. Calvin went verse-by-verse through the book of Ephesians in 48 sermons.<sup>60</sup> Many men have learned a great deal about preaching by the serious approach that John Calvin gave to this most solemn task. While I do not agree with every aspect of Calvin’s beliefs, without question, he exemplifies the meaning of a true expositor of God’s Word.

Steven Lawson writes, “Biblical preaching must come from the life of one who is fervent for the glory of God, zealous for the Word of God, and aflame for the souls of men, women and youth.”<sup>61</sup> From small group Bible studies and children’s Sunday school lessons to the pulpit ministry of our church, it is my firm conclusion that the Word of

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<sup>59</sup>John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 107.

<sup>60</sup>Lawson, *Famine in the Land*, 111.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 125.

God must be expounded faithfully in order to reveal the totality of God's glory. The purpose of preaching is to magnify and glorify God. It is our ultimate duty to ensure that we do not rob God of His glory through a deficient method of Bible preaching and teaching. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes,

Preaching addresses us in such a manner as to bring us under judgment; and it deals with us in such a way that we feel our whole life is involved, and we go out saying, 'I can never go back and live just as I did before. This has done something to me, it has made a difference to me. I am a different person as the result of listening to this.' Preaching is that which deals with the total person, the hearer becomes involved and knows that he has been dealt with and addressed by God through this preacher. Something has taken place in him and in his experience, and it is going to affect the whole of his life.<sup>62</sup>

It is my firm belief that the evangelical church today is in a serious drought of Bible preaching and teaching. We must return to the "old paths" of expository preaching that were established in ages past. These "old paths" were walked by men such as Stephen Olford, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Charles Spurgeon, John Calvin, and the apostles. The "old paths" of exposition are not right just because of their age, but they are made right based on their desire to honor God's Word and their pursuit of the true meaning of the text. John Calvin writes, "It ought always to be the aim of a good teacher, to turn away the eyes of men from the world, that they may look up to heaven."<sup>63</sup> Calvin exemplified that approach well as he preached relentlessly through books of the Bible.

It was Calvin's practice to preach through different seasons without pausing for special Calendar days. Many preachers of history have profited from Calvin's writings, but one of the things that Calvin left all preachers who came after him was his love for God's Word and his careful handling of it. Calvin's approach to the pulpit was

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<sup>62</sup>Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 40<sup>th</sup> ann. ed., 66-67.

<sup>63</sup>John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians 1&2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, trans. and ed. William Pringle, vol. 21 of *Calvin's Commentaries* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 283.



not a light-hearted or humorous style. He was a true expositor who labored intently to explain the unadulterated Word of God. As Calvin experienced a great deal of controversy while serving in Geneva, he was banished from his pulpit for a period of three years. Upon an invitation to return to his pulpit, he literally picked up exactly where he had left off at the time of his banishment.<sup>64</sup> It is likewise reported that Calvin became very ill in October of 1558 and had to postpone his preaching. In fact, he was not able to enter the pulpit again until June 12, 1559. When he returned to his preaching, he picked up in the very next verse from the book of Isaiah.<sup>65</sup>

May God be pleased to end the drought of sound doctrine and to revive the church again through faithful preaching and teaching ministries that are firmly established on the foundation of passionate and clear exposition. Expository evaluation and explanation will lead the church to expository jubilation as the glory of God is revealed. Faithful exposition has one primary goal and that goal is to bring the congregation face-to-face with God. It is only then that lost sinners will come to faith in God through Jesus Christ and it is only then that the sheep of God's flock will be sufficiently fed as intended by the God who rules and reigns over heaven and earth. That is the task of the preacher, and one that should bring us to humility each time we stand before a congregation for the purpose of explaining the Word of God.

The responsibility of safeguarding the proper means of biblical preaching rests upon the shoulders of preachers and teachers of God's Word. The mantle of preaching that has been laid upon the shoulders of all preachers should bring about much humility. The assignment of preaching is a weighty task. Steven Lawson said of Charles Spurgeon, "He had virtually become a fountainhead for its truth to gush forth. He had tapped into

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<sup>64</sup>Steven J. Lawson, *The Expository Genius of John Calvin* (Lake Mary FL: Reformation Trust, 2007), 33.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

the deep reservoirs of sovereign grace, and they flowed freely from his biblical expositions.”<sup>66</sup> It is my prayer that God would raise up more men like Spurgeon in our present day. The church desperately needs men who are mighty in the Scriptures and have a sure commitment to biblical exposition.

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<sup>66</sup>Steven J. Lawson, *The Gospel Focus of Charles Spurgeon*, (Lake Mary FL: Reformation Trust, 2012), 35.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE METHODOLOGY USED TO ACCOMPLISH THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The ministry research project covered twelve-weeks consisting of several elements and methods for collecting and tracking the data throughout the project. Several elements were employed to facilitate the project such as pre-sermon surveys and post-sermon surveys for the church and leadership, a six-week sermon series on expository preaching, a six-week teacher training class, and a teacher's project that consisted of a completed sermon (lesson) over Ephesians 2:1-10. These elements were all used in order to accomplish the main goals of this ministry research project: (1) enhance my personal abilities in the area of expository preaching; (2) educate the church body on the importance and effectiveness of expository preaching; (3) educate the teachers and preachers on how to properly develop and deliver an expository sermon; and (4) educate teachers and preachers on how to effectively defend the faith through expository teaching. The methods used helped track, record, and evaluate the progress in reaching the goals.

#### **Schedule of the Project**

The sermon series was titled, "Preaching Matters – The Plan of God for the Church" and was based on the subject of biblical exposition. The series began on May 27 and continued through July 22 during the evening services on Sunday. The timeline for the project consisted of the following:

1. May 20 – Church and Leadership Pre-Project Survey
2. May 27 – Began Sermon Series
3. June 3 – Began Teacher Training Series

4. July 22 – Sermon Series Ended
5. July 29 – Teacher Training Series Ended
6. July 29 – Church and Leadership Post-Project Survey
7. August 5 – Church and Leadership Post-Project Survey (week two)
8. August 12-19 – Evaluation of Project

### **Church and Leadership Pre-Project Survey**

The pre-project survey consisted of three sections of questions to evaluate the understanding of the church in general. (A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.) The first section was used to gather basic information related to name, age, and how long the individual has been a Christian. The second section, consisting of five questions, was designed to gather preferences on learning styles. The third and final section of questions consisted of fourteen questions and was based on a 5-point Likert scale. Each question in section 3 was designed to gather basic knowledge and preferences regarding methods of teaching and preaching the Bible. For instance, question 1, “I feel that the most effective way to teach the Bible is with a verse by verse method.” Question 9 stated, “Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual’s interpretation.” The questions were designed to compliment and contradict one another at times in order to gain specific patterns of answers.

The pre-project survey was handed out to the congregation the week prior to the start of the sermon series. The goal was to gain as much involvement prior to the start of the preaching series. Instructions were given during the announcements at the conclusion of the service and ushers stood at all exits and handed each member a copy of the survey with instructions to return the completed form in the foyer by the following Sunday evening. Out of a total of 167 surveys distributed in our Sunday evening service on May 20, a total of 141 were returned the following Sunday.

## **Six-Week Sermon Series**

The sermon series was based on the subject of expository preaching and was given the title, “Preaching Matters – The Plan of God for the Church.” The goal of the series was to walk the congregation through different texts of Scripture during the series and point out the importance of Bible teaching and the need to rightly handle the Word of God. The series was broken down into four Old Testament texts followed up by two New Testament texts. The series started in the Old Testament and worked toward the New Testament at the end in order to show that God’s plan from the beginning was to instruct, guide, encourage, and save His people through the message of the gospel.

### **Sermon 1**

The first sermon served as an introduction to the series and quickly moved to the subject of Deuteronomy 6 where we see God’s Word as central in the life of the people of Israel. The Word of God was placed before the people of Israel and God expected obedience from the people. In Deuteronomy 6:4-19, the importance of Scripture memory is also emphasized. Furthermore, a clear command was given to the parents to passionately teach the Scripture to their children. The first sermon took its roots in the life of the nation of Israel in order to demonstrate the comprehensive plan of God for His Word in the life of His people.

### **Sermon 2**

Sermon 2 was preached from Psalm 119:89-96. The main subject of the sermon was centered on the sufficiency of God’s Word. In order for the congregation to have a firm commitment to expository preaching, they must first have a solid understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture. The people of Israel had that understanding, although they did not always act upon it. In the second sermon, I wanted to drive home the absolute fact that God’s Word can be trusted in all areas of life. One

main reason for topical preaching is because of the relevant subject matter for each sermon, and exposition is often viewed as stale, outdated, and even boring. Therefore, I pointed out the reliability and sufficiency of Scripture from the Psalmist's words found in the most lengthy chapter in our Bible – Psalm 119.

### **Sermon 3**

Sermon 3 was also taken from the hymn book of the Bible. The text for sermon 3 was Psalm 19:7-11. The main idea of sermon 3 was centered on the subject of the special revelation of God's Word. From this text of Scripture, the Psalmist points out that God brings the light of the gospel to the eyes of fallen man through the message of God's Word. It is through His Word that God converts, sanctifies, encourages, corrects, perseveres, and sustains His people. Through this sermon I pointed out the necessity to rightly handle Scripture due to the purpose of God for His people through His Word.

### **Sermon 4**

For sermon 4, the text of Scripture was Nehemiah 8:1-12. The main goal of sermon 4 was to observe the practice of the nation of Israel as Ezra the scribe, along with his assistants, preached and explained the Word of God. The nation of Israel desired to hear a message from God, and Ezra stood before the people and read from the Law of God. His message started and finished with the Word rather than the opinion of man. This is one of the most crucial texts in the Bible for the subject of biblical exposition. As Alistair Begg explains, "Since expository preaching begins with the text of Scripture, it starts with God and is in itself an act of worship, for it is a declaration of the mighty acts of God. It establishes the focus of the people upon God and His glory before any consideration of man and his need."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alistair Begg, *Preaching for God's Glory* (Grand Rapids: Crossway, 1999), 33.

## **Sermon 5**

Sermon 5 was an exposition of 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and was our first text from the New Testament in the preaching series. The goal of this sermon was to center on the role and responsibility of a pastor in preaching. In chapter 3:16-17, Paul explained that “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” That same pattern of reproof, correction, and training for the man of God is repeated for the people of God. God does the reproving and training through the ministry of the man of God as he preaches and explains God’s Word. Therefore, the main goal of sermon 5 was to educate the church on the massive responsibility for the man of God as he stands before the congregation with God’s Word each week.

## **Sermon 6**

The final sermon of the series was preached from Titus 1:9-2:1. The main goal of this sermon was to demonstrate the need for faithful exposition by the pastor. If the pastor leads the church through real Bible exposition, it will cause the congregation to develop a pattern of Bible exposition in their own personal study of the Scriptures. Furthermore, a serious approach to Bible exposition will confront false teachers and their heresies as the genuine gospel of Jesus Christ is consistently preached. As Paul explained to Titus, the faithful teaching of God’s Word will overcome the empty messages of false teachers. At the end of the sermon, I sought to conclude the series by giving my firm position on the need to remain consistent in the area of biblical exposition in an age of change and compromise.

### **Six-Week Training Class For Teachers**

During the six-week preaching series for the church, I taught the teachers and preachers of our church through a six-week training class that covered the basics and

tools of biblical exposition. At the beginning of the class, I distributed a pre-project survey for the teachers to complete and this survey followed the same format as the survey that was distributed to the entire church for the preaching series. The teachers and preachers also received instruction about a project that would be due at the end of the training series. The project consisted of a lesson manuscript from Ephesians 2:1-10 designed for the age and class that each teacher normally leads. For the preachers in the class, they were given an option to develop a sermon designed for the pulpit.

### **Class 1**

On the first day of the training class, I covered the introduction of the class, basic vocabulary for the class, and a project that each teacher was asked to complete and turn in at the end of the training series. However, the main focus of class 1 was the vocabulary that centered on preaching, hermeneutics, and other terms that some teachers may not fully understand at first glance. After spending time discussing the definitions, I talked about the importance of attending all classes and learning the best approach to teaching the Bible.

### **Class 2**

Class 2 consisted of an overview of topical preaching. The class members were asked to watch a DVD of a topical sermon from a tent revival preached in our town in the early 90's prior to arriving for the Sunday training class. The class began by an overview of topical preaching and then the remaining time of the class was spent discussing the approach of the preacher to his text along with strengths and weaknesses of his presentation.

### **Class 3**

The third training class was devoted to the subject of expository preaching. Before arriving for the class, the teachers were asked to watch a DVD video of a sermon



preached by Alistair Begg at the Gospel Coalition Conference. After an overview of the subject of expository preaching, the class time was spent discussing the sermon. We discussed the strengths, weaknesses, and the overall approach to the text of Scripture. The class members participated well in the discussion time and provided good observations about his approach to the text. I concluded the class with my personal position on biblical exposition and why I believe that the normative method for preaching should always be expository preaching.

#### **Class 4**

Class 4 consisted of a presentation of basic biblical hermeneutics along with a list of websites and online tools that will assist teachers in their preparation to teach God's Word. It is essential for anyone who plans to teach and preach the Bible to have a good understanding of how to approach a text of Scripture. The basic science of biblical hermeneutics is centered upon a knowledge of the importance of words in the text. Therefore, the majority of the class was spent covering the importance of words and the responsibility of each teacher in the pursuit of the single meaning of each passage of Scripture.

#### **Class 5**

The fifth class was centered on the subject of apologetics. While each teacher and preacher in the room may not feel called to the ministry of apologetics, it is essential to know how to use the Bible in an expository manner to accurately defend the faith once delivered to the saints. The central focus of the class was spent in the book of Revelation as we considered the heresy of the Jehovah's Witnesses. As we went through chapter 1 and 22, I demonstrated from the context of each chapter how we can prove that Jesus is God and that He has risen from the dead as Lord of all. Rather than merely picking and choosing random texts of Scripture from the Bible to prove their heresy false, I walked

through each chapter and connected the dots from the context to demonstrate the reality of Jesus' deity and resurrection.

### **Class 6**

The final class began with a brief conclusion and explanation of why I believe that biblical exposition is the only solution for true Christian preaching on a normative basis for the church. Following my conclusion to the training series, I spent the remainder of the class time discussing Ephesians 2:1-10 from my personal manuscript. I asked for volunteers to explain how they arrived at the main idea of their lesson and to explain their outline divisions. We discussed these divisions in order and referenced the text of Scripture for support. We started out with the context and then moved to the ten selected verses. Each division in the lesson was based on the definitions of words and the structure of the language used by the apostle Paul. Following the discussion, I distributed a post-project survey for the teachers to complete and return the following week. I also collected the teachers' lesson from Ephesians.

### **Post-Project Survey**

The post-project survey was distributed to the church on July 29<sup>th</sup> at the conclusion of our worship service. Likewise, on July 29<sup>th</sup> a post-project survey was distributed to the teachers and preachers at the conclusion of the training class which preceded the worship service. Directions were given and the church was asked to return their completed surveys by the following week. On August 5<sup>th</sup> at the conclusion of the evening worship service, anyone who had not previously received a post-project survey was given one and the church was asked to turn it in at the earliest possible date in order to record and track the data for the project. It took over two weeks to receive the total of 131 surveys from the evening services of our church during the timeline of our project.

## **Leadership Project**

The leadership of the church was asked to submit a lesson from Ephesians 2:1-10 using the tools they learned during the training class. Each person submitted their lesson that was designed for their class that they normally lead. The teachers and preachers in the class were given a list of resources to consider during the development of their lesson. They were also given a sample of a sermon manuscript that I had developed from Ephesians 2:1-10 as they thought through the process of their project. I explained to the class members that one foundational goal for this project was to enable them to develop a lesson without the use of a teacher guide or pre-published material. Furthermore, I also explained that this lesson would always be ready in case they were called upon to teach at the last minute by invitation or necessity to cover for another person in ministry. During the final class, we discussed the component parts of this lesson from the assigned text in light of the tools that we discussed during the six-week training class sessions.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

#### **Analysis of Data**

This project included two main sets of data that needed to be analyzed. The two sets include: the data from the church body and the data from the leadership group that consisted of teachers and preachers within our church congregation. The church body included one hundred forty-one respondents and the leadership group consisted of twenty-four. The pre-test and post-test data from both groups were collected, organized, and analyzed to see the movement in the data. This analysis took place over a two-week period.

The data for each set was entered into a spreadsheet and placed into an organized table that allowed easy examination of the data. This allowed me to view the data clearly and precisely for each category. The respondents for each category such as “agree” or “disagree” were totaled and placed into their table accordingly. Additionally, the number of respondents for each category were evaluated in connection to the total number of respondents. This allowed me to see the percentage of the entire group for each category. The movement in the data for each category was recorded below each table (see Appendices 4-7).

The evaluation of the data from the project was used to measure the effectiveness of the project in terms of three of the four goals: educating the church on the effectiveness of expository preaching, educating the leaders of the church (preachers and teachers) in the basics of expository preaching, and enhancing the leaders of the church (teachers and preachers) in their ability to defend the faith through faithful

exposition. After evaluating the data for both sets, no massive movements were visible from the data, but some movements in the right direction of the goals could be measured. The majority of the success in this project could be measured in the leadership group which included both teachers and preachers in the congregation.

Question number 9 to the church stated, “Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual’s interpretation.” The pre-test survey recorded 16 percent of the church “strongly agree” while 31 percent “disagree” with the statement. The post-test results showed a movement in the “strongly agree” category from 16 percent down to 5 percent while the “agree” category increased from 31 percent to 52 percent of the total respondents.

The church answered in an expected manner regarding their views of topical preaching and this was one of the purposes for this project (see rationale in chapter one). While a drastic movement in the data was not visible from the statistics regarding the church’s views of topical preaching, they did seem to move in a positive direction to questions 4 and 10 (see Appendix 5), which deal with the heart of expository preaching and teaching methods.

Question 3 stated, “I feel that topical preaching is more connected with the current events of our day.” The pre-test results included 22 percent who “disagree” and the same percentage “agree” with the statement. The post-test results moved the “disagree” category from 22 percent to 41 percent; however, the “agree” category remained at 18 percent. When compared with question 5, the results show that the church does see a relevance to topical preaching, but they likewise see expositional studies as relevant to everyday life. Question 5 states, “The Spirit of God who leads the pastoral staff to choose a particular book for a verse-by-verse study knows what events, problems, and needs the church will be facing 18 weeks into a 52 week study.” While the pre-test data revealed 56 percent in the “strongly agree” category, the post-test data showed that category increase to 61 percent overall. This data revealed a confidence in

the ability of expository preaching to connect to current events and everyday life.

Through the sermon series, the data revealed that the respondents (a clear representation of the Pray's Mill Baptist Church) have a healthy and growing view of expository preaching. While topical preaching seems to be respected on some level, the data reveals a clear uncertainty related to topical preaching and a growing dependency upon exposition. The results of this project may have a growing harvest in the life of Pray's Mill that will continue to be revealed into the future. As stated clearly at the beginning of this series, it is difficult to see a clear success in this area in only a few weeks; therefore, it is my desire to see the full results of this project to appear in the life of our congregation as a means of health and protection in the years to come.

Perhaps the most successful movement toward reaching the goals of this project could be evident through an evaluation of the leadership group data. In question 1 to the leaders, the questionnaire stated, "I feel that the most effective way to teach the Bible is with a verse-by-verse method." The pre-test results showed 46 percent "strongly agree" while the post-test results revealed a spike to 68 percent. The "uncertain" category decreased from 21 percent to 0 percent in the post-test results.

Another example of the leadership group success is evident in the results from question 3. The question stated, "If I was asked to teach a lesson from a passage of Scripture without a guide, I feel confident that I could effectively teach the Bible with a verse-by-verse approach." The pre-test results revealed that only 38 percent of the group "agree" with that statement while the post-test results revealed a jump to 69 percent in that same category. This shows the growth in the leaders' confidence to locate resources in order to assist them in rightly dividing a specified text of Scripture.

While no massive data jumps were recorded in either set of data, it is encouraging to see movement in the right direction for each group. The most encouraging is the leadership movement since they will serve as a catalyst for sparking greater health in the rest of the congregation as a whole.

## **Analysis of Leadership Group Training Classes**

The first meeting of the leadership group included a brief explanation of the class, the purpose, goals, and summary of the questionnaire. Following the brief introductory remarks, the first class was spent explaining the definitions of terms related to expository preaching and teaching. During this first class, it was evident that we had some differing positions in the class, but the overall majority was in agreement on the big issues related to expository preaching and teaching.

The first assignment for the class involved an evaluation of a sermon preached by an evangelist at an evangelistic crusade in the early 1990's. The leadership group was asked to evaluate the preacher on his effectiveness and be prepared to discuss it as a group. An evaluation form was provided for the class members to use in order to evaluate the preaching and be prepared for the class discussion (see Appendix 8). As we gathered together to discuss the first sermon, it was apparent, the overall majority of the class was opposed to his method of preaching. His model was not seen as an effective strategy to accurately handling the Word of God. While they pointed out the strengths of this particular preacher and his delivery, they likewise detailed the flaws to his approach and provided a healthy discussion on why this was not a healthy preaching methodology. One of the main deficiencies the class members highlighted was related to the topical preaching method this preacher used. His preaching style lacked a connection to the context for each supporting passage that was pulled into the sermon from various places in the Bible. I was extremely encouraged to hear the discussion around the room on this issue.

The second sermon was an expository message by Alistair Begg. The class members reviewed his preaching in the same way that the topical sermon was reviewed (see Appendix 9). Our discussion centered on expository preaching as it related to Alistair Begg and then moved to a discussion of the health benefits connected with

expository preaching. While I provided a clear cautionary remark about preaching and teaching that insisted on a need for an occasional topical sermon or series, I argued that the overall diet should consist of expository preaching and teaching. The majority of the class agreed with this statement and insisted that a commitment to exposition as the main diet of the church would provide optimum health.

One of the main items of discussion among the class during the fourth week was prayer. It was refreshing to hear the teachers and preachers talk about the importance of prayer at the beginning of the preparation process. Although we may be committed to exposition, that doesn't mean that prayer is not important. The class members pointed to the need to pray for the Spirit's illumination in the study and preparation process of each lesson.

In the class discussion, one of the main reoccurring themes that continued to resurface each week was the importance of a proper context to the foundation of the sermon. That was one of the major weaknesses to the topical sermon and one of the main strengths to the expository sermon. I was greatly encouraged to hear the teachers and preachers constantly referring to the importance of interpreting the Scripture within the historical context of the selected passage.

The main purpose of this class was to encourage and equip the church leaders in the areas related to expository preaching and teaching. While it was clear from the beginning that our teachers and preachers have a high regard for exposition, our class time together provided for healthy discussion, reinforcement on the issues, and an opportunity to provide our leaders with resources and examples of expository preaching methods. Some of the data reported movement toward a more solid position on exposition as it relates to some of the issues of a verse-by-verse method. For instance, the final question in the questionnaire stated, "The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse-by-verse method." The pre-test results reported 63 percent "strongly agree" and 37 percent



“agree” with the statement. The post-test results reported 100 percent “strongly agree” with this statement. Therefore, it seems clear that our class provided a healthy reinforcement to the leadership of our congregation on the importance of rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

### **Evaluation of Goals**

The first goal of the project was to increase my education and enhance my abilities as an expositor of God’s Word. During my research, reading, teaching, and preaching throughout this project, I have been challenged and refined in this extremely important area. Not only have I personally been encouraged through the reading material, but I was also challenged on several issues related to the practical nature of exposition during the project timeline.

During the leadership class, open discussion took place each week regarding the specified subject. On more than one occasion, the issues surrounding the use of illustrations and applications really helped me in my personal practice of expository preaching. One of my greatest weaknesses is providing application and illustrations to bridge the gap between the original author’s intent and the present day lives of the congregation. Therefore, following this project I have spent more time trying to apply and illustrate the passage during my preaching. The personal goals were achieved in this project.

The second goal of this project was to educate the church body on the importance and effectiveness of expository preaching and teaching. The results of the data point to very minimal change, but this could be due to the fact that our congregation had a high view of preaching and teaching prior to the start of this project. The deficiencies of the congregation will be strengthened over time through a consistent model of biblical exposition each week as I preach the Bible. It is my desire to be constantly working with the preachers and teachers to make them more healthy in their

areas of service. However, a few of the questions seem to indicate the congregation came to a more healthy knowledge of the importance of biblical exposition and our commitment to it. For instance, question 14 stated, “The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse-by-verse method.” The pre-test results revealed 6 percent of those polled disagreed with this statement. The post-test results recorded 0 percent who disagree with the statement. Once again, this is not a massive shift, but it does indicate movement in a healthy direction for the congregation.

The third goal of this project was to educate the preachers and teachers of our congregation on how to accurately develop and deliver an expository message. While the leaders of the congregation had a healthy view of biblical teaching and preaching, the data revealed some measurable success in the overall project. Question 7 on their survey stated, “The meaning of each passage of Scripture is not up to the teacher or students in the class, it’s found in the context by closely examining the original author’s (such as Paul or whoever wrote the text being studied) intent.” The pre-test results showed 58 percent strongly agree while 17 percent were uncertain. When compared to the results of the post-test results, it becomes clear that they had a much more healthy view. The post-test results revealed 84 percent who strongly agree and 0 percent who were uncertain.

Another area of success in the results was in question 5. The survey stated, “My preparation skills are great, but I have trouble communicating the lesson clearly before people.” The pre-test results were widely varied. The results showed, 4 percent strongly agree, 17 percent agree, 25 percent uncertain, 50 percent disagree, and 4 percent strongly disagree. Naturally, one would expect this type of answer from teachers and preachers within the congregation who serve as mere volunteers. The post-test results revealed, 0 percent strongly agree, 5 percent agree, 5 percent uncertain, 74 percent disagree, and 16 percent strongly disagree. The data in this question revealed a distinct spike in confidence to prepare and communicate a lesson from the Bible.

The leadership of the church showed far more improvement than the overall church body. This is extremely encouraging to see due to the fact that the church body will be directly strengthened by the leaders who teach the Word. It is my desire to do follow-up meetings with our teachers to encourage and equip them in their teaching abilities. If I invest in the leaders of the church who teach, it will have a dramatic impact on the entire church over time.

The fourth goal of the project was designed to enhance the preachers and teachers in their ability to defend the faith through expository teaching. During the six-week training class, we examined the methods of cults who often use the Bible as a proof-text out of context to validate their points. Therefore, if we can learn how to rightly handle Scripture by interpreting it within the historical, grammatical context – the truth will always triumph over the teaching of cult groups.

The process of education involved an examination of Revelation 1 and Revelation 22 with the class members. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the deity of Christ, and from these two passages the deity of Christ is revealed clearly from pages of the sacred Scripture. I pointed out that they often have padded answers and perverted interpretations prepared for John 1:1 and Colossians 1, but they are often not prepared for the passages in Revelation that deal with the deity of Christ.

After walking through these texts together and discussing the importance of unpacking the surrounding context, it became clear to the leadership class that the context was the key to revealing the truth of the text. Without the context, the Jehovah's Witnesses will often give an answer that points away from the deity of Christ. However, upon a careful examination and explanation of the surrounding passage, it becomes apparent that the Bible is revealing Jesus as God. In the survey, question 12 stated, "Many cults use the Bible to support their agenda by misinterpreting texts of Scripture by pulling them out of their original context." The pre-test results revealed that 63 percent strongly agree, 34 percent agree, and 3 percent were uncertain. The post-test results

reported 95 percent strongly agree and 5 percent agree while 0 percent were uncertain or disagreed. It appears that the leaders in the training class came to the realization that a contextual evaluation of the Bible will benefit them in their defense of the faith when presented with those opportunities in public or in a teaching setting.

### **Evaluation of Process**

There are a few things that I would change if I performed this project in the life of my church again. First, I would begin with clearer and more concise instructions to the entire congregation regarding the overall purpose and goals of this project. As I look back and reflect on the beginning of the project, I had good intentions, but my communication was not clear enough. Furthermore, I would begin the process of educating the church body on the upcoming project several weeks earlier than I initially informed the congregation. This would result in a better understanding and participation from the congregation.

The second thing I would change regarding the process is related to the timeline of the project. The project started in May and extended through August. During our project, we saw a few members drop out of the leadership class and several families missed the post-test survey opportunities due to being absent a couple of weeks for summer vacation. My initial desire was to remain on a December graduation schedule, and that forced me to do the project over the summer months, and I feel that I would have had better results if the project had been completed in the months when the church attendance is more stable.

The third alteration I would make to this project if I had to complete it once again would be related to the completion and delivery of post-test surveys for the church and leadership. Although a good percentage of people returned their completed survey, they took over two weeks to trickle into the church office. If the church members and leadership class were asked to complete the survey before leaving the auditorium, it

would have resulted in a much faster delivery time. This would have allowed absentees to return their survey the following week, and the time spent on the evaluation of the project would have been more concise.

The final change that I would make regarding this project is related to the survey questions. A couple of the questions were not clear enough, and I fully believe that it resulted in more “uncertain” answers than should have been recorded. If I was crafting the questions again, I would be more specific and seek absolute clarity in the questions chosen for the survey. This would provide more accurate data in the pre-test and post-test results. This would result in more accurate reporting upon completion of the project.

### **Theological Reflection**

This project has caused me to rethink the importance of exposition in the life of the church. From an early age, children should be exposed to the right handling of Scripture so that when they develop Bible study habits from watching their pastor, it will result in a love for exposition. Pastors and teachers are to be an example to those under their care. First Peter 5:3 says that the elder should be an “example to the flock.” One of the most important ways an elder can be an example to the flock entrusted to his care is by faithfully handling the Word of God before the eyes of the people. No pastor can expect his people to have a love for exposition in their homes if he doesn’t exemplify that before them each week in the pulpit. God’s Word must be preached with extreme caution and humility.

Another clear truth that surfaced in this project is the importance of interpreting the Bible through a proper hermeneutic. Although there is a clear connection between each passage of Scripture and Jesus, we must be cautious in our interpretation to avoid reading Jesus into every passage of the Bible. Just because a certain hermeneutic has Jesus’ name in the title does not mean that it will always avoid allegorical

interpretation in the process of exegesis. Therefore, it is essential for the pastor and teachers within the church to interpret the Scripture with a solid commitment to the original author's intent. When the leaders of the church understand this important concept, it will make the church healthy through a proper handling of God's Word.

Finally, this project reinforced the understanding that the life of the church should be centered on the preaching of the Bible. From the very beginning of the early church (Acts 2) to our modern church campus models, God expects His Word to be the driving force behind our worship, evangelism, and community. Any alteration to the centrality of preaching in the life of the church will result in man-centered entertainment and a wide variety of church growth techniques that do not align themselves with God's plan for His people.

### **Personal Reflection**

One of the foundational goals of this project was to sharpen and refine my abilities in the area of expository preaching. Not only do I feel that I am a better expositor and communicator as a result of this project, but it has likewise reinforced by commitment and zeal for rightly handling the Word of God. As I have read the great preachers and theologians of history upon the subject of preaching, my heart has become overwhelmed with the reality that the church must have a revival of serious biblical exposition. The Word of God transcends tradition, scholarship, and theologians; and it provides sufficient witness to the seriousness of Christian preaching. 2 Timothy 3:16 to 4:5 is a tremendous passage of Scripture that reveals the task of pastors. The Bible is God's Word and it must be preached to accomplish the purposes of God. True biblical preaching accomplishes the sovereign purposes of God from regeneration to edification, and the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry.

Through this project, I have also learned the importance of illustration and application. Preaching is not a dry commentary of the text of Scripture. As D. Martyn

Lloyd-Jones rightly states, “Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire.”<sup>1</sup> However, it is essential to control the emotions, stories, and application to ensure that no damage is done to the meaning of the text. Many preachers avoid a true commitment to application because they want to safeguard the meaning. However, through this project (especially the leadership training class) I have become convinced of the need for faithfully bridging the gap from the ancient setting to our modern audience through careful application. This is an essential to biblical preaching.

Finally, this project has been a refining tool in the hands of our Lord upon my life. While working on this project the Lord has blessed our family with two new additions, and He has transitioned us away to Georgia to serve the church where we both grew up as children. During this time of transition, I was forced to postpone the research and project for an entire year. Therefore, once the project was restarted, I have dedicated each Friday (the day our church office is closed) away from my family for research and writing purposes. This time has caused me to value my family more and cherish the time we get to spend together outside of ministry and church life. Although it has been a struggle at times, it has caused me to become more structured in time management and committed to persevering through perceived roadblocks that hinder me from reaching goals.

### **Conclusion**

This project has revived me, challenged me, humbled me, and equipped me for the work of pastoral ministry. The more I read, study, and research about one specific thing, the more I realize how little I know about so many things in life and ministry. This project has given me renewed strength in the pulpit, refined skills, heightened passions, and a humbled spirit. John MacArthur was right on target when he said, “We ministers

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<sup>1</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 97.

are weak, common, plain, fragile, breakable, dishonorable, and disposable clay pots who should be taking the garbage out – but instead we’re bringing the glory of God to our people (2 Corinthians 4:7).”<sup>2</sup> Through this project, I have revisited my calling and meditated upon my responsibility as an elder who labors in word and doctrine.

The feeling I have as I write this final paragraph is comparable to the way I have often felt upon the completion of a marathon. I feel a sense of accomplishment although I am extremely tired from the process of this project. It is my earnest desire that this project has benefited my church family and I pray that my efforts will likewise be a helpful resource for future studies in the area of preaching. It is my prayer that other preachers will consider taking up a similar task for personal sanctification and to further the cause of revival and reformation in the area of biblical preaching. May it be said of me as I stand before my Lord in eternity, that my foundational desire for this project was to bring glory to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur, “A Reminder to Shepherds,” in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, ed. Don Kistler (Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2002), 285.





Scripture) are necessary in the life of the church requiring a method of delivery that differs from a verse by verse method.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual's interpretation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. A verse by verse approach to teaching the Scripture provides the people with a clear understanding of the overall theme, author's intent, original audience, and single meaning of each text.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Children should be exposed to the correct way to handle Scripture from an early age.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Many cults use the Bible to support their agenda by misinterpreting texts of Scripture by pulling them out of their original context.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I believe the best way to defend the faith when talking to unbelievers or skeptics is through a clear interpretation of a biblical text within the context of the passage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse by verse method.

## APPENDIX 2

### LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Using the following scale, please write the number that best corresponds to your feelings in response to the statements:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
_____	1.	I feel that the most effective way to teach the Bible is with a verse by verse method.		
_____	2.	I believe that a topical preaching style is an effective way to teach the Bible.		
_____	3.	If I was asked to teach a lesson from a passage of Scripture without a guide, I feel confident that I could effectively teach the Bible with a verse by verse approach.		
_____	4.	If asked, I could provide at least 4 good resources for use in preparing a lesson on a specified text of Scripture.		
_____	5.	My preparation skills are great, but I have trouble communicating the lesson clearly before people.		
_____	6.	I feel that each passage of the Bible should be interpreted within the context of the original audience in order to gain the true meaning of the passage.		
_____	7.	The meaning of each passage of Scripture is not up to the teacher or students in the class, it's found in the context by closely examining the original author's (such as Paul or whoever wrote the text being studied) intent.		
_____	8.	I think there are times when doctrinal studies (Trinity, Inerrancy of Scripture) are necessary in the life of the church requiring a method of delivery that differs from a verse by verse method.		

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual's interpretation.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. A verse by verse approach to teaching the Scripture provides the people with a clear understanding of the overall theme, author's intent, original audience, and single meaning of each text.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Children should be exposed to the correct way to handle Scripture from an early age.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Many cults use the Bible to support their agenda by misinterpreting texts of Scripture by pulling them out of their original context.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I believe the best way to defend the faith when talking to unbelievers or skeptics is through a clear interpretation of a biblical text within the context of the passage.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse by verse method.

## APPENDIX 3

### SERMON OUTLINES

- Sermon 1      Deuteronomy 6      “Scripture in the Life of God’s People”
- I.      Steadfast Obedience Expected
  - II.     Scripture to be Memorized, Explained, and Obeyed
  - III.    Strong Testimony to Future Generations
- Sermon 2      Psalm 119:89-96      “The Sufficiency of God’s Word”
- I.      The Timeless Truth of Scripture
  - II.     The Timeless Treasure of Scripture
- Sermon 3      Psalm 19:7-11 “The Special Revelation of God’s Word”
- I.      God’s Word Converts the Lost
  - II.     God’s Word Sanctifies the Saved
  - III.    God’s Word Rejoices the Discouraged
  - IV.    God’s Word Corrects the Child of God
  - V.     God’s Word Perseveres the Righteous
  - VI.    God’s Word Sustains the Child of God
- Sermon 4      Nehemiah 8:1-12      “God’s Word – Preached, Explained, and Obeyed”
- I.      The Preaching of the Word
  - II.     The Explanation of the Word

- III. The Obedience of the Word
  
- Sermon 5      2 Timothy 4:1-5      “The Man of God and his Message”
  - I.      The Man – Called by God
  - II.     The Man – Commitment to the Word of God
  - III.    The Man – Consistent in Ministry
  
- Sermon 6      Titus 1:9-2:1      “The Pastor’s Preaching of Scripture”
  - I.      Preaching the Faithful Word
  - II.     Preaching that Confronts False Teachers and their Message
  - III.    Preaching Sound Doctrine

APPENDIX 4

AVERAGES FOR THE CHURCH BODY

Table A1 Average Responses to Question 1

Question 1		
I feel that the most effective way to teach the Bible is with a verse-by-verse method.		
Pre-Test Average	1.87	
Post-Test Average	1.67	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A2 Average Responses to Question 2

Question 2		
I believe that a topical preaching style is an effective way to teach the Bible.		
Pre-Test Average	2.89	
Post-Test Average	3.05	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A3 Average Responses to Question 3

Question 3		
I feel that topical preaching is more connected with the current events of our day.		
Pre-Test Average	2.85	
Post-Test Average	3.19	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A4 Average Responses to Question 4

Question 4		
An expository preaching model is more likely to present tough biblical texts that are often avoided.		
Pre-Test Average	1.88	
Post-Test Average	1.58	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A5 Average Responses to Question 5

Question 5		
The Spirit of God who leads the pastoral staff to choose a particular book for a verse-by-verse study knows what events, problems, and needs the church will be facing 18 weeks into a 52 week study.		
Pre-Test Average	1.66	
Post-Test Average	1.57	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A6 Average Responses to Question 6

Question 6		
I feel that each passage of the Bible should be interpreted within the context of the original audience in order to gain the true meaning of the passage.		
Pre-Test Average	1.77	
Post-Test Average	1.54	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		



Table A7 Average Responses to Question 7

Question 7		
The meaning of each passage of Scripture is not up to the teacher or students in the class, it's found in the context by closely examining the original author's (such as Paul or whoever wrote the text being studied) intent.		
Pre-Test Average	1.88	
Post-Test Average	1.53	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A8 Average Responses to Question 8

Question 8		
I think there are times when doctrinal studies (Trinity, Inerrancy of Scripture) are necessary in the life of the church requiring a method of delivery that differs from a verse-by-verse method.		
Pre-Test Average	1.73	
Post-Test Average	1.58	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A9 Average Responses to Question 9

Question 9		
Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual's interpretation.		
Pre-Test Average	3.74	
Post-Test Average	4.03	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A10 Average Responses to Question 10

Question 10		
A verse-by-verse approach to teaching the Scripture provides the people with a clear understanding of the overall theme, author's intent, original audience, and single meaning of each text.		
Pre-Test Average	2.02	
Post-Test Average	1.81	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A11 Average Responses to Question 11

Question 11		
Children should be exposed to the correct way to handle Scripture from an early age.		
Pre-Test Average	1.28	
Post-Test Average	1.08	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A12 Average Responses to Question 12

Question 12		
Many cults use the Bible to support their agenda by misinterpreting texts of Scripture by pulling them out of their original context.		
Pre-Test Average	1.37	
Post-Test Average	1.29	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A13 Average Responses to Question 13

Question 13			
I believe the best way to defend the faith when talking to unbelievers or skeptics is through a clear interpretation of a biblical text within the context of the passage.			
	Pre-Test Average	1.71	
	Post-Test Average	1.50	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A14 Average Responses to Question 14

Question 14			
The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse-by-verse method.			
	Pre-Test Average	1.86	
	Post-Test Average	1.58	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

APPENDIX 5

CHURCH BODY RESULTS

Table A15 Actual Responses to Question 1

Question 1: I feel that the most effective way to teach the Bible is with a verse-by-verse method.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	48	34%	51	39%
Agree	71	50%	74	56%
Uncertain	13	9%	4	3%
Disagree	9	6%	2	2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A16 Actual Responses to Question 2

Question 2: I believe that a topical preaching style is an effective way to teach the Bible.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	9	6%	7	5%
Agree	56	40%	43	33%
Uncertain	26	19%	21	16%
Disagree	41	29%	51	39%
Strongly Disagree	9	6%	10	7%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A17 Actual Responses to Question 3

Question 3: I feel that topical preaching is more connected with the current events of our day.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23	16%	13	9%
Agree	31	22%	23	18%
Uncertain	43	31%	31	24%
Disagree	31	22%	54	41%
Strongly Disagree	13	9%	10	8%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A18 Actual Responses to Question 4

Question 4: An expository preaching model is more likely to present tough biblical texts that are often avoided.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	61	43%	64	49%
Agree	54	38%	61	47%
Uncertain	8	6%	3	2%
Disagree	18	13%	3	2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: The “Disagree” category decreased by 11% overall.

Table A19 Actual Responses to Question 5

Question 5: The Spirit of God who leads the pastoral staff to choose a particular book for a verse-by-verse study knows what events, problems, and needs the church will be facing 18 weeks into a 52 week study.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	79	56%	80	61%
Agree	35	25%	30	23%
Uncertain	23	16%	18	14%
Disagree	4	3%	3	2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A20 Actual Responses to Question 6

Question 6: I feel that each passage of the Bible should be interpreted within the context of the original audience in order to gain the true meaning of the passage.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	61	43%	67	51%
Agree	51	36%	57	44%
Uncertain	25	18%	7	5%
Disagree	4	3%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A21 Actual Responses to Question 7

Question 7: The meaning of each passage of Scripture is not up to the teacher or students in the class, it's found in the context by closely examining the original author's (such as Paul or whoever wrote the text being studied) intent.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	67	47%	72	55%
Agree	48	34%	52	40%
Uncertain	10	7%	3	2%
Disagree	8	6%	4	3%
Strongly Disagree	8	6%	0	0%

Conclusion: It should be noted that the “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” categories decreased.

Table A22 Actual Responses to Question 8

Question 8: I think there are times when doctrinal studies (Trinity, Inerrancy of Scripture) are necessary in the life of the church requiring a method of delivery that differs from a verse-by-verse method.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	59	42%	60	46%
Agree	65	46%	67	51%
Uncertain	13	9%	3	2%
Disagree	4	3%	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A23 Actual Responses to Question 9

Question 9: Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual's interpretation.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23	16%	7	5%
Agree	4	3%	2	1%
Uncertain	19	13%	14	11%
Disagree	45	31%	68	52%
Strongly Disagree	52	37%	40	31%

Conclusion: The most significant movement was with the “Strongly Agree” category as it decreased and moved toward the “Disagree” category.

Table A24 Actual Responses to Question 10

Question 10: A verse-by-verse approach to teaching the Scripture provides the people with a clear understanding of the overall theme, author's intent, original audience, and single meaning of each text.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	43	31%	40	31%
Agree	75	53%	78	60%
Uncertain	0	0%	11	8%
Disagree	23	16%	2	1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: The “Disagree” category decreased significantly.



Table A25 Actual Responses to Question 11

Question 11: Children should be exposed to the correct way to handle Scripture from an early age.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	101	72%	120	92%
Agree	40	28%	11	8%
Uncertain	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: The “Agree” category decreased and moved toward the “Strongly Agree” category.

Table A26 Actual Responses to Question 12

Question 12: Many cults use the Bible to support their agenda by misinterpreting texts of Scripture by pulling them out of their original context.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	89	63%	93	71%
Agree	48	34%	38	29%
Uncertain	4	3%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A27 Actual Responses to Question 13

Question 13: I believe the best way to defend the faith when talking to unbelievers or skeptics is through a clear interpretation of a biblical text within the context of the passage.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	66	47%	79	60%
Agree	54	38%	39	30%
Uncertain	17	12%	12	9%
Disagree	4	3%	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A28 Actual Responses to Question 14

Question 14: The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse-by-verse method.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	48	34%	61	46%
Agree	72	51%	64	49%
Uncertain	13	9%	6	5%
Disagree	8	6%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: The “Disagree” category moved up toward the “Strongly Agree” category.

APPENDIX 6

AVERAGES FOR THE LEADERSHIP GROUP

Table A29 Leadership Average Responses to Question 1

Question 1			
I feel that the most effective way to teach the Bible is with a verse-by-verse method.			
	Pre-Test Average	1.75	
	Post-Test Average	1.31	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A30 Average Responses to Question 2

Question 2			
I believe that a topical preaching style is an effective way to teach the Bible.			
	Pre-Test Average	2.87	
	Post-Test Average	3.31	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A31 Average Responses to Question 3

Question 3			
If I was asked to teach a lesson from a passage of Scripture without a guide, I feel confident that I could effectively teach the Bible with a verse-by-verse approach.			
	Pre-Test Average	2.54	
	Post-Test Average	1.94	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A32 Average Responses to Question 4

Question 4			
If asked, I could provide at least 4 good resources for use in preparing a lesson on a specified text of Scripture.			
	Pre-Test Average	2.50	
	Post-Test Average	1.94	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A33 Average Responses to Question 5

Question 5			
My preparation skills are great, but I have trouble communicating the lesson clearly before people.			
	Pre-Test Average	2.91	
	Post-Test Average	3.84	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A34 Average Responses to Question 6

Question 6			
I feel that each passage of the Bible should be interpreted within the context of the original audience in order to gain the true meaning of the passage.			
	Pre-Test Average	1.62	
	Post-Test Average	1.21	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A35 Average Responses to Question 7

Question 7		
The meaning of each passage of Scripture is not up to the teacher or students in the class, it's found in the context by closely examining the original author's (such as Paul or whoever wrote the text being studied) intent.		
Pre-Test Average	1.58	
Post-Test Average	1.15	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A36 Average Responses to Question 8

Question 8		
I think there are times when doctrinal studies (Trinity, Inerrancy of Scripture) are necessary in the life of the church requiring a method of delivery that differs from a verse by verse method.		
Pre-Test Average	1.79	
Post-Test Average	1.52	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A37 Average Responses to Question 9

Question 9		
Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual's interpretation.		
Pre-Test Average	4.50	
Post-Test Average	4.84	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A38 Average Responses to Question 10

Question 10		
A verse by verse approach to teaching the Scripture provides the people with a clear understanding of the overall theme, author's intent, original audience, and single meaning of each text.		
Pre-Test Average	1.62	
Post-Test Average	1.42	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A39 Average Responses to Question 11

Question 11		
Children should be exposed to the correct way to handle Scripture from an early age.		
Pre-Test Average	1.16	
Post-Test Average	1.05	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A40 Average Responses to Question 12

Question 12		
Many cults use the Bible to support their agenda by misinterpreting texts of Scripture by pulling them out of their original context.		
Pre-Test Average	1.25	
Post-Test Average	1.05	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A41 Average Responses to Question 13

Question 13			
I believe the best way to defend the faith when talking to unbelievers or skeptics is through a clear interpretation of a biblical text within the context of the passage.			
	Pre-Test Average	1.62	
	Post-Test Average	1.52	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

Table A42 Average Responses to Question 14

Question 14			
The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse by verse method.			
	Pre-Test Average	1.29	
	Post-Test Average	1.00	
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Undecided 4 = Disagree 5 = Strongly Disagree			

APPENDIX 7

LEADERSHIP GROUP RESULTS

Table A43 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 1

Question 1: I feel that the most effective way to teach the Bible is with a verse-by-verse method.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	11	46%	13	68%
Agree	8	33%	6	32%
Uncertain	5	21%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: 21% in the “Uncertain” moved into the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” categories.

Table A44 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 2

Question 2: I believe that a topical preaching style is an effective way to teach the Bible.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%	0	0%
Agree	12	50%	6	31%
Uncertain	4	17%	2	11%
Disagree	7	29%	10	53%
Strongly Disagree	1	4%	1	5%

Conclusion: 19% in the “Agree” category moved into the “Disagree” category.



Table A45 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 3

Question 3: If I was asked to teach a lesson from a passage of Scripture without a guide, I feel confident that I could effectively teach the Bible with a verse-by-verse approach.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	8%	4	21%
Agree	9	38%	13	69%
Uncertain	8	33%	1	5%
Disagree	4	17%	1	5%
Strongly Disagree	1	4%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was an increase in confidence as the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” categories increased significantly.

Table A46 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 4

Question 4: If asked, I could provide at least 4 good resources for use in preparing a lesson on a specified text of Scripture.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	17%	4	21%
Agree	5	21%	12	63%
Uncertain	11	46%	3	16%
Disagree	3	12%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	1	4%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was a noted decrease in “Disagree” and “Uncertain” that appears to move toward the “Agree” category.

Table A47 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 5

Question 5: My preparation skills are great, but I have trouble communicating the lesson clearly before people.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	4%	0	0%
Agree	4	17%	1	5%
Uncertain	6	25%	1	5%
Disagree	12	50%	14	74%
Strongly Disagree	1	4%	3	16%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A48 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 6

Question 6: I feel that each passage of the Bible should be interpreted within the context of the original audience in order to gain the true meaning of the passage.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	54%	15	79%
Agree	7	29%	4	21%
Uncertain	4	17%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: The “Uncertain” category had the most movement from 17% to 0%.

Table A49 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 7

Question 7: The meaning of each passage of Scripture is not up to the teacher or students in the class, it's found in the context by closely examining the original author's (such as Paul or whoever wrote the text being studied) intent.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	58%	16	84%
Agree	6	25%	3	16%
Uncertain	4	17%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: The "Uncertain" category had a significant change as it moved from 17% to 0%.

Table A50 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 8

Question 8: I think there are times when doctrinal studies (Trinity, Inerrancy of Scripture) are necessary in the life of the church requiring a method of delivery that differs from a verse-by-verse method.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	29%	9	47%
Agree	15	63%	10	53%
Uncertain	2	8%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A51 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 9

Question 9: Each passage of Scripture has multiple meanings that can be found based upon each individual's interpretation.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%	0	0%
Agree	1	4%	0	0%
Uncertain	1	4%	0	0%
Disagree	7	29%	3	16%
Strongly Disagree	15	63%	16	84%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A52 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 10

Question 10: A verse-by-verse approach to teaching the Scripture provides the people with a clear understanding of the overall theme, author's intent, original audience, and single meaning of each text.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	11	46%	12	63%
Agree	11	46%	6	32%
Uncertain	0	0%	1	5%
Disagree	2	8%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A53 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 11

Question 11: Children should be exposed to the correct way to handle Scripture from an early age.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	72%	18	95%
Agree	4	28%	1	5%
Uncertain	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A54 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 12

Question 12: Many cults use the Bible to support their agenda by misinterpreting texts of Scripture by pulling them out of their original context.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	18	63%	18	95%
Agree	6	34%	1	5%
Uncertain	0	3%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A55 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 13

Question 13: I believe the best way to defend the faith when talking to unbelievers or skeptics is through a clear interpretation of a biblical text within the context of the passage.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	47%	14	73%
Agree	8	38%	2	11%
Uncertain	2	12%	3	16%
Disagree	1	3%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: There was not a significant movement in the data.

Table A56 Leadership Actual Responses to Question 14

Question 14: The Bible places a high priority upon rightly handling Scripture, therefore, the most careful approach is with a verse by verse method.				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	63%	19	100%
Agree	9	37%	0	0%
Uncertain	0	0%	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	0	0%

Conclusion: The entire group of leaders “Strongly Agreed” that the Bible places high priority upon rightly handling Scripture.

## APPENDIX 8

### TOPICAL SERMON EVALUATION

Analysis of a Topical Sermon  
*The Power of the Gospel* – Evangelist Mike Cothran

Dr. Albert Mohler, in a blog post (<http://www.albertmohler.com/2004/06/25/the-urgency-of-preaching-4/>), writes, “**Real exposition takes time, preparation, dedication, and discipline. The foundation of expository preaching is the confidence that the Holy Spirit will apply the Word to the hearts of the hearers—explained by the Reformers as the ministry of Word and Spirit. That ministry—so vital to the people of God—is missing or minimized in many evangelical congregations.**”

1. What sermon style did this sermon best fit?
  - A. Expository Preaching
  - B. Topical Preaching
  - C. Doctrinal Preaching
  - D. Topical-Expository Preaching
2. What did Mike Cothran do well in his sermon?
3. Was there anything that the preacher did wrong?
4. What text did he preach?
5. What presentation tactics did he use in his sermon?
6. Did anything he do or say take away from the meaning or change the meaning of the text?
7. Did his illustrations illuminate the meaning of the text?

8. Did his application bridge the gap from the original audience to the modern audience?
  
9. How would you rate the effectiveness of his sermon on a scale of 1-10?



## APPENDIX 9

### EXPOSITORY SERMON EVALUATION

Analysis of an Expository Sermon  
*Preaching Christ from Ruth* – Pastor Alistair Begg

Alistair Begg said, “**The preacher’s task is to declare what God has said, explain the meaning, and establish the implications so that no one will mistake its relevance.**” - *Preaching for God’s Glory*, Crossway, 1999, p. 29

1. What sermon style did this sermon best fit?
  - A. Expository Preaching
  - B. Topical Preaching
  - C. Doctrinal Preaching
  - D. Topical-Expository Preaching
2. What did Alistair Begg do well in his sermon?
3. Was there anything that the preacher did wrong?
4. What text did he preach?
5. What presentation tactics did he use in his sermon?
6. Did anything he do or say take away from the meaning or change the meaning of the text?
7. Did his illustrations illuminate the meaning of the text?
8. Did his application bridge the gap from the original audience to the modern audience?

9. How would you rate the effectiveness of his sermon on a scale of 1-10?

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## ABSTRACT

### INTEGRATING EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND TEACHING AS THE MODEL OF MINISTRY FOR PRAY'S MILL BAPTIST CHURCH

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013  
Chair: Dr. Robert A. Vogel

This project has one overarching goal that seeks to establish expository preaching as the primary method of Bible teaching for Pray's Mill Baptist Church. This goal transcends the time period of this project and looks into the future of our congregation. The first chapter introduces Pray's Mill Baptist Church and the Douglas County community. Chapter 2 lays out a theological foundation for the goals of the project. Chapter 3 evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of preaching methods and examines training techniques related to biblical hermeneutics. The preaching methods reviewed include topical preaching, doctrinal preaching, allegorical preaching, and expository preaching. The hermeneutical techniques reviewed include evaluating the words, the original human author, contextual interpretation, and the single meaning hermeneutic. Chapter 4 explains the process of the project in the life of Pray's Mill Baptist Church. Chapter 5 is an analysis of the project's results in the life of the church.

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