

The book cover features a dark blue background with a complex marbled pattern of red, orange, and yellow swirls. A central yellow rectangular box contains the title and author information. This box is framed by a decorative border consisting of a thin gold line and a series of overlapping red circles. The title 'THEMATIC PREACHING' is written in a large, bold, black serif font.

# THEMATIC PREACHING

The Art of True Biblical Homiletics

By Rollin E. Wilson, Jr.

# Thematic Preaching

---

*The Art of True Biblical Homiletics*

*A Manual for Sermon Preparation and Delivery with  
Emphasis on the Thematic Concept of Biblical Preaching*

*by Rollin E. Wilson, Jr.*

Published 1998 by  
**Rollin E. Wilson, Jr.**  
12429 66th Ave.  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

The right to copy and use any material in this book to the glory of God is freely granted by the author. See I Corinthians 4:7b and Acts 20:35b.

All quotations and footnotes herein referenced which are protected by copyright are *excluded* from the above permission statement.

*Typesetting and design by*  
Day of Grace Ministries, Inc.  
11118 E 675 N  
West Lafayette, IN 47906-8004

*Printed and bound by*  
Morris Publishing  
3212 E. Hwy 30 • P.O. Box 2110  
Kearney, NE 68847

*Printed in the United States of America*

## DEDICATION

---

*To my cherished wife, Jetty, who for more than forty-three years has served with me in the ministry, I dedicate this book. She has faithfully supported me as we pastored seven congregations here in Wisconsin as well as in foreign and home mission works. She has heard over 6,700 of my sermons and each new time encourages me by her respectful attention. Every preacher should be so blessed. Proverbs 5:18.*

# Table of Contents

---

Preface	5
Chapter 1: The Case for Homiletics	7
Chapter 2: Thematic Preaching	12
Chapter 3: Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth	19
Chapter 4: Topical, Textual, and Expository Sermons	27
Chapter 5: Ten Points of A Good Outline	43
Chapter 6: The Threefold Cord	53
Chapter 7: Use of Key Words and Interrogatives	61
Chapter 8: Sermon Titles, Themes, and Theses	72
Chapter 9: What Constitutes A Good Introduction and A Good Conclusion	79
Chapter 10: The Use and Abuse of Illustrations	90
Chapter 11: Studying the Bible Homiletically	94
Chapter 12: Structural Analysis	97
Chapter 13: Pulpit Decorum	107
Chapter 14: Conclusion	115

## Preface

---

In the fall of 1951, as a senior student at the (then) Milwaukee Bible Institute (now Grace Bible College of Grand Rapids, Michigan), I took a course in homiletics<sup>1</sup> that profoundly affected my life and subsequent ministry. The teacher of that course, the late William B. Hallman, reportedly had in his private library over 300 volumes on the subject of homiletics alone. Mr. Hallman not only taught homiletics in the classroom, but his preaching and teaching exuded it!

How was our young student, full of Bible facts and knowledge, going to effectively enter the ministry of the local church? Surely God's call and the Holy Spirit's work would be the overriding motivation. Yet there was something lacking. To preach and teach God's Word is a high calling. As students we had been impressed with the basic principle of *rightly dividing* Scripture (a later chapter will address this in more detail); but how could this be *packaged* in terms of our limited personalities?

Enter homiletics and Professor Hallman. In his course of discipline the structure, design, and science of homiletics equipped me to fill in that missing or lacking *something*. Now this young preacher could square his theological shoulders and feel ready for ministry.

Perhaps a word of disclaimer is needed here. It is not intended that the above emphasis should mean that homiletics is a panacea for one's preaching and teaching. Homiletics is but an aid, or a tool, to assist the preacher or teacher in communicating the message of Holy Scripture.

Two points about this book and the homiletics it will embrace should be emphasized:

- First: The science of homiletics is only valid as it comes directly from the Bible itself. The Bible presents to us God's orderly and structured revelation of Himself and His eternal purpose. From this a biblical homiletic will be taken.
- Second: The issue of the *thematic concept* will be predominant. It will be a rule of thumb in this volume that every Bible text can be reduced to at least one central *theme*. In our sermonizing we will address and present that single thought or theme from varying and supportive angles. So, when our sermon has been delivered, one outstanding theme will have been caught by our audience.

What is here forthcoming is thus my distillation of Professor Hallman's course offered many years ago in Milwaukee. Were he reading this material today, it would be patently evident to him that little resemblance to his original course still exists.

In the latter years of my ministry two correspondence courses called Homiletics I and II were offered to ministerial students. The present book is sent forth with these

---

<sup>1</sup> Homiletics, "the art of preaching"- *Webster's 7th Collegiate Dictionary*; (thus, homiletics is the science of preparing and delivering sermons).

two courses combined and expanded. Hopefully the book can be used personally for one's private study and practice, in a classroom setting with some modification, and possibly via correspondence as appropriate teachers can work with the student.

The book is designed to be a hands-on, user-friendly manual. Following each section or chapter will be appropriate study questions and exercises that should assist the student to practice what is being taught.

As this book goes to press, I am aware of the Stans, Phils, Larrys, Mikes, Dans, Jims, Petes, Glens, Scotts, Trevors, et al., who are still out there waiting for help in their preaching. And for all who are interested in aligning their preaching and teaching with a biblical homiletic, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).



# Chapter 1

## The Case for Homiletics

---

By definition the subject of homiletics relates to the preparation and delivery of sermons. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition* (1993) defines *homiletics* as "the art of preaching. Homiletic or homiletical... [from Greek *homiletikos* of conversation]: of, relating to, or resembling a homily 2: of or relating to homiletics; also: *preachy*."

Part then of our word *homiletics* is the English word *homily*. And although *homily* is a legitimate word, its usage is probably more accepted among the liberal element of the church than among the conservative branch of Christianity. Possibly, then, the larger word *homiletic(s)* carries a less than conservative ring to it. This contributes a somewhat negative tone to our fundamental, conservative brethren.

It is noteworthy that *Webster's* definition of *homiletics* sees its derivation from the Greek word: *homiletikos*. The New Testament Greek word *homilia* is defined by E. W. Bullinger<sup>2</sup> thusly: "a being together, or in company with `any one,' intercourse, (Eng. homily), (non occ)."

Usage of the word *homilia* is cited in 1 Corinthians 15:33: "Be not deceived: evil communications [Greek, *homilia*] corrupt good manners." Admittedly, the word *communications* is negatively used here with the word *evil*. Surely we cannot therefore reason that our English word *homiletics* also has a less than positive root meaning.

Therefore, inherent in the word *homiletics* is the idea of *communication*. And when it comes to the preparation and delivery of sermons, communication becomes the major concern. Homiletics will be used here to denote the science or art of putting together, as well as presenting, biblical sermons.

To illustrate the case of homiletics, let us consider the field of finance. Most of us have been exposed to rudimentary mathematics in our elementary schooling. We can handle basic and simple financial matters, like keeping our checkbook balanced and maintaining the family budget. On occasion, if asked to serve on a board, we might be appointed treasurer. Now is when our record-keeping skills are tested to the maximum. To accurately and skillfully keep the books (financial records) so that funds are carefully tracked and tallied in an understandable fashion takes special expertise. Enter the science of bookkeeping or accounting. These disciplines actually simplify what otherwise is to the novice treasurer, a time-consuming, trial and error of "doing-the-best-I-can" effort. What bookkeeping is to finance, homiletics is to the communication of biblical truth via the sermon or lesson.

### BIBLICAL HOMILETICS

It is not our intent to elevate homiletics to the level of a biblical doctrine. Homiletics will never deserve a place along side the doctrines of salvation, redemption,

---

<sup>2</sup> *Critical Lexicon and Concordance*, p. 173.



justification, sanctification, glorification, inspiration, ecclesiology, eschatology, creation, et al. What we want to establish here is that there is such a subject as biblical homiletics. In fact, if there is not a biblical basis for our topic, then surely much of its legitimacy is lost.

In defense of biblical homiletics we have noted that the word itself is derived from a New Testament Greek word. Its use in our Bibles shows itself in the word *communications* (see 1 Corinthians 15:33).

If homiletics is an art or a science, it must of necessity represent an ordered structure of information that is to be communicated. Is Holy Scripture an ordered and structured revelation of God and His eternal purpose? Most assuredly it is. In fact, the more one studies God's Word, the more one is impressed with its intricacy, design, order, harmony, and structure.

## **THE USE OF LITERARY FORMS IN THE BIBLE**

To illustrate this matter of biblical structure which formats biblical homiletics, let us consider the following literary biblical intricacies.

### **The Acrostic in the Hebrew Bible**

The word acrostic means "a composition usually in verse in which sets of letters (as the initial or final letters of the lines) taken in order form a word or phrase or a regular sequence of letters of the alphabet; *acronym*."<sup>3</sup> Some well-known acronyms used in English are: LASER-Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation; SONAR-Sound Navigation Ranging; RADAR-Radio Detecting and Ranging; and GRACE-God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

The Hebrew Bible contains numerous alphabetical acrostics, e.g., Psalms 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145; Proverbs 31:10-31; and Lamentations, chapters 1-4.

These alphabetical acrostic Bible texts demonstrate a literary structure in Scripture that affords a parallel in the subject of biblical homiletics. Regardless of the form one gives to sermons, there exists some definable structure therein. However, it must be admitted in some sermons we have all heard, one might be hard pressed to find sermonic or homiletical shape! Even the most random sermonic form usually has a starting point and something addressed as a conclusion. And hopefully between these two, some kind of sermonic content or body is delivered.

What is more basic and fundamental to any language than its alphabet? These letters by themselves are meaningless; yet they are arranged in an orderly way, *alphabetically*. The writers of the above cited Bible texts used the alphabetic acrostic to communicate an emphasis that the Hebrew reader could not miss. This literary form in and of itself may not have communicated truth, but it did communicate an emphasis in a legitimate fashion. This parallels what biblical homiletics is all about also.

### **The Alpha and Omega Principle**

The beginning letter of the Greek alphabet is named *alpha*. The concluding letter of the same alphabet is named *omega*. Four times in the Book of the Revelation, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1993.

Apostle John uses these two letters in describing our Lord Jesus Christ; see Revelation 1:8,11; 21:6; and 22:13. In other references in Revelation, John alters this *alpha and omega* phrase to: "I am the first and the last" (Revelation 1:17 and 2:8).

The Holy Spirit uses two literary forms, the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, and applies them to our Lord. In using these letters, we understand our Lord is the total of all that falls between *alpha* and *omega* also. He is the consummation and epitome of communicative language; He is the ultimate revelation of truth.

Often certain Bible passages have exposed a special dimension of emphases by applying (what I will call) the *alpha and omega principle*. Compare the beginning and ending of a given Bible text. Perhaps the opening word or phrase notably compares with the closing word or phrase. Many of the Psalms demonstrate this.

See Psalms 150, 149, 148, 147, 146, 145\*, et al. The Bible student who is apprised of this principle will be specially blessed to see it operative in many Bible passages. (\*Note these in the *Companion Bible*).

By the way, it is interesting that this so-called *alpha and omega principle* is anchored in the Hebrew Bible. (See: Isaiah 41:4 and 44:6, "I am the Lord, the first and the last...")

In the Hebrew language there exists an untranslatable particle that is composed of the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is a rule in Hebrew grammar that this particle introduces the direct object in a complete sentence. Isaiah says that Jehovah is the "first and the last." Might this be a reference to that Hebrew particle composed of *aleph* (first Hebrew letter) and *tau* (the last Hebrew letter)? When this was pointed out to my Professor of Hebrew at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, he saw no significance in it whatsoever. But when linked to the above references in Revelation and the use of the *alpha* and *omega*, a strong case can be made between the two languages. Again, a parallel may be seen in the literary form of biblical homiletics. Biblical homiletics will recognize structure in Scripture and properly utilize the same.

### **The Warp and Woof Concept in Scripture**

These two words *warp* and *woof* are used in Leviticus 13:48,51-53,56-59. We are dealing here with fabric, cloth, or textiles. *Webster's* defines these: "warp = a series of yarns extended lengthwise in a loom and crossed by the woof; the cords forming the carcass of a pneumatic tire; *foundation, base.* " "Woof = a filling thread or yarn in weaving; woven fabric; also the texture of such a fabric; a basic or essential element or material."<sup>4</sup>

The *Companion Bible* describes these: "warp - the longitudinal lines in a loom, through which the shuttle passes. Woof - to weave in; Hebrew `arab,' to `intermingle.' Hence used of what is mingled or woven in by the shuttle."

In Leviticus, the priest was instructed to look for "the plague of leprosy...whether it be a woolen garment or a linen garment" (13:47). This garment being a woven cloth or fabric was composed of both warp and woof, i.e., the horizontal and vertical threads

---

<sup>4</sup> [\*Webster's 7th New Collegiate Dictionary, 1971.\*](#)

woven together. The cloth or fabric does not exist with just one set of threads; both are needed in the weaving process.

Just so, the Scripture presents a two-dimensional aspect similar to a fabric. How often when studying a given doctrine, subject, or truth we find it mingled or intertwined with another supporting topic. Seldom does any biblical doctrine stand alone in Holy Scripture.

These threads lie at right angles to each other and move in opposite directions. The weaving process utilizes these opposites to fabricate strength, beauty, and design. My good friend William (Bill) Heath suggests the following truths as illustrating the warp and woof principle. The believer's standing in Christ could represent the warp (vertical thread lines); the believer's state then would be represented by the woof (i.e., the horizontal thread lines). God weaves these together; they do not stand separate or alone. I see this in Paul's salutation to the Ephesians: "...to the saints which are at Ephesus" (1:1). Being saints refers to their standing before God; they were *sanctified, holy ones* in Christ. But they also were living at Ephesus. Here then is their state. The former is perfect, finished, and complete because it is totally dependent upon Christ. The latter is often imperfect and needs direction and encouragement therein. God weaves these two threads (i.e., the warp and woof) into the fabric of salvation.

The doctrines of justification (warp) and sanctification (woof) could be equally compared.

A special example here is offered from 2 Corinthians 4:7. The treasure would be the warp (concept); the *earthen vessel* would be the woof (concept). Never in this life will these two cease to be distinctly opposite, yet God weaves them together in the believers' lives that "the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."

Again, we suggest here a parallel with biblical homiletics. Biblical homiletics will also recognize the harmony and intermingling of Scripture and utilize the same in its art of communication.

## **Chapter and Verse Division of Scripture**

It is understood that the Bible was not originally written with the chapter and verse divisions as we presently have them. These were added to the Hebrew Bible in 900-1200 A.D.<sup>5</sup> The New Testament verse divisions "were first made by Robert Stephanus (Stephens) of Paris, a printer, for his Greek New Testament, published in 1551. The first entire Bible in which these chapter and verse divisions were used was Stephen's edition of the Latin Vulgate (1555). The first English New Testament to have both chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible (1560)."<sup>6</sup>

Some of these divisions probably have more long-standing legitimacy in the Hebrew Bible than in our New Testaments.

At any rate, we find the chapter and verse divisions a help in the communicative aspect of God's Word. These verse and chapter breaks are not inspired, nor do they

---

<sup>5</sup> *The Books and the Parchments* by F. F. Bruce, p. 121.

<sup>6</sup> *General Biblical Introduction* by H. S. Miller, page 10, The Word-Bearer Press, Houghton, N.Y., 1950. Quoted here "Journal of Pauline Dispensationalism," R. C. Brock; Vol. 6, No. 22, Sept. 1994.

infringe on inspiration. In a parallel manner, I would suggest that biblical homiletics is a legitimate literary form enabling us to better communicate God's Word to our audiences.

## CHAPTER ONE-STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Study Questions

1. Define the word *homiletics* in your own words.
2. Why is 1 Corinthians 15:33 cited in relation to homiletics?
3. Besides the illustration of bookkeeping in the field of finance, what other similar illustrations can you offer to make the case for homiletics?
4. What is meant by *biblical homiletics*?
5. What is the difference between an acrostic and an acronym?
6. Why can it be said that even the most random of sermon form has some relation to homiletics?
7. State how the following literary forms illustrate a case for biblical homiletics:
  - a. The acrostic in the Hebrew Bible
  - b. The alpha and omega principle
  - c. The warp and woof concept in scripture
  - d. Chapter and verse divisions in the Bible

### Exercises

1. Use Proverbs 31:10-31. Beginning with verse 10, give an English word that begins with *A* as a summary of the verse; now in alphabetic succession use *B* with verse 11, etc., until you conclude with a word for each verse through verse 31. What English letter did you use with verse 31? Why was it not the English letter *Z*?
2. Do the same English acrostic format with Lamentations, chapter 1, i.e., for Lamentations 1:1, use an English word starting with *A* to summarize that verse; use a *B* word to summarize 1:2, etc., through the chapter. Why will you (again) not end with the English letter *Z*? For your own enjoyment you may repeat this exercise with Lamentations 2. As a special discipline, use Lamentations, chapter 3, in this same format. Here the Hebrew Bible triples each letter of the alphabet! Therefore, verses 1, 2, and 3 all correspond to *A*; verses 4, 5, and 6 to *B* and so on throughout the chapter.
3. Using the *alpha and omega principle*, examine each of Paul's letters (Romans through Philemon) and see which lend themselves to this concept. List the books and their corresponding *alpha and omega* texts.
4. Read Leviticus 13:48-49, and note the usage of the words *warp* and *woof*. Familiarize yourself with this concept as to the *intermingling* of biblical truth in chapter 1. From 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 use the *warp and woof concept* in each of verses 8-18. You will show which is the *treasure* and which is the *earthen vessel* in each verse. For example, in 4:8, "troubled on every side" would be the *warp*; "yet not distressed" would be the *woof*.

## Chapter 2

### Thematic Preaching

---

Thematic preaching is actually the main title of our volume involving *homiletics*. If there is one point I want to aim at, and repeatedly strike, it is this matter of *thematic preaching*.

Basic and fundamental to our thinking in the art and science of homiletics is the bedrock of thematic preaching. But it may be asked: "Isn't all preaching thematic?" No, all preaching is not thematic. Too often sermons are like buckshot - spread out and peppering the audience with many pellets of thought and truth. Our emphasis will be that the sermon should be, as Haddon Robinson put it, "...a bullet and not buckshot. Ideally each sermon is the explanation, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture."<sup>7</sup>

A single<sup>8</sup> thought or theme, duly undergirded by supporting evidence from the Bible text, is what thematic preaching is all about.

*Webster's* defines the word *theme* as "something laid down; a subject or topic of discourse or of artistic representation."

Thematic preaching will ascertain from a given Bible text that single "laid down something" (i.e., its *theme*). This theme will be supported by three undergirding points that we will call "Roman numerals," e.g., I, II, and III. These also will arise from the chosen Bible passage. Each of these Roman numerals will have three supports that we will call *Capitals*, usually shown by the capital letters A, B, and C. These and additional numeric and alphabetic figures will be dealt with in the chapter on "Ten Points of a Good Outline."

Quite often what makes a sermon memorable is not the many things (buckshot) brought out or dealt with, but that one thing (theme) emphasized.

Listen to J. H. Jowett in his Yale lectures on preaching:

"I have a conviction that no sermon is ready for preaching, not ready for writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal. I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labour in my study. To compel oneself to fashion that sentence, to dismiss every word that is vague, ragged, ambiguous, to think oneself through to a form of words which defines the theme with scrupulous exactness - this is surely one of the most vital and essential factors in the making of a sermon: and I do not think any sermon ought to be

---

<sup>7</sup> Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 1980; Baker Book House Co., p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Ed., 1993; p. 1222.

preached or even written, until that sentence has emerged, clear and lucid as a cloudless moon."<sup>9</sup>

Numerous Scriptures themselves single out what could be called the *one thing* concept. The following list is offered to demonstrate the importance of a singular thought or theme:

- Psalm 27:4 "One [thing] have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after..."
- Psalm 62:11: "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God."
- Mark 10:21: "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest..."
- Luke 6:9: "Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing..."
- Luke 10:42: "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part..."
- John 9:25: "...one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."
- Acts 24:21: "Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them..."
- Galatians 3:2 "This only would I learn of you..."
- Philippians 3:13 "...but this one thing I do..."
- 2 Peter 3:8 "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing..."

Dwight E. Stevenson cites the following qualities for what he calls "The Proposition," which to me equally fit our *thematic* concept:

- "The proposition (i.e., theme) is the whole sermon boiled down to one sentence."
- "The purpose of the proposition (i.e., theme) is to give unity to the sermon by excluding the irrelevant and drawing in the relevant."
- "It may be stated or implied in the finished sermon, as delivered. If stated, it may be used most advantageously in the introduction. Other good places for it are in the conclusion and at the transitions between the main points."
- "It should be written out in full on the work sheet early in the week. Never omit it in sermon preparation."
- "Labor to make your proposition say exactly what your sermon says. Make it accurate."
- "It should be worth while and important, therefore, more specific than general, but not trivial."
- "Make it clear and interesting."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> "The Preacher: His Life and Work," p. 133; as taken from *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> A Road Map for Sermons, 1950, The College of the Bible, Lexington, Ky.

## THE MATTER OF PREACHING

Since the Bible is God's written revelation, why bother with preaching? Would it not be best to just busy oneself with distribution of these written Scriptures? We answer these questions by turning to the Scriptures themselves. Examining the Bible we find a God-honored form of expression based there: *preaching*.

God has not only endorsed preaching, but the preacher also. Note Romans 10:14,15: "...how shall they hear without a preacher? ...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things."

Our English word *preach* means "to deliver a sermon; to urge acceptance or abandonment of an idea or course of action" according to *Webster's 7th Collegiate Dictionary*.

The New Testament Greek word *preach* or *preaching* (*kerugma*) means "a proclamation (especially of the gospel; by implication, the gospel itself; preaching; from the verb *kerusso*: to herald (as a public crier) to proclaim, publish."<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, there exists biblical preaching - preaching that is Bible-based. Any preaching without biblical content is merely an exercise in emptiness, as shown in Mark 7:7, "Howbeit in *vain* do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

It has been said that "preaching is the art; homiletics is the science; the sermon is the product."

Preaching might be described as the personal proclamation of biblical truth with the intent to persuade. The root of this word *persuade* (*i.e.*, *suave*) means *sweet*. God sees special sweetness in the preaching of biblical truth (see Romans 10:15)! This personal proclamation of biblical truth eliminates all ritual and all religious activity. The Word of God in the sermon stands alone. Thus, the preacher must be a speaker. He must express God's truth, usually in a vocal manner, via the sermon. The preacher does not follow the line of the Old Testament priest or prophet, although many priests and prophets were preachers. The preacher does not follow in the order of the New Testament Apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, bishops, elders, deacons, etc., either even though they were heralds, proclaimers, *i.e.*, preachers. Interestingly, there is not a gift of *preacher* listed in Paul's letters, nor in the rest of New Testament Scripture. Does this diminish and depreciate preaching? Surely not! Paul calls himself an "ordained preacher and an apostle" (1 Timothy 2:7). Timothy was instructed to "preach the word" (2 Timothy. 4:2). And Titus was told "to speak the things which become sound doctrine" (see Titus 2:1).

With God's call to preach, each man so commissioned brings into this ministry his own personality. *And woe to that minister whose preaching is not accompanied by a godly life*. As has been said, "You can steal a bushel of wheat, plant it, and it will still grow." Truly God honors the good seed of His Word, but less than godly character will harm its testimony. (See 2 Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as *many* which

---

<sup>11</sup> [The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible](#); J. Strong; numbers 2782 and 2784.



corrupt the word of God; but as of *sincerity*, but *as of God, in the sight of God* speak we in Christ.")

The preacher must have an audience; and most preachers would wish for larger ones. Because of the public nature of preaching, certain mannerisms become important. A preacher is not necessarily a discussion leader. He brings a message from God's Word. He must rid himself of all that will distract from the biblical truth he announces. Due to the popularity of TV and video, the preacher has to compete for the minds of his audience in this field of communication. His voice, appearance, grammar, gestures, dress, and general pulpit decorum all attract to, or subtract from, his sermon delivery. We will deal in more detail with this area of pulpit decorum.

Preaching also carries a dimension as a divinely chosen method to accomplish the redemption of the soul (see 1 Corinthians 1:21). Here preaching is used for the thing or subject preached. In 1 Corinthians 1:18 the preaching of the cross is termed foolishness to the unbelieving world; whereas the same preaching (i.e., of the cross) to believers is the power of God! In both cases, it is not preaching per se that is either *foolish* or the *power of God*. It is rather the subject or thing preached that is so deemed. Even though preaching per se is not the emphasis here, the fact of its usage does lend weight as a bona fide expression of communication.

The following list points up a long line of Bible preachers:

- Jonah. Jonah 3:2: "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."
- John the Baptizer. Matthew 3:1: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea."
- The Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 4:23: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."
- The Kingdom disciples. Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."
- Philip. Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
- Paul and Barnabas. Acts 15:35: "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord with many others also."
- The Pauline emphasis. 1 Corinthians 1:18 and Romans 16:25, et al: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."
- The Pauline pattern. 2 Timothy 4:17 and Titus 1:3: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the

mouth of the lion." "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."

Preaching, I emphasize, is not the same as teaching, although they are compatible. Surely, all [biblical] preaching should teach! And all [biblical] teaching will preach! This seems to be demonstrated in the following texts:

- Matthew 4:23: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, *teaching*...and *preaching* the gospel of the kingdom.."
- Matthew 9:35: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, *teaching* in their synagogues, and *preaching* the gospel of the kingdom."
- Acts 15:35: "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, *teaching*, and *preaching* the word of the Lord, with many others also."
- Acts 28:31: "*Preaching* the kingdom of God, and *teaching* those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

## CHAPTER 2 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Study Questions

1. Define *thematic preaching*.
2. Explain the difference between a *bullet* and *buckshot* regarding a sermon? Why would one be preferred over the other?
3. What reasons can you cite for presenting just one main thought in your sermon?
4. Take each of Stevenson's seven citations and rewrite them in your own words.
5. From Romans 10:14,15 explain the significance of *preaching* and the *preacher*?
6. What makes preaching different from just plain public speaking?
7. What is biblical preaching?
8. If the Holy Spirit is the One who convicts the hearers of the Word, what place is there for persuasion by the preacher in his sermon?
9. What is the difference between a preacher and an Apostle? A pastor? An evangelist? A bishop? An elder? A deacon?
10. Explain *preaching* as found in 1 Corinthians 1:18,21 ? If *preaching* is foolishness, why bother doing it?
11. What differences exist between preaching and teaching? What similarities?

### Exercises

Write out a one-sentence *theme* for each of the following:

1. "Thematic preaching is the title of our volume involving homiletics. If there is one point I want to aim at and repeatedly strike, it is this matter of thematic preaching."

2. "I have a conviction that no sermon is ready for preaching, not ready for writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal. I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labour in my study. To compel oneself to fashion that sentence, to dismiss every word that is vague, ragged, ambiguous, to think oneself through to a form of words which defines the theme with scrupulous exactness this is surely one of the most vital and essential factors in the making of a sermon: and I do not think any sermon ought to be preached or even written, until that sentence has emerged, clear and lucid as a cloudless moon."

3. "Great and decisive preaching has characterized every period of growth and revival and power the church of Christ has experienced. Periods of declension and coldness and defeat have been periods of poor and uninspired preaching. The great reformers, who in the power of the Holy Spirit, warmed cold hearts, quickened dead ecclesiasticism, and set the church upon a path of conquest for her Lord, were men of great power in the preaching of the Word."<sup>12</sup>

4. "In one of the art galleries of Europe, a young man stood enrapt before a portrait done by one of the great masters. As he looked his eyes filled with tears. Another visitor to the gallery noticed him standing there and said, 'Young man, what troubles you?' Still gazing on the painting the youth replied, 'I can't paint like that. I never will be able to paint like that.' Then his face brightened. 'But, thank God,' he said, 'I am a painter too.'<sup>13</sup>

5. "The conscience may be likened to a sundial that is made for the sun, even as the conscience, rightly directed, reflects God's will. Suppose a sundial is consulted by moonlight the dial may read ten o'clock, but it may be only two. By a candle or some other light, the dial may be made to tell any hour, at the whim of the one who holds the light.

"Conscience, which man took from Satan, can be a safe guide only if it is turned toward God for illumination. Once a man turns away his conscience from God and lets some other light shine upon it, his conscience is no longer reliable."<sup>14</sup>

6. Romans 11:33-36: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?

"Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

7. Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

"Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

---

<sup>12</sup> Bob Jones, Jr.; *How To Improve Your Preaching*; Revell; 1945; p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.15.

<sup>14</sup> Donald Grey Barnhouse; *Let Me Illustrate*; 1967; Revell; p. 81.

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

"Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

8. Romans 16:25-27: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

"But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

9. Philemon 6: "That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus."

10. Ephesians 4:5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

## Chapter 3

### Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

---

Our chapter title is taken from 2 Timothy 2:15, which reads: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This phrase *rightly dividing* proves to be God's given key to understanding the Bible. And certainly God would have *the word of truth* understood. As the believer studies the Bible, he must rightly divide it, or in plain terms, he will not understand God's truth. E. W. Bullinger deals with this issue of *truth* thusly: "The one great requirement of the Word is grounded on the fact that it is 'the word of truth.' And this fact is so stated as to imply that unless the Word is thus rightly divided, we shall not get 'truth'; and that we shall get its truth only in proportion to the measure in which we divide it rightly."<sup>15</sup>

This pursuit of detailed consideration of Scripture is likened here to a *workman*. The laborer who Paul mentions was the ancient stone mason. From orders and blueprints furnished, the mason would cut the needed stones for the construction and bring them to the building site. Under the scrutiny of the superintending architect each mason's work would be examined as the edifice was constructed. If the stones were improperly sized, embarrassment and disapproval resulted. The stone mason would stand ashamed, for surely his workmanship was faulty - according to the blueprints furnished, he had not *rightly divided*.

The context of 2 Timothy 2:15 will yield confirmation of this usage of right division. We will examine this in detail later.

Our English words *rightly dividing* are translated from one Greek word: *orthotemeo*. In our New Testament *orthotemeo* is only found here in 2 Timothy 2:15. This Greek word is composed of two words: *ortho* and *temno*. We have both of these words extensively used in English. As a prefix, *ortho* means "straight, correct, true, right or upright." Thus we have:

- **Orthodox** = conforming to established (correct) doctrine
- **Orthography** = correct spelling; standard writing
- **Orthopedic** = correction of skeletal deformities

Perhaps a product found in most lawn and garden stores has been used by our readers; it is simply called ORTHO. Surely the manufacturer has chosen this name because of its meaning, which is: "correct, straight, standard, true or *right*."

The word *temno* also has found its way into English. Perhaps its largest usage is in the technical field of medicine. Rather than being a prefix, as in the case of *ortho*,

---

<sup>15</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *How To Enjoy The Bible*; 1955; Lamp Press, Ltd.; London; page 26.

*temno* is used as a suffix. Numerous surgeries are named using the suffix *temno*. In English *temno* comes out *-tomy*. Here are a few examples:

- Appendect**omy** = surgical removal of the vermiform appendix
- Mastoidect**omy** = surgical removal of mastoid cells, or the mastoid process
- Tonsillect**omy** = surgical removal of the tonsils
- Tracheot**omy** = the surgical operation of cutting into the trachea especially through the skin

Admittedly, surgery is a most exact kind of *dividing*. And although the use of *orthotemeo* in the New Testament does not deal with the medical field, the point is made regardless: Careful and precise dividing is required by God's workman as he studies the Scriptures.

If we turn to the Septuagint (LXX), we find there some noteworthy uses of *orthotemeo*.

Psalms 119:128: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right [*orthotemeo*]: and I hate every false way." The word *precepts* here refers to the Word of God. Thus, the Psalmist sees God's Word to be right, i.e., rightly divided from every false way. Therefore, David hates the false, which probably refers to the ways of man. Accordingly, when God's Word is esteemed right (i.e., rightly divided), the resulting estimation of false is that of hatred.

Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct [*orthotemeo*, i.e. 'rightly divide'] thy paths." As God is singly trusted (see 3:5) apart from all human resources, and brought into every step a believer takes, God *rightly divides* the paths open to His own children. Are there varied trails open to your steps today? How will you choose between the good and the bad, or between the better and the best? God will clearly delineate these for the believer as He is trusted.

By this are we suggesting that the Scriptures contain *good* and *bad* that need to be rightly divided? or delineated? Hardly. In fact, what might be a more accurate concept is that *right division* distinguishes between *the good* and *the good*, - between *the better* and *the better*, yes, even between *the best* and *the best*. This may sound confusing but when applied to God's different hopes and callings, it will make sense. For example, *right division* will recognize God's twofold program: 1) for the earth via Israel, and 2) for the heavens via the church, called the Body of Christ. God has *good* planned for both Israel and for His church; right division will respect such distinctives and not confuse nor mix the *good* for Israel with the *good* for His church.

Now, let us return to our starting text of 2 Timothy 2:15. The context here establishes the meaning of *rightly dividing*. Verse 14 presents a negative, "Strive not about words to no profit," with the only intent seemingly to be the subverting of the audience. Observe from 2 Timothy 3:16 that "all scripture" [words] *is profitable*. "Thus, this negative of 2:14 ("strive not ...to no profit") does not refer to the Bible. At verse 15 Paul (positively) instructs Timothy to "study. .. rightly dividing *the word of truth*." It is not enough to just study the Bible! Such study must be accompanied by *right division*, if believers are to be approved workmen of God.

Verse 16 deals with more negatives which multiply ungodliness. Surely these are to be shunned. Although 2:15 does not use the word *godliness*, the implication from verse 16 is apparent. That is, verse 16 being negative makes for ungodliness; therefore, the positive of verse 15 issues in godliness.

From this ungodliness comes *the canker* (literally, *gangrene*) of verse 17. If we know how malignant gangrene is, we may better understand how deadly such *babblings* may be. Two names are offered here to identify how the principle of right division has been misused, yea abused. Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching biblical doctrine, that is, the resurrection. They did not deny it, but they misplaced it "saying it was past already." In other words, they taught their hearers that what Scripture states to be a yet future event (i.e., the resurrection) was already past. Here is a classic example of *wrongly dividing*, and Paul quickly points out their error. Concerning (the word of) *truth*, these *wrongly dividers* had erred. Thus was the doctrinal content of their hearers' faith overthrown. Just as *right division* produces godliness and truth, so *wrong division* results in ungodliness, error, and overthrow!

### **MORE BIBLICAL EVIDENCES OF RIGHT DIVISION**

Note Luke 4:16-21. Here our Lord, having received the Book of Isaiah from the synagogue rulers, chooses chapter 61. From it He reads verse 1 and half of verse 2. Having read "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord," our Lord abruptly stops, closes the book, and sits down. With all eyes upon Him, He states, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Had the rest of verse 2 been read ("...and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn"), He could not have then said the verse was fulfilled that day in their hearing. Obviously, "the day of vengeance" belongs to our Lord's Second Coming to earth; and so our Lord *rightly divides* between these two events.

### **TWO DIFFERENT TIME FRAMES**

- "Since the world began" - see Luke 1:70; and Acts 3:21. This speaks of what God revealed by the mouth of all His prophets.
- "Kept secret since the world began" - see Romans 16:25. Surely what God kept secret was not revealed by the mouth of all His prophets. Paul makes bold to write about this mystery (secret) which through him was now made manifest to the saints. (See Colossians 1:26.)

Not only are these two time frames different, they contain distinctive truth from each other. The former relates to God's plans and purpose for the earth via the nation Israel and the redeemed Gentile nations. The latter, as uniquely found only in Paul's writings, concerns God's purpose for the heavens and the church, called Christ's Body.

### **FURTHER DISTINCTIVES THAT DEMONSTRATE RIGHT DIVISION**

See 1 Corinthians 10:32. Admittedly each of these is distinct from the others. *Jews* are not *Gentiles*! *The church of God* is not *the Jews*. *The Gentiles* are not *the church*. As to God's revealed program of Scripture, no other groups have been addressed besides the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church of God. Since God origi-



nally separated the Jews from the nations (Gentiles) via Abraham's call (Genesis 12:1; Acts 7:2,3 ff), our study of Scripture will be enhanced if we rightly divide between these. We must recognize that each is special and cannot be merged into the other without great confusion and twisting of Scripture.

Christ has been made Head over the church, His Body (Ephesians 1:22,23). This church is called the *one new man* (Ephesians 2:15) and is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles. It is also called *[the] Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12; and Ephesians 3:4) with emphasis on grace upon Gentiles (Ephesians 3:6). Does not wisdom, then, demand our study of Scripture will be only enhanced if we rightly divide this *new creature* (2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15) from *the Jews* and/or *she Gentiles*?

### **Times Past - But Now**

These expressions are found in Ephesians 2:11-13. In *times past* Gentiles were essentially without God. This was due to their exclusion from Israel and God's dispensational dealings therewith. *But now* illustrates a change, says Paul - a change described by being *in Christ*, being made *nigh*. God changed the dispensational boundaries here by breaking down the middle wall between Jew and Gentile. This, Paul says, was done *by* the cross (Ephesians 2:16) and *not at* the cross. Were Paul to have here used the phrase *at the cross*, the meaning would be that at the crucifixion (i.e., point in time and history) this separating wall was broken down. Such was not the case. The Book of Acts records God's continued dealing with favored Israel until the stoning of Stephen (see Luke 13:6-9). With the raising up of Paul, God's *due time* (1 Timothy 2:6), *but now* (Ephesians 2:13), and *due times* (Titus 1:3) all evidence the change that "reconciled both [Jew and Gentile] unto God in one body *by* [means of] *the cross*, having slain the enmity thereby." (See Ephesians 2:16.)

If these differences are not *rightly divided*, and thus valued as does God, is it any wonder today's believer (as well as the church in general) becomes a workman (that is) ashamed? (2 Timothy 2:15.)

### **Note 1 Peter 1:9-12**

Peter writes to the Jews scattered among the Gentiles (1:1). He deals with *salvation*; a salvation which, says he, the prophets investigated even as they wrote thereabout. Two areas were focused upon via the Spirit of Christ in their (i.e., Old Testament prophets) searching: first, *the sufferings of Christ*, and second, *the glory that should follow*. Would these two events occur together? Could they be one and the same? Apparently these prophets realized that others, later, would see these events fulfilled; yes, even two separate events, at that. Obviously, Christ's first coming fulfilled the (predicted) *sufferings*, i.e., His rejection, crucifixion, et al. And, consistent with His parable teaching, the going into the far country to receive for Himself a kingdom *and to return* (see Luke 19:11 ff) evidences that *the glory to follow* awaited a still a future day.

These two areas must be *rightly divided* as they provide a basis for Christ's two comings to earth. The first of these comings, He would *suffer*, then He returns with

*the [kingdom] glory to follow.* Much disharmony of doctrine exists today due to failure to rightly divide in this area alone!

How true are these words: "If we do not rightly divide `all Scripture' according to the times, when, and as it was written, it will be impossible for us to be guided into 'all truth.'"<sup>16</sup>

### **Approving Things That Are Excellent**

This phrase is found in Philippians 1:10. It is part of a purpose clause, which grows out of verse 9: "And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." How different is Paul's concern for the believer's growth in love, from that of the world. The world says, in effect, "Love is blind." Paul says abounding love issues in *knowledge* (*epiginosis*, i.e., full knowledge) and *all judgment* (discernment). All this to the end that believers "may approve things that are excellent." Such *approving* is used in 2 Timothy 2:15 and Romans 2:18. In both verses reference is made to God's Word. Thus, *things excellent* in Romans 2:18 involved knowing God's will and being instructed out of the law, which meant at least the Hebrew Scriptures of Genesis through Deuteronomy, and possibly the entire Hebrew Bible. Often God's will is used as a synonym for God's Word. (See Colossians 1:9; Romans 12:2; et. al.) Surely the written Word of God is His revealed will. How crucial it is that these *things that are excellent* be approved, tested - yes, *rightly divided*.

Surely true biblical preaching and true biblical Homiletics will utilize God's key to understanding the Bible: *right division*.

## **CHAPTER 3 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. How *is right division* God's key to understanding the Bible?
2. How is truth involved in this matter of *right division*?
3. Why is *rightly dividing* likened unto a workman that needs not to be ashamed?
4. What other English words can you find that use the prefix: *ortho-*, or the suffix: *-tomy*?
5. Explain in your own words Proverbs 3:6 in the light of *orthotemeo*.
6. Give some other examples of *right division* in the Bible.
7. How had Hymenaeus and Philetus *wrongly divided* the word of truth?
8. From 1 Corinthians 10:32 explain the distinctives between the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God.
9. How does the word *dispensational* relate to the concept of *rightly dividing*?
10. How does the expression *approving the things that are excellent* relate to *rightly dividing*?

---

<sup>16</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *How To Enjoy The Bible*, p. 178; 1955; Lamp Press Ltd., London.

## Exercises

Explain the differences and distinctives in the following items by answering the questions<sup>17</sup> posed:

---

### ***Why the Difference?***

#### **Answered Prayer**

*"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth..." (Matthew 7.7, 8).*

#### **Unanswered Prayer**

*"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.. ." (2 Corinthians 12:8,9).*

If "every one that asketh receiveth," why didn't the Apostle Paul receive what he had asked for three times over?

---

### ***Did Paul Have A Different Gospel?***

*"And He [Jesus] said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel..." (Mark 16-15).*

*"And I [Paul] communicated unto them THAT GOSPEL WHICH I PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES" (Galatians 2:2).*

Three times Paul speaks of "my gospel," and many times he uses phraseology like the above. Can you explain this?

---

### ***What Happened to the Pentecostal Believers?***

#### **A.D. 33**

*"Neither was there any among them that lacked" (Acts 4:34).*

#### **A.D. 60**

*"a...contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (Romans 15:26).*

Can you explain why poverty overtook these believers in Christ?

---

### ***What's the Difference?***

#### **Peter - A. D. 33**

*"REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).*

#### **Paul - A.D. 65**

---

<sup>17</sup> C. R. Stam; *Puzzles and Paradoxes*; Berean Bible Society, used by permission.

*"NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).*

Can you explain this seeming contradiction in the Bible?

---

### **John the Baptist and Israel**

*"And I [John the Baptist] knew Him [Christ] not, but that He should be made manifest to Israel; THEREFORE AM I COME BAPTIZING WITH WATER" (John 1:31).*

### **Paul and the Church Today**

*"For BY ONE SPIRIT ARE WE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 12:13). "THERE IS ONE BODY AND... ONE BAPTISM" (Ephesians 4:4,5).*

If there is but *one baptism* in God's program for our day, which one is it?

---

### **A Kingdom on Earth**

*"Fear not, little flock; for it is YOUR FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM. Sell that ye have, and give alms... " (Luke 12:32,33).*

### **Blessings in Heaven**

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST" (Ephesians 1:3).*

Do you know why Christ promised His followers a kingdom on earth, but later sent Paul to proclaim spiritual blessings "in heavenly places"?

---

### **Subjection to Moses**

*"The Scribe and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: ALL THEREFORE, WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE, THAT OBSERVE AND DO" (Matthew 23:2,3).*

### **Liberty in Christ**

*"STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE" (Galatians 5:1).*

Can you reconcile this seeming contradiction in the Bible?

---

## **Christ to Israel**

*"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision [the Jewish nation]," (Romans 15:8).*

## **Paul to the Gentiles**

*"That I (Paul) should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (Romans 15:16).*

Can you explain this vital difference in the ministries of Christ on earth and the Apostle Paul years later?

---

## **The Kingdom Program: Prophecy Fulfilled**

*"...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, THE TIME IS FULFILLED, AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND; REPENT YE, AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL " (Mark 1:14,15).*

## **The Dispensation of Grace: A Secret Revealed**

*"For this cause, I Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD, which is given me to you-ward how that BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY [Lit., SECRET]" (Ephesians 3:1-3).*

Do you know the difference between prophecy and that great body of truth which Paul, by divine inspiration, called *"the mystery"*?

---

## **Whatsoever Ye Shall Ask**

*"And ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK IN PRAYER, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).*

## **We Know Not What to Pray For**

*". . . WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT, but the Spirit. .. maketh intercession... "(Romans 8:26).*

The former statement was made by Christ on earth; the latter by Christ through Paul, years later. Can you explain?

---

## Chapter 4

### Topical, Textual, and Expository Sermons

---

The types or kinds of sermons can be arranged around these three descriptives: topical, textual, and expository. There will be some overlapping shared among these three. For example, all three must have a Bible text from which to launch their persuasive message. What then makes a topical sermon different from a textual sermon? Is it not possible to preach a topical sermon, a textual sermon and an expository sermon, all from the same singular text? Theoretically, the answer would be "No"; however, practically, the answer would be "Yes." As we deal with each of these three types of sermons, their distinctives, peculiarities, and similarities will be noted.

#### THE TOPICAL SERMON

A topic is "the subject of a discourse or of a section of a discourse."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, a topical sermon is one that addresses a biblical subject, or any subject, from a biblical point of view. Perhaps the foregoing needs to be put in a more detailed manner. Primarily, essentially, and basically a topical sermon deals with a biblical subject or a biblical doctrine. In a secondary or lesser consideration, a topical sermon may address any legitimate subject, but always from a biblical perspective, and always using a Bible passage or Bible text for its support.

The topical sermon will use the Bible as final authority in gathering and comparing the facts relevant to the chosen subject. Whatever subject our topical sermon addresses, our audience must be presented with a clear understanding of the Bible's teaching thereon. And always we must use the key of right division (2 Timothy 2:15).

The topical sermon may use many texts, but it should always have one starting passage that opens the door for the others. These additional texts will provide an increased range for the given subject. Thus, the topical sermon offers an aggregate of Bible texts that fortifies and undergirds the chosen subject or biblical doctrine. The overall biblical perspective may be quickly given via the topical sermon. Many texts strengthen the subject chosen. This prevents the preacher from taking his own ideas about the subject in place of using the Scriptures themselves. With the multiplication of texts, a stronger conclusiveness exists - much like the repeated washing of the waves of the ocean upon the beach.

Topical preaching is probably the simplest and easiest type of sermonizing. It allows the preacher to move around in the Bible, for seldom is any Bible subject or topic isolated to just a single reference. Therefore, at the outset, the young preacher should concentrate his homiletics and thematic preaching on the topical sermon. The

---

<sup>18</sup> *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1993.*

Scriptures will always provide more material than any topical sermon can contain. Never will one exhaust the subjects upon which to preach so long as he sticks with the Holy Scriptures. In the exercises at the close of this chapter there will be suggested assignments in the making of topical, textual, and expository sermons.

As basic and elementary and recommended as topical sermons are for the beginning preacher, they also have some disadvantages. The following are some disadvantages to the topical sermon.

### **Preconceived ideas**

Being human, the preacher can field his pet ideas or doctrines in a biblical setting, calling it a topical sermon. Thus armed with his ideas, the preacher then looks for textual support, rather than vice versa. And too often, the topical sermon is thereby reduced to merely the thoughts of man, flavored with selected Bible passages. (See 2 Corinthians 2:17,<sup>19</sup> et al.)

### **Artificial or Superficial Arrangement of the Texts**

Again it is possible to warp Bible texts to fit the preacher's dogma. While this may be true in textual and expository sermons, it is more prevalent in topical preaching.

### **Too Much Material**

Although this danger exists in every type of sermon, the topical falls prey to it more often than not. The broader the subject, the more texts can be multiplied. For example, think of the topic love. Just refer to a concordance and see that in the Bible our English word *love* is found approximately 310 times in 280 verses. Amazingly, seventeen books of the Bible do not once contain the English word *love*! How could one possibly utilize all this material in one topical sermon? Obviously, the point is made. The preacher needs to narrow his topic and the Bible material thereabout so as not to overload his sermon and also his audience.

Even using the topic *the love of God* which, by the way, is found twelve times in our New Testament, is to invite too much material for one topical sermon. Although, by some combining of similar or parallel texts, one topical sermon might contain all these references.

Because of the amount of material to be found on most Bible topics, another danger could exist. That is the artificial selection of the texts to be used. Therefore the preacher would ignore some (equally) appropriate and necessary (for the complete picture) passages.

A solution to this problem, or disadvantage, might be to preach a series of messages on the subject. This way the vast store of material can be appropriately parceled out to the specific dimensions of your given subject. Again, be sensitive to the amount of material you put into the topical sermon. Your sermon may be able to hold more material than can your audience!

---

<sup>19</sup> "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."



## **The Trading on Controversy or Sensationalism**

These two may easily find an ally in the topical sermon. Woe to the preacher who allows his subjects to repeatedly fall into these two categories. It is true that just about any biblical subject can be made controversial or sensational. But we are taking this duo in their more accepted meaning, that is, a deliberate trading on controversial and sensational themes. To wrap this in the packaging of the topical sermon is to be avoided.

## **Using A Verse (or Teat) Apart from Its Context**

Any time this is done we have weakened, if not perverted, the text in question. The old adage still stands: "A text without its context is a pretext." For this reason the topical sermon needs special attention so as to be biblically sound. We must use each verse's context in its supporting context; and when it is so utilized, this danger will have been precluded.

## **SOME BASIC RULES TO GOVERN THE TOPICAL SERMON**

- Get the topic from Scripture itself; it should not be preconceived.
- Give the topic a biblical rather than a moral or philosophical setting.
- Aim at a scriptural discussion of your subject; take into account all that the Bible has to say on the given topic.
- Aim at a complete treatment of this topic; use a series of sermons to accomplish this if need be.
- Define and limit your topic in your treatment.

## **THE TOPICAL SERMON AND THEMATIC PREACHING**

Technically, every type of sermon has a *topic*. It addresses a chosen subject. A textual sermon will have its topic. An expository sermon will have its topic. Yet the topical sermon takes its topic from a group of different texts; whereas both textual and expository sermons stay pretty much *at home* in their starting texts.

A word about the theme in the topical sermon. The topic and the theme are not the same. The topic is more general; the theme is more specific. Every topical sermon will have its theme, or obviously it cannot be thematic! For example, if the chosen topic is "The Love of God" and the text is Romans 5:8, the theme might be: "God's Love Is Proved for Sinners by Christ's Death." Now this topic and the theme may be duplicated in other texts to round out the topical sermon treatment. (See Ephesians 2:4,5; 1 John 3:16; et al.)

Therefore, the starting text in the topical sermon will include the sermon's theme. As other texts are added to this type of sermon, that same theme will be found and reinforced. This binds the topical sermon together regardless of the number of extended passages one uses.

It was Voltaire who expressed a wish that the practice of taking texts be abandoned.<sup>20</sup> When using the topical sermon, if we do not heavily anchor our subject in the Bible, we would be meeting the approval of this noted eighteenth century atheist! May it never be!

To assist the student, some sample topical sermon outlines are offered:

---

Text: Romans 6:14,15 (Romans 3:24; John 15:25; Psalm 35:19; Luke 6:32,33,34)

Topic: "Governed by Grace"

Theme: "Grace Operates Without a Cause in Man"

Thesis: God's administration of grace is not dependent upon its recipients; it finds its entire motivation in God Himself.

I. Grace "without a cause" (Romans 3:24, "freely"; John 15:25; Psalm 35:19)

II. Grace expects no return (Luke 6:32,33,34)

III. Grace operates from God's nature (Ephesians 2:7)

---

Text: Romans 16:25 (Colossians 1:25,26; Ephesians. 3:3)

Topic: "The Mystery"

Theme: "God's Secret ('Mystery') Revealed."

Thesis: To Paul was given God's sacred secret to be made known through His church.

I. A secret once hidden (Ephesians 3:5,9; Colossians 1:26; Romans 16:25)

II. A secret now made known (Romans 16:26; Ephesians 6:19,20; Ephesians 3:3)

III. A secret involving Christ (Romans 16:25; Colossians 1:27,28; Ephesians 3:4)

---

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:7 (Hebrews 11:6; Galatians 2:20; 3:11; Romans 1:17; 10:17; Hebrews 10:38; Philippians. 3:9).

Topic: "By Faith"

Theme: "Faith Activated Pleases God"

Thesis: The faith response is ever expected by God and beneficial for believers.

---

<sup>20</sup> Quoted by Bob Jones, Jr. in *How To Improve Your Preaching*, 1945; Revell; p. 22.

- I. God's requirement (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 1:17; 10:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38)
  - II. Christ's dependability (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:9)
  - III. Believer's benefit (2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 2:20)
- 

Text: Romans 5:12 (8:2; James 1:15)

Topic: "Sin and Death"

Theme: "God's Principle of Sin and Death"

Thesis: The two partners of sin and death are bound together, the former to the latter.

- I. The principle established (Romans 5:12)
  - II. The law fixed (Romans 8:2)
  - III. The process observed (James 1:15)
- 

Text: Romans 1:10 (8:27,28; 12:2; 15:32)

Topic: "The Will of God"

Theme: "The Will of God in Romans"

Thesis: God's will (in Romans) deals with the spread of the gospel, the Holy Spirit's prayer for believers and our living sacrifice.

- I. Paul's gospel travels (1:10; 15:32)
  - II. Holy Spirit's prayer ministry (8:27,28)
  - III. Believers living sacrifice (12:2)
- 

## THE TEXTUAL SERMON

By its very name a textual sermon is bound to a single Bible passage. Thus, it differs from the topical sermon which depends upon an aggregate of Bible texts to cover its subject.

Yes, the textual sermon will have a topic that it will address. It will take its subject directly from its starting text; that subject will be a general and overall viewpoint. The textual sermon derives its theme also from its starting text. The theme will be narrower, more defined, and more pointed than the topic.

A rule-of-thumb definition of the textual sermon is: a sermon drawn from approximately two Bible verses.

In his helpful pamphlet, Dwight E. Stevenson defines the textual sermon: "A short passage of Scripture is used - one verse or part of a verse. All the divisions of a sermon are drawn from the text."<sup>21</sup>

If we go beyond two verses from which our textual sermon is taken we are getting into the area of the expository sermon. Textual and expository sermons are closely related. They stay with their starting text and exposit therefrom.

The textual sermon is preaching that is derived directly from the text of Scripture. This method is ideal as it comprehends and apprehends the truth by textual study and preaching. All of our major points, called *Roman numerals* [e.g., I, II, and III] will come directly from that text.

This textual approach allows the use of the three laws of study:

- The first rule of study is *observation*. (What do I see?)
- The second rule of study is *interpretation*. (What does it mean?)
- The third rule of study is *application*. (What does it mean to me?)

Here are some basics involved in textual preaching:

- Know the text itself. Primarily it is set in a context; know the meaning of all the words; know the spirit or the vitality, movement, and animation of the chapter.
- Know the parallel texts - those similar. Dare not lift a text from its context. To be truly biblical and thematic, we must leave each text where we find it. Again right *division* (2 Timothy 2:15) assures us of doing just that.
- Seek textual division from the text itself - each Roman numeral must naturally come from the chosen text. Any artificiality here becomes obvious since our text is limited to two verses.
- Each division (i.e., Roman numerals and Capitals) should be exhaustive and complete. Use the whole text; make it climactic. Move in the text from the weaker to the stronger, to the strongest points. This seems to be the natural flow in Scripture. We want that evident in our textual preaching also.

In many respects the textual sermon is the most delicate. The topical sermon is quite wide and broad in its perspective as it gathers many texts. The expository sermon is more rambling as it involves longer passages and texts within a context.

To assist the student a few sample textual sermon outlines are offered.

---

Text:	Philippians 4:19
Topic:	"God's Resources"
Theme:	"The Believer's Spiritual Supply"
Thesis:	God promises to meet our needs through His own resources.

---

<sup>21</sup> Dwight E. Stevenson, *A Road-Map For Sermons*; 1950; The College of the Bible; Lexington, Ky. See #18.

- I. God's promise given ("my God shall supply all your need")
  - II. God's riches available ("according to His riches in glory")
  - III. God's Son the agent ("by Christ Jesus")
- 

Text: Philippians 4:4

Topic: "Joy"

Theme: "Real Joy"

Thesis: True joy finds its source and expression in the Lord.

- I. The command to joy ("rejoice!")
  - II. The location of joy ("in the Lord")
  - III. The frequency of joy ("always...again")
- 

Text: Philippians 3:10

Topic: "Closeness to Christ."

Theme: "Knowing Christ."

Thesis: Paul's desire to know Christ involved the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, and the conformity to His death.

- I. The dynamic of Christ's resurrection
  - II. The partnership of Christ's sufferings
  - III. The conformation to Christ's death
- 

Text: Titus 2:11,12

Topic: "The Extent of Grace"

Theme: "God's Grace Saves and Teaches"

Thesis: The activity of grace is both universal in saving the sinner and restrictive in teaching the believer.

- I. God's grace (bringing salvation)
  - II. God's grace (dealing with believers sins)
  - III. God's grace (teaching believers how to live)
- 

Text: Titus 3:5,6

Topic: "Salvation"

Theme: "How God Saves Today"

- Thesis: God saves today apart from all man's effort and totally by His own provisions.
- I. Not by man's efforts
  - II. But by God's mercy
  - III. Via Holy Spirit and Christ's work
- 

## THE EXPOSITORY SERMON

"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 him to his hearers."<sup>22</sup>

Haddon Robinson writes from the perspective of a homiletician who "during two decades in the classroom [has] evaluated nearly six thousand student sermons."<sup>23</sup> Surely Robinson ought to know what expository preaching is. Or at least he knows what it is not!

Without controversy Bible homileticians agree that the expository sermon is the "King of Sermons." The very word *expository* conveys its import: "a setting forth of the meaning or purpose [as of a writing]."<sup>24</sup>

Just why is the expository sermon so highly recommended? Mainly because it deals with a given Bible text almost word for word. And, after all, this is the way Scripture was given. Every book in the Bible is composed of words, verses, and chapters. In expository preaching one sticks to his chosen passage. From that text comes the topic, theme, and thesis of that sermon.

Many of the dangers incidental to topical sermons are lessened in the expository sermon. It is harder to preach one's preconceived ideas when thoroughly explaining (or exegeting) a text. Each word in the given passage deserves due recognition and consideration under the expository method. Such is not the case in the topical sermon. While the textual sermon is closely related to the expository, the expanded nature of the latter lifts it head and shoulders above the former. The preacher will be wise to make the higher percentage of his annual sermons expository!

As such preaching becomes high priority in one's ministry, a growing awareness and appreciation of every word in the text produces a biblical background from which the young preacher may draw. The same holds true to a greater degree for the seasoned preacher.

This expository approach draws directly in each passage from the overall structure of the respective Bible book. Each Bible book will have its own general

---

<sup>22</sup> Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* 1980; Baker; p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition, 1993; Merriam Webster, Inc.

theme. Expositing from any given text, one must of necessity touch that thematic pulse. And as the old axiom states: "The whole is related to each of its parts as each of the parts is related to the whole." Thus, the expository process draws indirectly from the Bible book of which it is a part. It also draws more directly from its chapter context.

The expository method pays close attention to grammar and literary style in the text. Such adds color, bouquet, and harmony to the main theme of the Bible text. Verbs, of course, show action: is it ongoing and continuous? or past and complete? or past with present results? or maybe with future prospects? Then there are the prepositions. For example: "*in* Christ," "the faith of Christ," "by Him and *for* Him," "for of Him, and *through* Him and *to* Him are all things." Each one is special in conveying relationship from one noun to another. Each part of speech takes on significant meaning when we realize these are the vehicles of divine truth!

A word here is offered in defense of English grammar. Well do I recall my grade school teacher, a Mrs. Carlson. She drummed into us English grammar. Little did I know then the large part that would play in my later study of Holy Scripture! That solid grammatical foundation gave me an appreciation for all the language arts. And the world's greatest piece of literature, inspired by God Himself, has come to us in grammatical form. If ever the sermonizer needs to be apprised of good grammar, it will be in his use of the expository method.

For the benefit of our hearers, expository messages incorporate a teaching aspect. As the words of each text are recognized, and the thoughts they convey are proclaimed, in the expository sermon the first purpose of all Scripture is achieved. And from 2 Timothy 3:16, that first purpose is *doctrine*, or teaching. If this comes first in God's stated *profit* of Holy Scripture, it follows that expository sermons will contain that same emphasis.

With so many obvious pluses from expository sermons, are there any disadvantages? I will suggest a few:

- The possibility of getting bogged down with technical word studies. Again the tendency is to overdo a good thing. (See Romans 14:16!)
- One might miss the aggregate of Scripture on a given doctrine. Seldom does a single passage contain all of God's mind about a given doctrine.
- Misuse of the context. Two extremes are possible here: to over emphasize the context, or to de-emphasize it.
- The possibility of making one's introduction so contextually involved that it does not address the needs of the audience. This may also be considered a disadvantage of expository preaching, in one's conclusion-making it too contextually relevant but not applicable to those hearing the sermon.

## **A WORD ABOUT EXEGESIS**

Exegesis is defined as "an explanation or critical interpretation of a text."<sup>25</sup> The Greek verb *exegeomai* (from which our English word *exegesis* comes) is found in Luke 24:35 (told); John 1:18 (*declared*); Acts 10:8 (*declared*); 15:12 (*declaring*); 15:14 (*declared*); and 21:19 (*declared*). Two synonyms for *exegesis* are *exposition* and *explanation*.

Haddon Robinson capsulizes this concept thus: "Linguistic and grammatical analysis *must* never become an end in itself, but rather should lead to clearer understanding of the passage as a whole. The process resembles an hour glass that moves from synthesis to analysis and back to synthesis. Initially the exegete reads the passage and its context in English to understand the author's meaning. Then through analysis he tests his initial impression through an examination of the details. After that he makes a final statement of the subject and complement in the light of that study."<sup>26</sup>

The expository method can be applied to topical and textual sermons as well. This exegetical approach completely grounds these sermons in the Bible.

For the student, some sample expository sermon outlines are here offered.

- 
- Text: Colossians 2:6,7 (This outline could be either textual or expository; it is offered here as expository.)
- Topic: "The Lordship of Christ"
- Theme: "Christ Received"
- Thesis: Christ received involves: past act of faith, a present behavior or walk, and the principle of faith as here taught.
- I. A finished transaction
    - A. Backward look
    - B. Personal Encounter
    - C. Lordship introduced
  - II. A comparable experience
    - A. Present reality
    - B. Circumscribed by Him
    - C. Rooted and built up
  - III. A certain body of teaching
    - A. Outgrowth of walking
    - B. Body of doctrine
    - C. Consistency ("as ye have been taught")

---

<sup>25</sup> *Merrian Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition; 1993; Merriam Webster, Inc.

<sup>26</sup> Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* Baker; 1980; p. 66.



Text: 1 Corinthians 10:16-20  
Topic: "Communion Sunday"  
Theme: "Fellowship and Communion"  
Thesis: These words are part of what we observe at the Lord's table.

- I. Fellowship and communion applied to:
  - A. The cup
  - B. The bread (loaf)
- II. Fellowship and communion illustrated by:
  - A. Israel (after the flesh)
  - B. The Gentiles
  - C. Three distinct groups here
- III. Fellowship and communion prohibited with:
  - A. A. Dual allegiance
  - B. "Cup" and "table"

---

Text: Galatians 1:1-5  
Topic: "Book of Galatians"  
Theme: "Spiritual Salutation"  
Thesis: Grace will adequately deal with problems and people all to the glory of God.

- I. The greeter
  - A. Paul
  - B. An Apostle
  - C. The brethren with me
- II. Those greeted
  - A. Churches of Galatia
  - B. Northern or southern cities?
  - C. "Cool" (less than warm) references
- III. The greetings
  - A. Grace and peace
  - B. Deliverance acknowledged
  - C. Will of Father-God

---

Text: Galatians 1:6-10  
Topic: "Book of Galatians"  
Theme: "The Gospel Perverted"  
Thesis: The gospel of Christ perverted moves believers in the wrong direction, comes under the double curse, and is contrary to the standard of Paul's gospel.

- I. The Gospel perverted moves away from Christ and grace (1:6).
  - A. Paul's amazement
  - B. The removing process
  - C. The wrong direction
- II. The gospel perverted is doubly cursed (1:8,9).
  - A. Though Paul or angel from heaven
  - B. "If any man"
  - C. Curse defined
- III. The gospel perverted contrary to the standard of Paul (1:7,10).
  - A. Another gospel
  - B. Corinthian parallel
  - C. Men pleasers, no longer!

---

Text: Galatians 2:19-21  
Topic: "Book of Galatians"  
Theme: "Not I But Christ"  
Thesis: Grace alone values the human "I," and Christ living in the believer.

- I. The law that kills (2:19)
  - A. Pauline perspective
  - B. Death, not life
  - C. Alive unto God
- II. The exchanged life (2:20)
  - A. Joint-crucifixion
  - B. The "now" life
  - C. The faith of Christ
- III. The alternative (2:21)

- A. Issue of grace
- B. Abounding grace
- C. Christ died in vain

## CHAPTER 4-STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Study Questions

1. List the similarities between topical, textual, and expository sermons. List their differences.
2. Why is the topical sermon considered the easiest for the beginning preacher?
3. How might proof texts be used to extremes in a topical sermon?
4. How may the topical sermon use a verse apart from its natural context?
5. Explain the three laws of study.
6. Define a textual sermon.
7. Why is the textual sermon considered the most delicate?
8. Define expository preaching in your own words.
9. Why does the expository sermon have less potential dangers than does the topical sermon?
10. Why does the expository method pay close attention to grammar and literary style?
11. Why should teaching be a part of an expository message?
12. List the benefits or advantages of the expository sermon.
13. Why might a word study be a disadvantage to an expository sermon?
14. Explain the differences between a topical sermon and a topical expository sermon; between a textual sermon and a textual expository sermon.

### Exercises

Fill in the blanks or missing parts of the following topical sermon outlines:

- Topic: "Grace Solutions for Today's Problems"
- Text: 1 Timothy 1:14
- Theme: "The Exceeding and Abundant Grace of God"
- Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Saving grace (1 Tim. 1:14)
  - II. Educating grace (Titus 2:12)

### III. Sustaining grace (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

---

Topic: "Grace Solutions for Today's Problems"

Text: 2 Timothy 2:1,3

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Example from the military (2 Timothy 2:3)

II. Grace of suffering (Philippians 1:29)

III. The faithful God (1 Corinthians 10:13)

---

Topic: "Grace Solutions for Today's Problems"

Text: Romans 8:28

Theme: "[Some] All's of Paul"

Thesis: God informs believers today that He is in control, producing thereby His own glory and our greater benefit.

I. \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 8:28)

II. \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Corinthians 9:25)

III. \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippians 4:12)

---

Topic: "Grace Solutions for Today's Problems"

Text: 2 Corinthians 7:5,6

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Depression described (definition)

II. Depression in Bible texts (Psalm 37:24; 42:5,11; 43:5; 1 Kings 1:29; 2 Corinthians 4:9; 7:6)

III. Depression overcome by grace (2 Corinthians 2:12,13,14)

---

Topic: "Grace Solutions for Today's Problems"

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis: Paul knew loneliness and received strength in such times.

I. Loneliness defined

II. Loneliness experienced

III. Loneliness defeated

Fill in the blanks for the following textual sermon outlines:

---

Topic: "Communion Sunday (Lord's Supper Observance)."

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:21

Theme: "The Lord of the Table"

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. A title of relationship

III. A term of ownership

---

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Text: Philippians 4:5-7

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

I. The task to perform (4:5)

II. The treasury of prayer (4:6)

III. The triumph of peace (4:7)

---

Topic: "Philippians: The Mind of Christ Outlived"

Text: Philippians 4:8-9

Theme: "God and Peace"

Thesis: God and peace are present in proper thinking and exemplary doing.

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Topic: "Christ, The Fullness"

Text: Colossians 2:9

Theme: "Christ is Fullness"

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

- I. \_\_\_\_\_
- II. \_\_\_\_\_
- III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Text: Hebrews 1:3

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

- I. An express revelation
- II. His essential being
- III. The exact substance

Exercises to do regarding *expository* sermons. For each of the five given texts make a seven-point outline from this format:

---

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Text: \_\_\_\_\_(provided below)

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

- I. \_\_\_\_\_
- II. \_\_\_\_\_
- III. \_\_\_\_\_

- 
1. Romans 1:1-7
  2. Galatians 2:1-10
  3. Ephesians 4:1-6
  4. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
  5. Titus 1:5-16

## Chapter 5

### Ten Points of A Good Outline

---

Every sermon must have structure. By this I mean the independent parts of your message must show a constructive pattern. An orderly arrangement must show itself in your sermon. This should be true of your sermon because the Bible text you are developing is highly structured. The homiletic process is based upon this structure as is thematic preaching, thus the need for an outline.

The outline is not the entire anatomy or body; it is but a skeleton to which will be added the vital organs, muscle, nerve, fiber, and tissue in the body of your sermon. It may be likened to the loom whose fixed lines provide a backdrop for your sermon design to emerge.

The outline is the very minimal essential of the homiletical process. A good outline enhances the desired thematic flow of the sermon. A poor outline (or none at all) obviously interferes with the thematic flow.

It is from this good outline that the preacher takes his latent/potential sermon and personalizes it by God's enabling in preaching. This he conveys to the ears and minds and hearts of his audience.

Following are the bare essentials of a good outline.

#### **1. TEXT**

The *text* logically comes first! Nothing is more important in the outline than the Bible text. All other points in one's outline grow out of the text.

There can be no Bible sermon without a Bible text. If you list the topic first in your outlining process, it is understood it has been rooted in your chosen Bible text. There must be at least one Bible passage for your sermon. If a text cannot be found for what you intend to say, then you have no biblical basis for saying it!

#### **2. TOPIC**

The *topic* also may be your title. It is the broad subject of your sermon. It will be a generalization of your theme. It is a broad statement of fact. It may be only one word; it may be a phrase; or it may be a short sentence. Strive to keep it brief and concise.

#### **3. THEME**

The *theme* is what you are going to talk about-the aim of your sermon. It is what you are going to say - where you are going. It is not like aiming at nothing and hitting it every time! Many thoughts will be dealt with in your sermon. One central idea will emerge on the cloudless sky of your sermon. Thematic preaching ensures that the *ship* of your discourse will arrive at its destined haven.

#### **4. THESIS**

The *thesis* is a single, extended sentence that fully develops your theme. It includes the undergirding of your three Roman numerals. It will be written out in your outline as it was for your theme. It is not necessary to recite it in your sermon. It is here to remind you of the full development of the theme from your text. The thesis will be your sermon reduced to one comprehensive sentence.

## 5. INTRODUCTION

There will be more detail given to the *introduction* and conclusion in chapter 9. Here it needs only to be said: Introductions are necessary and important. With them we build a bridge quickly between our text and our hearers. All too often this bridge takes so much time and material from the sermon proper that the rest of the sermon is minimized. We all detest lengthy introductions to speakers and dignitaries. The diners have come for the main course and readily tire of prolonged hors d'oeuvres. Let them savor a few select appetizers, then serve up the main course of the sermon.

## 6. TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE

Because the introduction is designed to get the hearers' attention, we need to lead that interest on into the sermon proper. To ensure a smooth transition here, a written sentence secures its accomplishment. It is well to memorize the initial sentence of the introduction to open the door for the hearers to enter. By the same token we must open another door into the sermon proper via the *transitional sentence*. The latter conveys the idea "if this has been good, then come with me to something even better..." Never do we want to leave the impression that the introduction was better than the body of the sermon per se. If the introduction is a bridge from the text to the hearer, then the transitional sentence is a bridge from the introduction to the first Roman numeral in the sermon proper.

## 7. ROMANS

These are *Roman numerals*. We construct our sermonic outline from three Roman numerals: I, II, and III. The progression in these is quickly seen. The vertical mark between the two parallels forms numeral I. The next numeral sees *two* vertical marks between the same *two* parallels making the numeral II. And finally, our concluding figure sees *three* vertical lines between two parallels making the numeral III. I attempt here to dramatize this in order to demonstrate the progression of my system of outlining. I do not see this observable progression in the use of the numbers: 1, 2, and 3. It is in this same manner that we want our three supporting points (Romans) to grow, expand, and develop.

And there should be at least three Romans in our sermon. I am convinced of this *threeness* for the thematic sermon. In fact, I will devote an entire chapter to this concept (chapter 6, *The Threefold Cord*). Two legs may serve the human anatomy well, but the divine principle of *threeness* gives the biblical perspective to our discourses.

Some homileticians recommend five or up to seven Romans in one's sermon. And admittedly on occasion more than three are permissible. These are merely the exceptions that prove the rule (according to Wilson, that is).



How do I arrive at the Romans in my sermon outline? Since our thesis is our sermon's theme expanded, we go to this thesis with a set of key words. These helpful words are questions; literally, they are called interrogatives. These interrogatives are: *Who? What? Where? When? Why?* and *How?* Because these key-words are worthy of detailed consideration, a separate chapter will be devoted to them (see chapter 7, "The Use of Key Words and Interrogatives").

## 8. CAPITALS

*Capitals* are supporting points that identify with each of the Roman numerals. The capital letters A, B, and C are used to set off these helpers. As it is hardly possible for our sermon to have only one Roman numeral, so we will expect at least two capitals to undergird each Roman. And each capital should be upheld by additional facts or Scriptures. These, under the capitals, will be numbers per se. And if needed, under these numbers will be lower-case alphabet letters. The following illustrates the form these supporting points should take in our outline:

Roman numeral	I.		
1st capital	A.		
Number		1.	
Subpoints/Scripture texts			a.
Subpoints/Scripture texts			b.
Subpoints/Scripture texts			c.
Number		2.	
Subpoints/Scripture texts			a.
Subpoints/Scripture texts			b.
Subpoints/Scripture texts			c.
Number		3.	
Subpoints/Scripture texts			a.
Subpoints/Scripture texts			b.
Subpoints/Scripture texts			c.
2nd capital	B.		
Number		1.	

Once again we arrive at these additional supporting capitals and numbers and lower case letters by using our key words/interrogatives. By applying an interrogative to our Roman we should find additional qualities that undergird that main point. Always will these capitals, numbers, subpoints, and texts expand and enhance the overall theme of the sermon. Admittedly, our outline might become

overloaded with too many subpoints and extra Bible texts. Experience will teach us which subpoints and texts are necessary and beneficial and which may be eliminated without loss to the sermon.

Remember each Roman is a main point in your sermon. It stands upon supporting members: first, the (three) capitals; each one of which is undergirded by two or three (2 Corinthians 13:16)<sup>27</sup> numbers (i.e., subpoints or parallel texts). The purpose of this substructure is to add dimension and depth to each Roman. In a word, this substratum will maintain continuity with each respective Roman and with the rest of the sermon also.

To illustrate the use of Romans, capitals, and numbers, the following outline is submitted:

- Topic: Ephesians - Far Above All
- Text: Ephesians 1:3-6
- Theme: "Blessed"
- Thesis: Three dimensions of our blessings by God are here evidenced.
- I. The upward dimension [of blessing] (1:3)
- A. Association
1. God and the Father (highest association known)
    - a. Not just "God" as in Genesis 1:1 but:
    - b. "God... Father" (first & leading member of Godhead)
  2. "Our Lord Jesus Christ"
    - a. Second Person of Godhead (associated with The Father!)
    - b. He is *Lord*= master, owner, possessor
    - c. *Our* relationally close!
- B. Benefaction ("all spiritual blessings")
1. From God-Father: ("hath blessed us")
    - a. English: *eulogy* = *well spoken of* God's benevolence usward
    - b. *Everything of which He can speak well* spiritually
  2. Heavenly, in nature
    - a. Cf. these in 1:3 and "wickedness" in 6:12
    - b. Not earthly

---

<sup>27</sup> "...In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

- c. Spiritually (in good sense) as related to God Himself
- C. Location:
  - 1. "In heavenly places" = (the *upward* ultimate!)
    - a. Beyond *heavenly nature* such was quality of "kingdom of heaven" as in Matthew which both John and Christ taught.
      - 1) Ephesians. 1:3 refers to "*in heavenlies*" blessings; enjoyed *in* heaven, finally and permanently.
  - 2. "In Christ"
    - a. Not just *alongside* Christ; not with Christ; but *in Him*
    - b. Complete identification with Him: (*far above all* - Ephesians 1:21)
    - c. "The present creation includes a heaven which is destined to pass away, but the blessed sphere of the church is above this heaven of Genesis 1:1, which is far above all."<sup>28</sup>

## II. The backward (in time) dimension (of blessing) 1:4

- A. "Chosen in Him..."
  - 1. i.e., Divine election
    - a. God's sovereign choice
    - b. He also chose the means for this (2 Thessalonians 2:13)
  - 2. This *election is in Christ*
    - a. See also 1 Thessalonians 1:4
- B. *Before* foundation (*katabole*) of world (*cosmos*)
  - 1. Suggested time frame: from *katabollo*: "a casting down, hence a laying down the founding, the establishing, involving a reference to an intended continuation."<sup>29</sup> Reference to Genesis 1:2 as result of Lucifer's fall, et al.
    - a. "Before" foundation of world (see Ephesians 1:4)
    - b. "Since" (see Matthew 13:35; 25:34 as to prophecy)
  - 2. Remote past
    - a. Where God's will/design/plan was supremely alive and well!

<sup>28</sup> C. H. Welch, *The Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner*, Berean Pub. Trust; 1931; P. 22.

<sup>29</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon And Concordance*; Lamp Press, Ltd; London; 1957.

- III. The forward dimension [of blessing] (1:4,5,6)
- A. (Be) "Before him" (i.e., directly in front of before [the presence] in sight of)
    - 1. Holy and without blame
      - a. Sanctified: totally set apart to/for God
    - 2. Echoed in the corporate church (see Ephesians 5:27)
  - B. Predestined unto adoption of children
    - 1. Defined: *prohoridzo* = *to set bounds before, determine, decrees or ordain beforehand*<sup>30</sup>
      - a. *Pro* = before; plus English: *horizon*
    - 2. Guaranteed destiny/future
      - a. Parallel detail of Romans 8:29 "predestined [to be] conformed to the image of His son."
    - 3. Idea of *Inheritance* (Ephesians 1:11)
      - a. Such "sonship" provides *inheritance*!
  - C. God's will and grace (1:6)
    - 1. Involves: "His good pleasure"
      - a. As repeated in 1:9 "purposed in Himself"
      - b. God's greatest delight: in His own Will; such "pleasure" also in His beloved Son (Matthew 3:17; 17:5)
    - 2. Superlative *grace*
      - a. "Praise (laud) ...of the glory (out shining...)"
      - b. "Wherein ...made (us) accepted (*charitoo*) in the beloved (*one*)"

## 9. TRANSITIONAL OBJECTIVE SENTENCE (T.O.S.)

This sentence forms a bridge from the body of the sermon (specially the last Roman numeral) over which the message moves to the conclusion. From the crescendo of your third Roman, your sermon is now ready for the conclusion. The T.O.S. easily makes this passage for you. It is advisable to write out in a complete thought the T.O.S. This ensures that you will not get carried away in a wordy transition. After the preacher becomes more proficient in the outlining process and thematic preaching, it may not be necessary to write out the T.O.S. in full. This does not mean, however, that it is to be eliminated from the sermon. Rather,

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

the level of proficiency and experience he has reached makes for a smooth movement into the conclusion apart from a written T.O.S. In other words, his T.O.S. will be there but in an unwritten memorized form. The T.O.S. may begin with "therefore.." and contain a very brief recapitulation of the main points (Romans) of the sermon. It should aim to persuade. However, remember that the conclusion will major in that field of persuasion.

A sample of the T.O.S. is here offered to the sermon outline furnished in #8 above.

Transitional Objective Sentence: "These three dimensions: *upward, backward,* and *forward* have given us the real perspective for our `all spiritual blessings."

## **10. CONCLUSION**

A separate chapter addresses both introduction and *conclusion* (see chapter 9). It will not be necessary here to anticipate that material. Suffice it to say that the conclusion wraps up the message and presses upon the hearers the point (i.e., *theme*) you will have made. Somewhere in the sermon you will have incorporated sufficient of the gospel of grace for the sinner so that an invitation to receive Christ as Savior may be included in your conclusion.

## **CHAPTER 5 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. What is meant by sermonic structure?
2. How does a good outline aid in structuring a sermon?
3. From where does this structure ultimately come?
4. Does the preacher preach an outline, or does he preach a sermon? Explain the difference.
5. Why does the text come first in a good sermon outline?
6. What is the difference between the sermon's topic and its title?
7. How does the topic differ from the theme?
8. How do the theme and thesis differ?
9. Why do we emphasize the theme over the thesis in thematic preaching?
10. What primary purpose does the introduction in the sermon serve?
11. What is the transitional sentence in a good sermon outline?
12. Why do we use Roman numerals for our sermon's main points?
13. Why do we stress threeness in these Romans?
14. How do we arrive at these (three) Romans in our outline?
15. What is meant by keywords?
16. In a good sermon outline what is a capital?

17. Why do we indent the capital under the Roman numeral? the number under the capital? and the subpoints under the number?

18. Reproduce here the given outline form for the supporting points under Roman numeral I, capital B.

19. What main purpose is served by these capitals, numbers, and subpoints?

20. Look up in a dictionary the words substructure and substratum, and explain how they relate to a good sermon outline.

21. Explain the T.O.S. of a good sermon outline? What might be a problem without one?

22. What purpose is served by the conclusion of our sermon? Why should it be a part of our outline?

### Exercises

Using the following *ten-point format*, fill in each point as a sermon outline for each of the following texts. You will need to duplicate this form on a separate sheet of paper for each outline.

### Ten-point Sermon Outline

1. Text:

2. Topic:

3. Theme:

4. Thesis:

5. Introduction:

6. Transitional

Sentence:

7. Romans: (I, II, III)

8. Capitals: (A, B, C)

I.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

II.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_

III.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- A. \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. T.O.S

10. Conclusion:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Assigned Texts**

1. Romans 1:8-17
2. Romans 3:21-28
3. Romans 5:1-11
4. Romans 6:1-10
5. Romans 8:1-4
6. Romans 12:1-2
7. Romans 15:1-4
8. Romans 16:1-4
9. Romans 16:5-16
10. Romans 16:17-24
11. Romans 16:25-27



## Chapter 6

### The Threefold Cord

---

Solomon of old wrote: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

Obviously the preacher (see Ecclesiastes 1:1,2) was speaking of living beings, not just things. These beings might have been of the lower forms of life, for example, the beasts of the field, or the fowls of the air, or even the marine life in the seas. Probably Solomon was speaking in the above quoted text about human beings. Truly, for one person to be *alone* (oft times) is not good. Therefore, two *are better than one*. Thus, one may be good, but two are better. And taking Solomon's numerics one step farther: *three* would be best!

Solomon wrote of a *threefold cord*; not just three cords, but a threefold cord. "If two hold together, that is seen to be good; but if there be three, this threefold bond is likened to a cord formed of three threads, which cannot easily be broken."<sup>31</sup>

As Keil and Delitzsch point out, Solomon's *cord* is actually a bond of three threads. Thus, there exists a plurality of members and a singularity of entity. And in the above text we note certain negatives that hold in the absence of this plurality: specially in the absence of the threefold cord. The first negative: It is not good to be alone (4:9). Second negative: Woe to the one alone if he fall (4:10). And the third negative: If one is attacked being alone, the implication is that he will not survive.

Moses addressed this multiple or threefold principle in the area of personal witness. The witness of one person was insufficient to put an offender to death. (See Deuteronomy 17:6.) Rather, Moses required: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death." See here also Hebrews 10:28. This principle held not just for capital punishment, but for "any iniquity or for any sin that he sinneth" (Deuteronomy 19:15). Christ also used this principle regarding discipline in the kingdom of heaven: "...that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matthew 18:16). Twice does the Apostle Paul replicate this concept: in 2 Corinthians 13:1 and in 1 Timothy 5:19.

---

<sup>31</sup> Keil & Delirzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament in Ten Volumes*; Vol. 6; Ecclesiastes, p. 278; Eerdmans; 1976.

## THREENESS

The English suffix *-ness* denotes: *state; condition; quality; degree*.<sup>32</sup> As it is associated with *one*, we readily see the biblical idea of *oneness*, expressing identification of the believer with and in Christ.

Therefore, I nominate the word *threeness* as a legitimate concept to be used in the field of thematic preaching and biblical homiletics. *Threeness* sets forth the state, condition, quality, and degree of the number three.

The following Bible texts are offered to illustrate the special place the number *three* has in Holy Scripture.

- Exodus 23:14: "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year."
- Exodus 23:17: "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God."
- Numbers 22:28: "...that thou hast smitten me these three times."
- Numbers 24:10: "...thou hast altogether blessed them these three times."
- Judges 16:15: "...thou hast mocked me these three times."
- 1 Samuel 20:41: "...and bowed himself three times..."
- 1 Kings 9:25: "And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings..."
- 1 Kings 17:21: "And he [Elijah] stretched himself upon the child three times..."
- 2 Kings 13:25: "...Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel."
- Ezekiel 21:14: "...and let the sword be doubled the third time."
- Daniel 6:10: "...he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed."
- Matthew 26:34: "...thou shalt deny me thrice."
- Matthew 26:44: "and he [Jesus] left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."
- Acts 10:16: "This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven."
- 2 Corinthians 11:25: "Thrice was I beaten with rods ...thrice I suffered shipwreck..."
- 2 Corinthians 12:8: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice... "

Nathan R. Wood in his profound book, *The Secret of the Universe*, predicates that this principle of threeness permeates the universe. Dealing with the three basics in the universe he sees just three: space, matter, and time. Each of these basics in the physical universe Wood suggests is composed of just three dimensions.

---

<sup>32</sup> [Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition; 1993; Merriam-Webster, Inc.](#)

"In this sense of the terms, space as we know it and live in it and use it consists of three things. They are three dimensions - length, breadth, and height. As we have said, we may speculate about space. Mathematicians may demonstrate a fourth and fifth dimension, and some profound realities may or may not reside in the demonstrations. But when we build a house, we build it in three dimensions. No man in the world has ever raised a cabin or a cathedral of either more or less than three dimensions. No thinker would know how to plan a structure of more than three dimensions. Whatever the refinements, the subtleties, of space may be, it is clear that the basic space, the space of common knowledge and experience, is of three dimensions. It consists of those dimensions. It is length, breadth, and height. This is the first thing in the structure of the physical universe."<sup>33</sup>

As Wood sees this threeness developed in all the universe, he asks: "Is there a universal principle?" He answers his question: "...that each one of these elemental things of the physical universe is threefold ...it is in each case three things in one. Different as these three elements are [i.e., space, matter, time], they have this in common. Each is three things in one."<sup>34</sup>

Wood searches farther for what he calls *the secret of the universe*: "Is the answer to the riddle of the threefold universe to be found in God?"<sup>35</sup>

Eureka! Wood has answered his question - God Himself exists in His Godhead, the very prototype of threeness after which His creation was patterned. This threeness is anchored in the Godhead itself. And if the physical universe demonstrates this, as Wood proves in his title of quest, then surely Holy Scripture resoundingly echoes the same on every page.

The significance of the number three is dealt with in the book *Number in Scripture*, in the section on *three*. "Three. In this number we have quite a new set of phenomena. We come to the first geometrical figure. Two straight lines cannot possibly enclose any space, or form a plane figure; neither can two plane surfaces form a solid. *Three* lines are necessary to form a plane figure; and three dimensions of length, breadth, and height are necessary to form a solid. Hence *three* is the symbol of the *cube* - the simplest form of a solid figure. As two is the symbol of the square, or plane contents, so three, is the symbol of the cube, or solid contents.

"*Three*, therefore, stands for that which is *solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire*. All things that are specially *complete* are stamped with this number *three*.

"God's attributes are *three*: omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence.

"There are three great divisions completing time: *past, present, and future*.

"Three persons, in grammar, express and include all the relationships of mankind.

"Thought, word, and deed complete the sum of human capability.

"Three degrees of comparison complete our knowledge of qualities.

---

<sup>33</sup> Nathan R. Wood; *The Secret of the Universe*; The Warwick Press; Boston, Mass., 1936; p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid* p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.

"The simplest proposition requires three things to complete it; viz., the *subject*, the *predicate*, and the *copula*.

"Three propositions are necessary to complete the simplest form of argument: the *major premise*, the *minor*, and the *conclusion*.

"Three kingdoms embrace our ideas of matter: *mineral*, *vegetable*, and *animal*.

"When we turn to the Scriptures, this completion becomes Divine, and marks Divine completeness or perfection.

"Three is the first of four perfect numbers...

"Three denotes divine perfection;...

"Hence the number *three* points to what is real, essential, perfect, substantial, complete, and Divine.

"Three is the number associated with the Godhead, for there are three persons in one God! Three times the seraphim cry, 'Holy, Holy, Holy' - one for each of the three persons in the Trinity (Isaiah 6:3): the living creatures also in Revelation 4:8."<sup>36</sup>

Bullinger sees the first occurrence of the number three in Genesis 1:13 as significant. "The 'third day' was the day on which the earth was caused to rise up out of the water, symbolical of that resurrection life which we have in Christ, and in which alone we can worship, or serve, or do any 'good works.' Hence 'three' is a number of resurrection, for it was on the third day that Jesus rose again from the dead ...It was the *third* day on which Jesus was 'perfected' (Luke 13:32). It was at the 'third' hour He was crucified; and it was for 'three' hours (from the 6th to the 9th) that darkness shrouded the Divine Sufferer and Redeemer."<sup>37</sup>

"'The Spirit, the water, and the blood' are the divinely perfect witness to the grace of God on earth (1 John 5:7).

"The three years of His seeking fruit testifies to the completeness of Israel's failure (Luke 13:7).

"The Divine testimony concerning Him was complete in the threefold voice from heaven (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28).

"The inscription on the Cross in *three* languages show the completeness of His rejection by men."<sup>38</sup>

## **THEMATIC PREACHING AND THREENESS**

Surely God has stamped His hallmark of threeness upon the created universe. The Hebrew Scriptures were divided into three groups: The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). The Hebrew language conveys this threeness in that each word therein can be reduced to a triliteral root or stem. It is expected that this threeness would be a major in biblical homiletics as well as in thematic preaching.

---

<sup>36</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Number In Scripture*; The Lamp Press, Ltd; London; 1952; pp. 107-108.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 111-112.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 112.

Solomon said *the threefold cord is not quickly broken*. It does not soon (i.e., *quickly*) become broken; it is not promptly displaced. This *threefold cord* is not easily *plucked away or off*, nor is it readily *rooted out*. All this translates for us the strength of structure in the *threefold cord*.

Lest we leave this subject having not clearly defined how this threeness applies to homiletics, consider the following:

- Three Roman numerals will ideally develop from the theme of the sermon as key words and interrogatives are used.
- Each of these Romans will, in turn, find a triad of support via their capitals.
- The undergirding capitals may find additional substructure via a trilogy of points and parallel Bible texts.

Must every sermon be composed of this threeness? Is it mandatory to have three Roman numerals in our sermon outline? Is it necessary for every Roman to be supported by three capitals? And each capital undergirded by three subpoints/parallel Bible texts? Were the answer to each of these "Yes," examples could be cited of sermons from the Bible which lack these homiletic refinements.

The Bible is not a manual of homiletics. Yet it is the world's greatest literature. The Scriptures mirror the intricate design of the Creator-Redeemer God Himself. The threeness principle is a part of the Word of God itself. It would seem consistent, therefore, that our thematic sermon outlines would incorporate this threeness imprint as frequently as possible. We must be consistent with the text that we are developing, but, at the same time, let us never overlook or never overwork this threefold cord.

## **CHAPTER 6 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. Write in your own words Ecclesiastes 4:12.
2. What is a threefold cord? Why would Solomon use a cord when speaking about fellows?
3. How does this threefold cord apply to homiletics? thematic preaching?
4. Explain Deuteronomy 17:6b.
5. How does this apply to homiletics? thematic preaching?
6. Wouldn't the fact that two or three witnesses were required detract from the threeness emphasis? Explain your answer.
7. What significance do you see that this "two or three witnesses" requirement was used by Moses, Christ, and Paul?
8. Explain the word threeness.
9. List three Scriptures that you see as the strongest in support of this threeness principle.

10. How has Nathan R. Wood vindicated this threeness principle in the physical universe? Do you agree with his conclusions? Explain your answer.

11. Capsulize Bullinger's views re: the number three.

12. Explain how the threeness principle finds its root in God Himself.

13. Explain from Ecclesiastes 4:12 "not quickly broken."

### Exercises

From the following texts and given theme, find three supporting Roman numbers for the sermon outline:

---

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:3  
Theme: "Blessed be God"  
I. Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
II. Father of mercies  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:10  
Theme: "Our Great Deliverance"  
I. Past deliverance  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. Future deliverance

---

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:21-24  
Theme: "The Stablising Factor"  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: Romans 5:6-11  
Theme: "From Rags To Riches"  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Theme: "The Gospel"

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

Theme: "Grace unto You"

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Theme: "The Trust of the Gospel"

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-8

Theme: "These Afflictions"

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Theme: "A Holy Walk"

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4

Theme: "The Times and the Seasons"

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

---



## Chapter 7

### The Use of Key Words and Interrogatives

---

Words are the material from which sermons are made. God has communicated with us via words as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and these Holy Spirit taught words are what we must speak (1 Corinthians 2:13).

The sermon outline will be composed of such words, and by the use of chosen key words we will arrive at the major thoughts that convey the sermon's theme to our hearers.

*By key words, I mean words that give an explanation or provide a solution; [words] that gain entrance, possession or control.*<sup>39</sup> We all carry numerous keys on our person to gain access and entrance to our homes, vehicles, places of business, etc. Just so, certain key words will gain us entrance and access to truth that we desire to share with our hearers.

Robinson shares with us the following verse which leads into this field of key words:

"I had six faithful friends,  
They taught me all I know,  
Their names are How and *What* and *Why*,  
*When* and *Where* and *Who*."<sup>40</sup>

These six *faithful friends* possess one thing in common. They all are questions, and a question is designed to probe, to enlighten, and to make something more exact. This, in essence, is what we desire from the Scriptures. As subjects and doctrines emerge in our studied texts, we need to narrow these down; we want to deal with exact and precise points that undergird the superstructure that we call the theme. We will call these faithful friends *interrogatives*. Our English word *interrogate* means: *to question formally and systematically*.<sup>41</sup> This is what we want from our six *faithful friends*: a formal and systematic interrogation of our chosen theme. This questioning process yields for us our sermon's Roman numerals as well as other necessary subpoints and parallel Bible texts. Robinson makes the point: "When a proposed subject accurately describes what the author is talking about, it illuminates the details of the passage; and the subject, in turn will be illuminated by the details."<sup>42</sup>

To the six *faithful friends* above, I will add one more, the word *which*; so now we have *seven faithful friends*! These become for us key words, words that assist us in

---

<sup>39</sup> Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co; 1971.

<sup>40</sup> Biblical Preaching by Haddon Robinson; Baker; 1980; p. 67.

<sup>41</sup> Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary; G. & C. Merriam, Co; 1971.

<sup>42</sup> Haddon Robinson, *Ibid*, p. 67.

determining the details of our sermon's theme. Thus we will understand, whether they are called *key words* or *interrogatives*, we are talking of our seven faithful friends: *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *which*, and *how*.

These interrogatives act like a prism upon the light of our theme. The spectrum of color that results by the use of a literal prism upon light figuratively parallels the rich components now observable from our sermon theme when subjected to the prismatic effect of these interrogatives.

Do make these interrogatives your friends. Know them. They exist to serve you. Homiletically they are faithful friends! Where one of these is unable to help you realize the main and subpoints from your sermon's theme, be assured another of the *seven* can. Let us become more acquainted with these *seven faithful friends*.

## WHO

*Who* generally introduces a sequence of *persons*. The greatest of all Persons in the Bible texts will be, of course, the members of the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then there will be the human authors of the Bible, as well as those immediately addressed in each text. Certainly the Bible *is* a person book; the Spirit of God conveys to our spirit God's truth (see 1 Corinthians 2:11,12).

If a text from Acts 17:22-34 yielded the theme "The Unknown God," the interrogative *who*, might produce the following Roman numerals:

Key word: *Who?* (i.e., Person [s])

- I. The Creator God
- II. The benevolent God
- III. The knowable God

From Isaiah 6:1-5 the theme might be "I Saw the Lord." Applying the interrogative *who* could produce the following Roman numerals:

- I. The Lord seated
- II. The thrice-holy Lord
- III. The King, the Lord of Hosts

By using the interrogative *who* from a different angle, with the same theme, but emphasizing the *I* rather than *the Lord*, the following Romans could be found:

- I. Isaiah the man
- II. Isaiah the unclean man
- III. Isaiah the man of the unclean people

## WHICH

*Which* generally introduces a sequence of *things*. *Which* deals also with *what one or ones out of a group*.<sup>43</sup> Depending upon the general theme of the text, the interrogative *which will* produce things, i.e., concepts, ideas, and issues. Probably *which will* be applied to a theme or point that conveys plural or multiple thoughts. The following are offered as examples:

Text: Galatians 6:1-5

Theme: "Burden Bearing"

Since the subject of *burdens* is plural and involved in the stated text, *which*, applied produces:

Key word: *Which?* (i.e., *things*):

- I. Those carried by others (6:2)
- II. Those overcome by others (6:1)
- III. Those borne by ourselves (6:5)

The key word (interrogative) may be used in our Bible text affording our outlined theme a direct assist in determining the main and subpoints. A few examples from the Book of Galatians are offered:

Galatians 1:17: "...to them *which were* apostles before me.."

Galatians 3:9: "so then they *which be* of faith.."

Galatians 4:24: "... *which things* are an allegory.." Galatians 5:19: "...the works of the flesh are manifest, *which are these...* "

One additional text and theme will be presented:

Text: 1 Corinthians 2:9-14

Theme: "Spiritual Things"

Key word: *Which?*

- I. The *things of* God (2:9)
- II. The *things* given to us *of* God (2:10-12)
- III. The *things* the Spirit teaches (2:13-14)

---

<sup>43</sup> Op.cit./ *Ibid*.

## WHAT

*What* introduces a sequence of *definitions* or *particulars*. "*What* used as an interrogative expresses inquiry about the identity of an object or matter ...or person, character, occupation, position, or role of a person."<sup>44</sup>

What a *friend* this interrogative is! *Definition* is one of the major points of any theme. It is so basic that one is tempted to make every sermon's theme yield these Romans:

- I. Definition
- II. Explanation
- III. Application

Or as some have utilized our interrogative *what* - making thereby this three-point outline:

- I. The *What*
- II. The *So What*
- III. The *Now What*

This dramatically and graphically shows how the key word (as a thought) could be utilized in the sermon outline. It will be a great benefit to keep in mind these two forgoing (three-point) outlines. They have an amazing adaptability and utility in dealing with many Bible texts. Thematic preaching and biblical homiletics are enhanced by these kinds of aids. However, remember the danger that exists in overworking a good thing (see Romans 14:16)! The following examples afford our friend *Mr. What* an opportunity to help us find the main points in our sermon outline:

---

Text:	Ephesians 1:17
Theme:	"The Christian's Greatest Need"
Key word:	<i>What?</i> (definitions or particulars)
I.	Defined: a true knowledge of God
II.	As illustrated by Moses and Christ (Exodus 33; John 17)
III.	As outworked by Paul (Philippians 3:10)

---

Text:	Ephesians 3:1-6
Theme:	"The Mystery Revealed"
Key word:	<i>What?</i> (Definition or Particular)

---

<sup>44</sup> Webster, *op.cit.* // *ibid.*

- I. Involves the dispensation of grace
- II. Involves gentile special blessing
- III. Involves Paul the prisoner

## WHY

*Why* introduces a sequence of *reasons*. *Why* deals with: *for what cause, reason, or purpose*.<sup>45</sup> We have all, from early childhood, used this interrogative. It is how the three- or four-year-old learns, by asking: *Why?* Adults seldom ask *Why?* perhaps to avoid the appearance of that childhood attitude toward learning! Does this mean adults do not need *reasons* today? Surely not. God in His infinite wisdom does not have to give us the answer to our *why's*. However, Scripture abounds with purpose, cause, and reason from God. All this enables us to adequately present the facts from God allowing our faith to take hold of God's truth.

To illustrate the interrogative *why*, the following examples are offered:

---

Key word:	<i>Why?</i> (reason, purpose or cause)
Text:	Ephesians 2:4-7
Theme:	"But God..."
I.	Rich in mercy and love (past)
II.	Together with Christ (present)
III.	Coming display (future)

---

Key word:	<i>Why?</i> (reason, purpose or cause)
Text:	Ephesians 6:10-18
Theme:	"Be Strong in the Lord"
I.	Put on the armour of God
II.	Stand against the Devil
III.	Wrestle against spiritual wickedness

## WHEN

*When* introduces a sequence of *time* or *times*. *When* asks: *at what time?* We might ask why is time important? Time is the substance of which life is measured. If ever a generation was time conscious, it is ours. With speed measured in nano-seconds (i.e., one-billionth of a second), our word processors and computers are getting faster each

---

<sup>45</sup> Webster, *op.cit.*/ *Ibid.*

year! One of the major selling factors in the computer industry is the speed of the machine. Yes, the time element is important.

God being eternal and timeless still works in time with and for His own.

Applying the interrogative *when* to our textual theme will bring up a sequence of *time* or *times*.

Two examples are offered here using *when* to establish the Roman numerals from the given textual theme.

---

Text:	2 Corinthians 6:1-3
Theme:	"The Accepted Time"
Key word:	<i>When?</i> (time or times)
I.	A time of grace
II.	A time of salvation
III.	A time of ministry

---

Text:	2 Corinthians 1:10
Theme:	Three-dimensional Deliverance
Key word:	<i>When?</i> (time or times)
I.	Past deliverance
II.	Present deliverance
III.	Future deliverance

## WHERE

*Where* introduces a sequence of *places, positions, or situations*. Used as an interrogative *where* asks *at, in, or to what place. At, in, or to what situation, position, direction, circumstances, or respect - does this plan lead - am I wrong?*<sup>46</sup>

Thus, *where* is one of the *seven faithful friends*. Its investigative prowess when applied to the sermon's theme will help us find the supporting Roman numerals; it will also prove beneficial in producing subpoints under each Roman. The idea of places, positions, or situations is borne out in the following sample texts and themes.

---

Text:	1 Corinthians 15:12-19
Theme:	"If Christ Be Not Raised"

---

<sup>46</sup> Webster, *op.cit./ Ibid.*

Key word: *Where?* (places, positions, situations, et al., i.e., where will this statement lead?)

- I. Our preaching is thus in vain.
- II. Your faith is thus in vain.
- III. Both dead and living are most miserable.

---

Text: 1 Corinthians 16:1

Theme: "Exemplary Liberality"

Key word: *Where?* (places, positions, situations, et al.)

- I. The churches of Galatia
- II. Churches at Jerusalem
- III. The church at Corinth

## HOW

*How* introduces a sequence of *ways* or *conditions*. If ever a generation could be characterized by the phrase *how to, ours* deserves that recognition. *How-to* books line the shelves of our Christian book stores, and this present volume could be placed in that category also.

Nevertheless, the word *how* is a bona fide interrogative. It belongs in the list of the homiletician's (seven) faithful friends.

*How* questions the manner or the method of the given premise or theme.

God's Word in some respects is a *how-to* book. It deals with *manner*, that is God's mode of acting and His characteristic conduct. It deals with *method*, being the way to attain an object or goal. Surely our thematic sermons will set forth biblical manner and method.

Two examples of the use of the interrogative *how* are offered here:

---

Text: Titus 2:12,13

Theme: "Grace, Our Teacher"

Key word: *How?* (ways or conditions)

- I. Negatively re: sin
- II. Positively re: godliness
- III. Encompassingly re: rapture

---

Text: Romans 5:6-10

- Theme: "God Commended His Love"
- Key word: *How?* (ways or conditions)
- I. By Christ dying for those without strength
  - II. By Christ dying for sinners
  - III. By Christ dying for enemies

These seven interrogatives may be effectively used on each of the three main Roman numerals of your outline. Thus will come concise and orderly subpoints called *capitals* (usually no more than three in number). Once more these seven applied to the capitals will produce additional numeric points or collateral Scriptures.

The overall outline must be noted for its unity and completeness. We want to eliminate long involved sentences in the outline, unless they are needed as part of a pointed quotation. Keep the outline orderly. Strive to put the right thought in the right place at the right time.

The more concise your points and statements are, the easier they can be recalled by a quick glance at the outline as you preach.

Would it ever be wrong or in bad taste to read a point or subpoint from one's outline? Surely not; often such a break from one's spontaneous recitation recaptures any lagging interest from the audience. The temptation may be here to overwork such *readings*. Balance will best be the goal of the preacher.

Frequently, our theme will contain one of these seven interrogatives, and therefore we have built in the machinery for determining the three Romans. For example, from Matthew 4:1-11 the theme might be "How to Overcome Temptation," using *how?* would yield these Romans:

- I. Christ knew the Word.
- II. Christ believed the Word.
- III. Christ used the Word.

Must one always use key words or interrogatives to secure the Romans, capitals, and similar subpoints in the sermon outline? I will answer this Yes and No. For the beginning preacher I would answer Yes. He needs the tutelage that our seven faithful friends have to offer. Until one gains familiarity with these mechanics, and they become natural and second nature in the homiletic outline, it will not be wise to ignore these interrogatives.

However, for the seasoned preacher, who readily practices and thoroughly enjoys thematic homiletics, the answer may be No. No, it is not always necessary to use in one's outline these key interrogatives. There will come in studying the Bible text a *the-*



*matic-homiletical-sense* which yields from the chosen theme, the basic Romans, capitals, and subpoints. This will be further developed in chapter 11, *Studying the Bible Homiletically*.

A fitting parallel here with using music lessons will serve to illustrate my point. There are certain basic skills the beginning piano player must master. All too soon the novice is confronted with the possibility that he can improvise. He can compose and play his own creations almost at will. Often this is done by sacrificing (yet-to-be-learned) basics. We all tend to swim in the deep water before we are really prepared.

Therefore, the budding thematic homiletician should use these key interrogatives; and again I say: "Use them!" In time, and with experience, an awareness, a special thematic sense, develops. And you will find from your study of Scripture, these Romans, capitals, and subpoints easily fall into place.

But even after you have attained that certain plateau of experience in thematic study and preaching, you often reach an impasse. One of your needed points in the sermon outline just will not come. It stubbornly resists all your previously successful expertise. What to do? Obviously, we seek God's help in exegeting any Bible text; and specially is this true with these *impasse* points. Perhaps a return to the basics will help - remember our seven faithful friends? Having once relied on them in each sermon outline, we need to return now to enlist their aid. And, "Ole!" The corner is turned; there is light in the tunnel; and the sermon outline flows smoothly once again.

## **CHAPTER 7 – STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. Why do we call these interrogatives key words?
2. List from memory the seven interrogatives used in this chapter. Give the concepts that each introduces.
3. What function does an interrogative, per se, serve?
4. When a proposed subject accurately describes what the author is talking about, what happens to the details of the passage?
5. How are a prism and interrogatives similar?
6. Why do we call these seven interrogatives faithful friends?
7. Should the key interrogatives always be used in the sermon outline? Explain your answer.
8. Explain how else these interrogatives may be used besides to determine the three Roman numerals in the outline.
9. Should capitals be used under each Roman numeral? Why? How many?
10. Should numbers be used under each capital as subpoints? Why? How many?

### **Exercises**

From the stated theme, cite the interrogative you use, and therefrom list the three Roman numerals:

---

Text: Deuteronomy 6:4  
Theme: "The LORD our God is one LORD"  
Key interrogative: \_\_\_\_\_  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: Joshua 1:9  
Theme: "God's Commands"  
Key interrogative: \_\_\_\_\_  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: Ruth 4:1-6  
Theme: "Redeem It..."  
Key interrogative: \_\_\_\_\_  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: Isaiah 1:18  
Theme: "Reasoning with God"  
Key interrogative: \_\_\_\_\_  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: Daniel 12:1  
Theme: "Michael's Coming Stand"  
Key interrogative: \_\_\_\_\_  
I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: Ephesians 2:6  
Theme: "Positioned"  
Key interrogative: \_\_\_\_\_  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Text: Hebrews 11:6  
Theme: "Pleasing God"  
Key interrogative: \_\_\_\_\_  
I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 8

### Sermon Titles, Themes, and Theses

---

Chapter 5 dealt with the "Ten Points of a Good Outline." Part of those ten points were themes and theses, whereas titles were grouped with the topic. It will be my purpose in this chapter to deal with each of these in more detail.

#### THE SERMON TITLE

One of *Webster's* definitions of the word *title* is "a descriptive or general heading (as of a chapter in a book)."<sup>47</sup>

For practical purposes let us make the sermon title synonymous with the sermon's name. Whether *title* or *name*, every sermon will have that special description or general heading given it by which it is called. Usually the sermon *name* is what will be published in the church bulletin, or placed on the church's outdoor sign. That name will be set off by quotation marks.

Your sermon title should be attractive. It should appear in fashion as a well-dressed person; neither will it be over or under attired. The title makes a statement and this should catch your audience's attention.

Your sermon title is much like the packaging of a treasured article. The contents would be enhanced by the appropriate wrappings, but the contents are (technically) not the packaging and vice versa.

The title by its very nature is closely related to the sermon theme and to the sermon topic. This is so because the sermon should be filed for future reference. Most filing is done in two ways: 1) textually and 2) topically. One may also file the sermon according to title. In textual filing we use the main Bible text of the sermon and place it in the filing system under that Bible book, chapter, and verse. Textual filing does limit the sermon to its main Bible text. Since many differing topics can be found in the same Bible text, topical filing has certain advantages over textual filing. If at all possible, sermons should be kept in your filing system cross-referenced under both textual and topical headings. To file sermons by title alone will tend to generalize that message, relegating it to an alphabetical jungle in which it is hard to track down.

Just so, the sermon title will be closely aligned to the sermon theme and topic. Over the years I have merged my sermon titles or names into the sermon theme itself. I no longer list a separate designation in my sermon outline called *title*. That part of my sermon outline that is printed in the bulletin is it. reality my sermon theme. When filing these sermons, the topic is given priority for use in the topic index; and the same sermon is filed in the textual index as well.

Why then spend time here with a separate title or sermon name? Primarily because it is a starting point. In my earlier pursuit of homiletics, I used a title for every

---

<sup>47</sup> *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*; G. & C. Merriam Co., Pub., 1971.

outlined sermon. Gradually the factors discussed above caused me to conclude that the sermon theme was serving the role of title also.

I suggest you keep a spot in your sermon outline for the title or name. Let time and experience dictate for you whether it should remain separate or perhaps merge into the sermon's theme. In any event do not deny yourself valuable experience by eliminating the title from your sermon outline prematurely.

The title is how you intend to publicly introduce your sermon. This public aspect tends to cause some preachers to trade on the sensational, if not on the fantastic! The public is constantly bombarded with slick, Madison Avenue advertising appeals and gimmicks. To enter this field of the sensational in advertising our sermon lowers the dignity we must maintain as preachers. It also demeans the sacred text from which we speak. Let us strive for a sanctified gravity in our sermon titles that dignifies the God we serve and His Word which we speak. All the while we will be sensitive to set this delectable sermonic meal in such a fashion (via the title) that it releases an aroma of our "bake meats" to reach the senses of our hearers.

As a general rule sermon titles should be short. Of course there are the exceptions that get attention and discretely serve a good purpose. Surely the title needs to address a need - and hopefully one that the audience feels.

## **THE SERMON THEME**

Once again we return to the very title of this book: *Thematic Preaching*. The theme of the sermon has been introduced, in varying degrees thus far. It is imperative here that we deal fully with it.

Having decided what your sermon's Bible text will be, the process begins. From that text find its theme. By theme I mean: "the one singular thought around which that passage is constructed." The theme may be likened to the heart beating in the human anatomy. That heartbeat can be located in various parts of the body; no matter which part is tested, that pulse is recognizable. The theme then is the main life-thought of each Bible text. We all know what a weak pulse means. So must our thematic sermons be rescued from anemic, deficient, or weak life-thoughts.

*The theme should be particular rather than general.* The topic "Peace" is general whereas "Peace With God" is more specific. And "How to Have Peace with God" is even more particular. In each case the text will determine how specific will be its theme.

*The theme should be free from excess baggage.* It should not be wordy. One of the characteristics of books on theology is that sentences become paragraphs when written by theologians. They tend to be verbose; they are too cluttered with verbiage. Although our sermons will contain theology, let us aim at a short and pithy sentence for the theme. If we do not aim at it, we will surely miss it every time!

Admittedly, trimming our theme to its bare essentials is not an easy task. Once the main life-thought of the text has been discovered, it is time to refine it and strip from it any and all extraneous verbiage.

*The theme should be clear, straightforward, and definite.* Steer away from hazy, foggy, cloudy, or vague themes. If the theme is not crystal clear, think how obscure will be the

Romans in their attempt to support it. And then realize the anemia the lesser subpoints will suffer. The light will get dimmer and dimmer the farther one gets from what was already, to start with, less than clear. Really, our sermon should be just the opposite of this. Each Roman, capital, and subpoint should enhance the theme and cause it to be more fully accentuated, and vice versa. To illustrate, we will use 1 Timothy 6:17-19 as a text. From this we will suggest a hazy or vague theme: "A Thankful Heart." Now, the element of thanksgiving might be here, based on God's benevolence as He "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." But surely at best it is a foggy theme. A clear and more lucid theme might be: "True Riches."

*The theme should be morally clear and uplifting and free from all impropriety.* This purity will always be realized when the theme comes directly from the text itself. Must we use the exact words of our text in the theme proper? This is not necessary. But any deviation from the biblical verbiage should not utilize terms and words that carry slanted or double meanings. How sad that large segments of our English language now carry secondary meanings. This invalidates their being used in our sermons. Also, the theme will always be edifying and God honoring.

*The theme should be creative and imaginative.* By imaginative I mean that quality which portrays a mental image and is always done in a positive and God-honoring manner. The sermon itself is a creation of sorts. Its components are truths from the Bible text woven together in a creative fashion by the homiletician in his sermon. Thus, the theme itself will be enhanced by the same sanctified creativity on the part of the preacher.

There are some objects to keep in mind in forming the theme:

*Make the theme instruct the understanding.* Remember the first purpose of *all Scripture* (see 2 Timothy 3:16) is *doctrine*, and doctrine is correct instruction or teaching. Therefore, our theme will always address this basic biblical concern of teaching.

*Make the theme convince the judgment of the hearers.* Such is the Holy Spirit's work via the Scriptures, and thus we are partners with God in this ministry through our sermon.

*Make the theme excite and persuade the will.* Perhaps these last three objectives seem impossible to achieve. Specially may this be so if we are simultaneously trying to be concise. But, being objectives, they are up front and plainly our targets. We may not hit the bull's eye with every attempt, but experience will find our attempts grouping consistently in the high-scoring black rings.<sup>48</sup>

*How do we arrive at the theme of our text?* Chapter 11 will deal with the subject "Studying the Bible Homiletically." It is there that we will deal more fully with how to derive the theme from a Bible text. Here are some essentials that should be part of our consideration now.

The theme of the text is the entire passage distilled into one sentence. It is this distilling process that we address here. Every Bible verse is going somewhere, being

---

<sup>48</sup> [The center scoring rings of the National Rifle Association's pistol or rifle targets.](#)

a part of a wider context. There will be, therefore, recognizable movement in every text. Direction, flow, and advancement will be observed mainly through the leading verbs in each sentence.

Any repetition in the text should be noted. It might be a pronoun: *he, his, him*, et al. It might be a noun: God, *Christ*, or *Spirit*. It might be a verb: *abound, abounded*, or will yet *abound*. It might be a preposition: **to the saints ...at Ephesus...in Christ**. It might be a conjunction: *breadth and length and depth and height...* It might be an adjective: **one body... one spirit... one hope... one Lord. . . one faith... one baptism... one God.**

The point is, look for words that repeat. They will lead to a heart-thought in that passage. They may prove to be the main heart-thought or the very theme for which you are searching.

Words are not only going somewhere, they are saying something. It is this *something*, this *idea*, this *concept* that will issue in the theme. Often this repetition of words will lead directly to the theme of the text.

Another approach in studying the text to find its theme relates to the original languages. Even minimal awareness of both Hebrew and Greek will prove helpful in fine tuning a Bible text. A great help here is the *Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament* and the *Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*. Both volumes specialize in taking a given English word in the text and giving in return the corresponding Hebrew or Greek equivalent. Also, a list of that original word's usage in either Testament respectively will be given. I personally like E. W. Bullinger's *Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English Greek New Testament*.

To determine your text's theme will require study. *Woe to that preacher who has not learned the discipline of study.* Our study does not invent nor create the theme. The theme exists already within the context; it awaits our discovery. What joy is ours once we, have ascertained the Scripture text's theme.

Often the theme will be discovered by seeing first in the text the three Roman numerals. These supporting Romans gradually become recognizable via our study. And as they line up in the text, we carefully observe their similarities amid their distinctives. Thus, a pattern of oneness and unity emerges, and the sought after theme is located. See here a parallel with Jeremiah's experience in Jeremiah 15:16: "Thy *words* were found, and I did eat them; and thy *word* was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts."

The Prophet discovered "the *words* [plural] of God." Further, he digested them! These multiple ideas produced a delight in a singular concept: "thy *word* [singular], was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..."

## THE SERMON THESIS

Our English word *thesis* is defined: "Greek, lit., act of laying down, 1 a.: a Position or proposition that a person (as a candidate for scholastic honors) advances

and offers to maintain by argument. b: a proposition to be proved or one advanced without proof: *hypothesis*.<sup>49</sup>

On the heels of the sermon's theme comes the thesis. We have discovered what our text is saying (i.e., its theme); now we will determine how that is established. The thesis establishes, affirms, and substantiates the theme.

It does this by including in its statement of fact the three Roman numerals. Therefore, the thesis applies the theme to the entire body of the sermon.

As with the sermon's theme, so with its thesis: Both should be written out in full in the outline.

Because the thesis will be fully written out in the outline, this does not necessitate it being read as part of the sermon. It should be a silent witness of the sermon structure you are homiletically fabricating. Your written thesis will be a documentary proof that your theme has been tested by the standard of your text and found of satisfactory quality. The thesis is a compilation of the theme as verbally supported by the three (or main) Roman numerals. The thesis, like the theme, should be composed of one main sentence or two at the very most.

The thesis names the Romans which together expand the theme. Some illustrations of the thesis and its function are presented here.

---

Text:	Genesis 26:25
Theme:	"Living A Full Life"
Thesis:	Isaac is a pattern of an individual who lived a full life as he builded an altar (prominence of spiritual), pitched his tent (material/family side of life), and digged a well (vocational side of life).
Key word:	<i>How?</i>

---

Text:	2 Timothy 1:10
Theme:	"The Appearing of Our Savior"
Thesis:	Paul sees Christ's appearing and redemptive ministry from his special apostolic viewpoint: 1) by the use of now and by; 2) as made manifest in contrast to hidden before world began; and 3) via issues of death and life.
Key word:	<i>How?</i>

---

Text:	2 Timothy 2:1-6
Theme:	"Strength to Serve"
Thesis:	Paul instructs Timothy (and us) regarding strength to serve by

---

<sup>49</sup> [Op.cit. Ibid.](#)



determining the source of our strength, by communicating that strength to faithful men while illustrating levels of strength to serve (i.e., soldier, athlete, and husbandman).

Key word: *What?*

---

Text: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Theme: "The Mark of Faithfulness"

Thesis: Paul exhibits the mark of faithfulness by having fought the good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith.

Key word: *How?*

## **CHAPTER 8 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. What purpose does the sermon title serve? What is the difference between title and name for a sermon?
2. How and why does the title relate to the topic and theme?
3. Define in one sentence the sermon theme.
4. How and why should sermons be filed?
5. List the advantages and disadvantages of filing by title; by topic; by text.
6. Why should one maintain a title in his sermon outline? When might this be modified? and how?
7. Why and how must we guard our sermon from sensational public exposure?
8. Why would the theme of the sermon be likened to a lifethought?
9. Why must the theme be particular and not general? What determines how particular a theme will be?
10. Why must we aim at brevity in our theme?
11. What happens if your theme is hazy?
12. What three goals are needed to be included in the theme? Why might these three be hard to achieve?
13. How might repetition in our text lead to its theme?
14. How would knowledge of Hebrew and Greek assist in finding the theme of a Bible passage?
15. How is finding the theme of a text related to study?
16. How might the Romans in a text lead us to the theme?
17. How is the thesis related to the sermon theme? Define the sermon's thesis.

18. Why write out the thesis in your outline? the theme?

19. How is the thesis related to the three Roman numerals?

### Exercises

From each of the following texts, find its *title*, *theme*, and *thesis*:

Colossians 1:1-8

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 1:9-14

Colossians 1:15-23

Colossians 1:24-2:7

Colossians 2:8-15

Colossians 2:16-3:4

Colossians 3:5-17

Colossians 3:18-4:1

Colossians 4:2-6

Colossians 4:7-18

## Chapter 9

# What Constitutes A Good Introduction and A Good Conclusion

---

### COMPONENTS OF A GOOD INTRODUCTION

The introduction is not the entire sermon. This needs to be well understood. Having dealt with the text, theme, and thesis, each of which deals with and contains a brief epitome of the entire sermon, it is important to remember that the introduction is but a part of the overall message.

This part of the sermon that we call the *introduction* is a key factor in communicating the truth of our thematic message. The introduction stands as an open door to the sermon; it invites the audience to enter and make themselves at home.

The title has presented a window through which the audience is allowed a minimal glimpse of the sermon's content. The introduction (as it were) turns up the lights, kindles the log on the fire, opens the front door, and says "Come on in, this is specially for you."

The purpose of the introduction then is evidenced in the following:

*It arrests and focuses the attention of the hearers upon the speaker.* It should bring the preacher and hearers into touch with each other.

"Certain types of material and subject matter attract and hold attention. A reference to some incident which has recently occurred which is of local interest, a direct reference to some object or situation near at hand – in fact, any reference which strikes a chord of familiarity in the minds of the hearers – will attract attention and rouse the interest of the listeners. The familiar, however, holds attention most strongly when it is used in connection with something that is unfamiliar, or when something is said about the familiar that throws new light upon it or introduces some unusual fact about it. People are always interested in that which is of intimate and personal concern to them. A man will listen to that which he considers vital to himself. Therefore, to hold the attention of his hearers the preacher should make the message strike home to the individual, make him feel that there is a matter of great personal concern in what the preacher is saying."<sup>50</sup>

*The introduction should be pertinent.* It should not be just a time filler until the preacher adjusts his eyes to his opened Bible and sermon notes.

"An effective introduction also surfaces need. A preacher must turn involuntary attention into voluntary, so that people listen not only because they ought to but because they want to.

---

<sup>50</sup> Bob Jones, Jr., *How to Improve Your Preaching*; Revell; 1945; p. 60.

"Directing our preaching at people's needs is not a mere persuasive technique; it is the task of the ministry.

"Early in the sermon, therefore, listeners should realize that the pastor is talking to them about them. He raises a question, probes a problem, identifies a need, opens up a vital issue to which the passage speaks. Application starts in the introduction, not the conclusion."<sup>51</sup>

When being introduced to a person, a hand shake seals the formal procedure. The sermon's introduction attempts to warmly shake the audience's hand. And while still clasping the hand of our acquaintance, we gently lead that audience down the textual path of God's Word.

*The introduction should be applicable to the theme of the sermon.* This is not the time to call attention to the preacher, per se, unless of course he is a prime example of introductory material that will establish the sermon's theme. Nor is it proper to offer apologies. Perhaps at more formal convocations the pastor might offer a brief expression of thanks for being invited to speak. This would be given as *an introduction* to his sermon's introduction proper. It is in the introduction that the theme, per se, becomes visible, audible, and livable. Therefore, it should be understood by all just what this sermon is about and what it is going to say.

*The introduction should be brief.* "An introduction needs to be long enough to capture attention, raise needs, and orient the audience to the subject, the idea, or the first point. Until that is done, the introduction is incomplete; after that the introduction is too long. An old woman said of the Welsh preacher John Owen that he was so long spreading the table, she lost her appetite for the meal."<sup>52</sup>

Too many preachers get carried away in (and with) their introductions. We have all heard a preacher remark after a lengthy message: Well, we really *did not get past the introduction today*. And one sure way for this to frequently happen is to fill the introduction with too much information and detail. The rule then is: Keep it short!

*It should be natural and unstrained yet related to the entire sermon body.* Now here are some strategic parameters. The preacher will constantly need to keep himself removed from artificiality in his preaching. If in his introductory comment he comes across in less than a natural form, a negative tone is set for the remainder of his message.

Audiences equally become uncomfortable with introductions that are strained. When a natural flow of thought and form is given, there is a sense of well being, control, and ease transmitted to the listeners.

"Introductions should orient the congregation to the body of the sermon and its development. At the very least it should introduce the sermon's subject so that no one need guess what the preacher plans to talk about."<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, Baker; 1980; pp. 161-164.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 165.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 164.

It should engage the attention of the intelligent hearer. The sermon is going to be a mental excursion. Truth is couched in ideas and concepts; these all challenge one's thinking. God is the supreme intelligence of the universe; the "Holy Scriptures make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). Surely thematic Bible preaching will therefore appeal to the thinking process in our hearers. And the introduction, being the first verbal step in our sermon delivery, will address, and appeal to, the intellect.

Introductions to our sermons will vary from occasion to occasion and often from location to location. A Bible study format, a Sunday School lesson, and a formal sermon will necessitate their own respective kind of introduction.

The following introductory sentence would hardly fit a Sunday morning worship service: *This is message number 25 in our series on the Book of Romans. Remember last week we concluded chapter 8. Note also we are using as the theme for Romans: "The Fundamentals of the Faith."* This statement might rather fit a home Bible study format or that of a Sunday School class.

Here are more suggestions toward a good sermon introduction.

*Begin the introduction with a well-thought-out opening sentence.* This should be written in your outline to aid your memory. Often a rhetorical question qualifies here, e.g., "How would you feel if tomorrow your best friend were to die?" "What would you suggest the Christian's greatest need might be?" "Why would anyone want to go to church and be the worse for it?"

Just as the introduction is not the entire sermon, neither is your opening sentence the entire introduction. It is possible that this well-thought-out opening sentence might be overplayed or overworked. Here one might strive for sensationalism, the kind that rocks the audience back on their heels! From this they may not recover until the sermon is terminated. When this happens, the audience often tunes out the preacher knowing they will not hear anything to equal what they have just heard. Yes, sensational introductions get people's attention, but all too soon they will exhaust their senses; and often the audience feels intellectually insulted and cheated.

*Balance that opening sentence with the remainder of the introduction.* How special is that word *balance*. Once the text is read, the next few sentences will determine how well the audience stays with the preacher. Remember you are leading your hearers into territory unfamiliar to them in the text, even though you personally have spent much time researching this Bible material.

That initial sentence must get the audience's attention. The subsequent introductory statements will want to move along logically. Once into the sermon itself, the homiletic outline takes over and retains the interest of the audience.

At this point the audience is waiting to hear something, and your introduction must meet that challenge. A good introduction might cover:

- A brief background of the text itself.

- The setting of the verses in the chapter; even their relationship to the Bible book where they are located.
- Use care not to overload the introduction with too much detail or *travelogue*.
- The material used here must move and point in the direction of the sermon body.
- Perhaps a well-chosen story, illustration, poem, or parable may prove effective here. If humor is used, guard against levity, i.e., excessive or unseemly frivolity. Some preachers believe the introduction is the place to *loosen up* the audience via humor; they believe the "merry heart" of Proverbs (15:13: 17:22) is equal to a good laugh or a hearty guffaw. Too often this turns the preacher into a joker or a comic. I wonder if the Apostle Paul had this in mind in Ephesians 5:4: "...nor jesting, which is not convenient; but rather giving of thanks." Let us guard against extremes here.

## COMPONENTS OF A GOOD CONCLUSION

Haddon Robinson likens the thoughtful preparation of a sermon's conclusion to the demands upon an experienced pilot in his concentration in landing an airplane.<sup>54</sup>

The conclusion by its very definition is: "a reasoned judgment; the necessary consequence of two or more propositions taken as premises; *end, result, outcome*."<sup>55</sup>

The conclusion brings the sermon to a burning focus. Throughout your message the single theme has been addressed via the three Romans, the supporting capitals, and the varied subpoints. Now the package must be wrapped and delivered; that is, it must be placed in the hands of the addressee. The conclusion is designed to accomplish this.

At the point of conclusion the preacher is confronted with the very work of God, i.e., the calling for a decision. God's truth must be acted upon. "Faith cometh by hearing ...the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

The text has been expounded. The theme has been effectively heralded; the clock says the service is over - how dare the preacher leave his audience hanging! The listeners need to know God is speaking and a decision is expected.

The conclusion is so important that some preachers prepare it before the sermon body itself. Thereby they are assured that all moves directly and steadily toward that designed *result* or *outcome*.

As the introduction appealed to the intellect of the hearers, so the conclusion appeals to the will. A decision must be made; action needs to be taken. Too often our sermons have not moved our hearers; the conclusion is reached and no one is motivated.

This is not the time to introduce anything new. To do so would confuse the audience and at best lead to an anticlimax.

Robinson suggests the following elements to us in *landing* a sermon:<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167

<sup>55</sup> *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*; G. & C. Merriam Co., Pub.; 1971.

<sup>56</sup> *Biblical Preaching*; pp. 168-172.

- *A summary.* It is the time to tie up any loose ends. It is not time to preach the sermon.
- *An illustration.* "The illustration must be exactly on target so that listeners grasp the meaning in a flash without explanation."<sup>57</sup>
- *A quotation.* The words of others may say better what the preacher has been trying to say.
- *A question.* Remember Paul's prayer in Acts 9:6 "...Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"
- *A prayer.* Only use this if it expresses a fitting end to the sermon; it should not be used as a summary or as indirect application to the audience.
- *Specific instructions.* How will this all be meaningful to our listeners Monday morning? Not all sermons can end with how to do it. "A truth correctly comprehended carries its own application."<sup>58</sup>
- *Visualization.* "Visualization projects a congregation into the future and pictures a future situation in which they might apply what they have learned. Visualization must be probable enough so that anyone can imagine himself in the situation before it takes place."<sup>59</sup>

Some further quotes from Robinson regarding the conclusion are here offered:

- "In a well-planned sermon, conclusions should conclude without announcing their appearance."
- "In the words of an old farmer: 'when you're through the pumpin' let go the handle.'"
- "Having come to the end, stop. Do not cruise about looking for a spot to land, like some weary swimmer coming in from the sea and splashing about until he can find a shelving beach up which to walk. Come right in, and land at once. Finish what you have to say and end at the same time. If the phrase can have some quality of crisp memorableness, all the better, but do not grope even for that. Let your sermon have the quality that Charles Wesley coveted for his whole life: let the work and the course end together."<sup>60</sup>

## CHAPTER 9 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Study Questions

1. Why is not the introduction the entire sermon?
2. What is the relation of the title to the introduction? of the theme to the introduction? to the thesis?
3. Explain in your own words the first purpose of the introduction.

---

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p.168.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p.116.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.170-171.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, as quoted from Wm. E. Sangster, *The Craft of Sermon Constructions*; p. 150.

4. How is the introduction to be pertinent?
5. How brief should the introduction be?
6. Explain in your own words how the introduction is to be natural and unstrained.
7. Why should the introduction engage the attention of the intelligent hearer?
8. Why isn't the opening sentence of the introduction the entire sermon?
9. How must the opening sentence of the introduction be related to the remainder of it?
10. Explain the pros and cons of the use of humor in the introduction.
11. State in one sentence the purpose of the conclusion.
12. Why do most preachers have trouble concluding their sermons?
13. To what does the conclusion appeal in the hearers? Why?
14. Why should no new material be introduced into the conclusion?
15. Why might a summary be part of the conclusion?
16. What kind of illustration might be part of the conclusion?
17. Why use a quote in the conclusion?
18. How and why might a question be suitable in the conclusion?
19. In what way might a prayer be a fitting conclusion?
20. What specific directions might the conclusion contain?
21. Explain in your words what visualization is in the conclusion.

## Exercises

From the following sermon outlines, write appropriate *introductions* and *conclusions* thereto.

---

Topic:	"2 Thessalonians: The Patient Waiting for Christ"
Text:	2 Thessalonians 3:6-9
Theme:	"Consistent Behavior"
Thesis:	Paul appeals to his testimony and his example to be duplicated in believers.
Introduction:	_____
I.	A response to disorderly walk
A.	The norm and standard: "..and <i>not after</i> [kata]..."
1.	The tradition (3:6)
a.	More than a <i>cultural practice</i> or family carry over



- b. See 2 Thessalonians 2:15; direct reference to Paul's *gospel* and *doctrine*
        - 1) The subject of these oral (by word) and written (our epistle) ministries
        - 2) "It implies on the part of the teacher that he is not expressing his own ideas but is delivering or handing over (*paradidomai*) a message received from someone else." Vincent
    - 2. "Received of us"
      - a. Paul faithfully dispensed the dispensation (1 Corinthians 9:16-18) given him to these Thessalonian believers.
        - 1) Where do we fit in here?
        - 2) Is there a parallel for us also?
  - B. What is a "disorderly walk"?
    - 1. Defined: Greek:
      - a. lit., "unruly; irregularly; unarranged; insubordinate;"
      - b. all such is *foreign* to grace teaching!
    - 2. Translated "unruly" in 1 Thessalonians 5:14
  - C. *Withdraw* from every believer...
    - 1. That is: cease fellowship with
      - a. No attempt suggested to make excuse for the "disorderly" brother.
      - b. In order for him to realize that he walks out of sync with the truth!
    - 2. Paul's authority
      - a. "By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"
      - b. Is there any higher?

## II.

### Follow the leader

- A. Inherent in *leadership*...
  - 1. The accepted fact
    - a. That: with 'leadership' goes 'followership'
    - b. This is a given!
  - 2. Greek for "follow" (*mimeomai*) *imitate; to follow closely*.
- B. Paul's precedent

1. The Thessalonians' experience (1 Thessalonians 1:5,6)
  - a. "Paul's gospel" (our) the standard (1:5)
  - b. "What manner of men we were among you for your sake."
2. Followers of Paul and the Lord (1:6)
  - a. Surely Paul would not usurp the place belonging to Christ,
  - b. Note: Colossians 1:18 "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."
- C. "Orderly walk" (opposite of *disorderly*)
  1. "Eating [any man's] bread for nought ...wrought with *labor and travail. . . night and day*"
  2. Does this sound like sloth? free loading? free lunch?
  3. Where does such work-ethic come? From sound grace doctrine!

### III.

#### Self-denial

- A. Paul's rightful expectation
  1. "They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel" 1 Corinthians 9:14; ordained, God's appointed order.
    - a. God's principle
    - b. In every dispensation (9:13)
  2. Expressed in Paul's Apostleship: cf. 1 Corinthians 9:1-6
- B. Paul's voluntary *self-denial*
  1. Willing to suffer "all things" (9:12) "lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ"
  2. Refusal to use his *rights* (9:15)
    - a. Paul *bent over backwards* here by denial of normal *support*.
    - b. Even willing to "die" before violating this commitment of *self denial*; such strong convictions!
- C. A *made-example*
  1. Surely Paul's chosen path - required *extra* grace! This was no "fleshly, legalistic" system.
  2. Note: Philippians 4:10,11 where Paul accepted (in prison) what previously, he would not!
  3. This *contentment* came via *grace* (4:12,13)

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Topic: "Philippians: The Mind of Christ, Outlived"

Text: Philippians 2:14--16

Theme: "Holding Forth the Word of Life"

Thesis: Such *holding forth* involves: intended harmony, personal legitimacy, and shining as lights.

Introduction: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Intended harmony

A. The "doing (*poiema*, verb; to *produce make, form*; related to *poiema*, Ephesians 2:10 *masterpiece*) of all things" (present tense, active voice, imperative mood)

1. Contextual limitations-to the (said) "all things"

a. Immediate verses of 2:12,13, plus 14-16

b. Then possible "do all [these] things"

2. Wider possibility

a. "All things" of Romans 8:28; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 6:12

b. Every detail/ministry of life.

B. B. "Without murmurings..."

1. Word which sounds like its meaning *mutter or murmur* used of the *cooing of doves*.

2. Refers not to loud outspoken dissatisfaction but rather an undertone...

3. "...refers to the act of murmuring against men, not God. The use of this word shows that the divisions among the Philippians had not yet risen to the point of loud dissension. The word was used of those who confer secretly, of those who discontentedly complain." K. Wuest.

C. "And disputings"

1. Idea of "discussion or debate" with the thought of suspicion or doubt...

2. Thus such murmurings, would ultimately lead to "disputings."

II. Legitimate offspring "the sons [*tekna*, children, born ones] of God"

A. Blameless and harmless

1. Deserving no censure: "free from fault/defect"
2. Example: 1 Thessalonians 2:10 here associated with Paul's behavior!
3. Harmless
  - a. Unmixed; unadulterated; used without water; or metal without alloy; guileless.
  - b. Examples
    - 1) Matthew 10:16 "harmless as doves"
    - 2) Romans 16:19 "...and *simple* concerning evil"
- B. "Without rebuke sons of God"
  1. Without blemish, faultless, unblameable, no obvious area worthy of criticism.
  2. Sons = *children of God*
    - a. Born ones
    - b. In holding forth Word of Life, needed that our legitimacy as *children of God*, in all its purity, show!

### III.

#### Shining lights (brilliantcy)

- A. In environment of evil
  1. "Crooked and perverse nation"
    - a. Idea of wickedness
    - b. As in turning from the *straight* of truth
  2. Perverse
    - a. Distorted, having a twist
    - b. Even stronger than "crooked"
- B. "Among whom ye shine" (*phaino*: appear, be visible, obvious)
  1. God's intended principle
    - a. Light separate from darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14b)
    - b. See Ephesians 5:8,11,13
  2. "As lights in the world" [lights = *phos*: "Light requires organ adapted for its reception (Matthew 6:22). Where the eye is absent or impaired, light is useless." W. E. Vine.
    - a. "Lights" used of "stars"

- b. No excuse to fail to shine - to hold forth the Word of Life - yet not to be shining lights is unthinkable!
- C. Paul's expected joy
  - 1. Beyond the present (now)
    - a. Called here "in the day of Christ"
    - b. i.e., at Rapture return of Christ.
  - 2. When labor/running will be rewarded
    - a. Labor - to *labor to the point of exhaustion*
    - b. Possibility of it all "in vain" - were these Philippian believers to fail in "holding forth the word of life."

Conclusion:

---

## Chapter 10

### The Use and Abuse of Illustration

---

Henry Ward Beecher claimed illustrations serve thirteen uses:

1. To make for clearness
2. To assist proof
3. To contrast and compare
4. To introduce narrative elements
5. To assist the memory
6. To assist the imagination
7. To appeal to individual differences
8. To employ tact
9. To introduce ornament
10. To introduce humor
11. To rest the audience
12. To educate the audience on how to use illustrations
13. The illustration is capable of varied meanings and interpretations depending on the hearer.<sup>61</sup>

An illustration lifts the attention of the listener to a renewed perspective. It provides an opportunity for the speaker to dress his point in another fashion.

To illustrate means: "a: enlighten, b: to light up: to make bright: adorn, to make clear: *clarify*: to make clear by giving or by serving as an example or instance."<sup>62</sup>

The main idea behind the use of illustrations is to enhance the point of the sermon. Too often that point is obscured by the illustration. We all will remember the timely story but might have forgotten the point that was to be illustrated!

The Bible writers were blessed in the art of illustration. As we read the Scriptures and become familiar with each book, a veritable treasure chest of illustrative material is made available. And surely Bible illustrations are unsurpassed in their clarity and adaptability to our thematic preaching. Whenever possible, seek your illustrations directly from the Bible itself.

---

<sup>61</sup> Crocker, Lionell, *Public Speaking For College Students* (New York: American Book Co., 1941) pp. 172-185; as quoted by Faris D. Whicesell, in *The Art of Biblical Preaching*, Zondervan Pub., 1950; p. 92.

<sup>62</sup> *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, G. & C. Merriam Co., Pub., 1971.

Illustrations, like sermons, deserve to be filed away for future use as well as reference. As sermons may be filed according to text or topic, just so may illustrations be filed. Some type of filing system should be used by every preacher (and by now the reader realizes he has read that thought before). This also applies to every budding or aspiring preacher as much as to the seasoned veteran. If an illustration deserves to be used in a sermon, it also should be made accessible to serve you again. This is ensured by the use of a simple and workable filing system.

"W. B. Riley compiled eighty-three scrapbooks of illustrations and ideas over a period of sixty years. They took up three and one-half shelves in his library, but he said they were a never failing source of help to him."<sup>63</sup>

Whitesell offers twelve suggestions regarding Biblical sermon illustrations:

1. Use Bible illustrations freely. They are always appropriate and can be used over and over again. The Holy Spirit uses them in more ways than we think.
2. Use old familiar, hackneyed illustrations sparingly.
3. Use a wide variety of illustrations.
4. Do not apologize for using personal illustrations, but do not use them too frequently.
5. Short illustrations are better than long ones.
6. Particularize and concretize the illustration as much as possible without unduly lengthening it.
7. One good, average-length illustration to each main division of the sermon, with another in the conclusion, will be about enough.
8. Tell the truth in illustrations. Do not put yourself into the illustration unless it is a fact.
9. Avoid too many death-bed illustrations, but do not omit them altogether. Death is a fact of human existence.
10. Acknowledge the source of an illustration if it is someone's peculiar property.
11. Do not tell stories about people in your audience.
12. Limit humorous illustrations to the minimum in serious destiny-shaping, biblical preaching.<sup>64</sup>

It has been suggested that the human mind is incapable of intensive concentration for great lengths of time. Bob Jones, Jr., suggests that the preacher should therefore provide "rest periods during his message. With an average audience these should occur every five to seven minutes. These rest points can be provided by a brief illustration which Spurgeon compared to the engraving placed in the midst of the printed page of a book, or by a bit of narration, by a quotation of

---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid* p. 93.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid* p. 94.

poetry, or simply by an interestingly worded sentence or two which does not demand an effort to understand and which, while in line with the thought, relieves the strain of continued concentration."<sup>65</sup>

Jones also contends a sermon should be no longer than thirty minutes. So if his (above) formula is adopted, that could necessitate four to six illustrations be used per sermon. Besides illustrations he also allows for other fillers for these rest periods.

In the exercises at the close of this chapter an assignment will be given asking for a list of seventy-five choice illustrations. These are to be collected, filed according to topic and text, and submitted to your teacher or mentor. This assignment is designed to get the preacher in the habit of looking for, recognizing, and organizing choice illustrations.

Just what subjects make for good biblical, thematic sermon illustrations? Donald Grey Barnhouse makes an interesting point in the foreword of his book, that answers this question.

"One of the books I intend to write is a book on the whole art and procedure of illustrating the sermon. As an introduction let me tell the story of the time I meditated on the fact that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Suddenly I realized that in the plan and thought of God, I was older than the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the trees, the garden, and everything else.

"Since God planned me before He planned trees and lakes and mountains, and storms, and sunsets,' I said, 'everything that there is was created in order to illustrate spiritual truth. Everything. I don't care what it is - the way the echo sounds if you clap your hands, the way light gleams off metal, the way paper tears, you name it - you can find a sermon illustration in it. A sermon illustration is in the things right around you.'<sup>66</sup>

As a written record of the outlined sermon is kept and dated, you will thereby have a listing of illustrations used. This guards the preacher from using the same illustrations too frequently.

Haddon Robinson comments on the need to "pay attention to your own language. In private conversation do not shift your mind into neutral and use phrases that idle rather than jump. Cultivate the choice of fresh comparisons, and you will find them easier to use when you preach. Beecher gives this testimony about illustrations that also applies to style: '...while illustrations are as natural to me as breathing, I use fifty now to one in the early years of my ministry...I developed a tendency that was latent in me, and educated myself in that respect; and that, too, by study and practice, by hard thought, and by a great many trials, both with the pen, and extemporaneously by myself, when I was walking here and there.'<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Bob Jones, Jr., *How To Improve Your Preaching*, Revell; 1945; p. 57.

<sup>66</sup> Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Let Me Illustrate*, Revell; 1967; p. 9.

<sup>67</sup> Beecher, *Yale Lecturer On Preaching*, p. 175, as quoted by H. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, p. 189.



## **CHAPTER 10 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. Define illustration.
2. What is the main purpose of an illustration in the sermon?
3. Often what does one remember of a timely story? Often what does one not remember of the timely story?
4. List some abuses of illustrations in the sermon.
5. Is humor legitimate to use in a sermon illustration?
6. What are the best kinds of illustrations? How would these be obtained?
7. How should illustrations be filed?
8. Why should we use a wide variety of illustrations?
9. Explain what rest periods are in one's sermon. Why are these deemed necessary?
10. What subjects are fit for illustrations?
11. How may we discipline ourselves to find illustrative material?

### **Exercises**

Gather seventy-five (75) choice illustrations that can be used in thematic sermons. They could be typed on 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 cards and filed topically and textually. These illustrations should be periodically discussed with your teacher to ensure that each is appropriate and approved.

# Chapter 11

## Studying the Bible Homiletically

---

We have established the case for biblical homiletics (see chapter 1). The special key to Bible study of right division has also been pointed out (see chapter 3). A further word needs to be said here as to studying the Bible homiletically. By this I mean that we probe the Scriptures with a view to preach what we find therein. No, I do not mean that we should exclude our personal need for the Word's influence. Rather, the preacher should ever view the Scriptures to the end that he might present them in a thematic sermon to the audience of God's choice.

If homiletics is a legitimate science (and it is), and if there is a biblical homiletic (and I believe there is), then we who are called to preach the Word (2 Timothy 4:2) must utilize a homiletic approach in our study thereof. Let us incorporate, therefore, in our searching of God's Word a file of material from which we will build our thematic sermons.

### **BEING AWARE OF TEXTUAL THEMES**

The Bible essentially reveals God to His own people. Our Lord pointed out to Israel that the Scriptures testified of Him (see John 5:39; Revelation 19:10). We will expect to learn about our Lord wherever we go in Holy Scripture. Each Bible passage will yield a textual theme - that central focus of truth that is special and peculiar to that portion of Scripture.

Look for textual themes as you study the Bible. These are the heartbeat of every sermon you will preach. They are not created by the ingenuity of the preacher. These textual themes lie on every page of Scripture like unmined diamonds. It will be your extreme joy to discover them in your Bible reading as well as in your serious and personal study.

Because the Bible is a structured piece of literature, it maintains excellence in all its forms of expression. What a single and special privilege is ours to be in touch with God's magnificent revelation in His Word. To revere its pages, to ponder its precepts, to worship its Author, to discover its doctrines, to utilize its themes - these and infinitely more fall to the lot of the committed preacher as he studies the Bible with a view to homiletics.

### **NOTING THE PRINCIPLE OF *THREENESS***

The triunity of the Godhead is stamped throughout creation. It also is indelibly seen in the revelation of Holy Scripture. (See chapter 6, "The Threefold Cord"). This threeness in oneness forms an integral part of biblical homiletics. Therefore, in your study of the Bible, as these triads emerge in the text, pursue them relentlessly. Frequently they lead to, and are in support of, the major, textual idea. Recently I was studying Matthew, chapter 12, where our Lord states in verse 6 that He is greater than the temple. Later in the same chapter (verses 41 and 42), the same expression

greater than is used. This time He claims to be greater than Jonas (12:41) and greater than Solomon (12:42). Three similar expressions bound together as a threefold cord (Ecclesiastes 4:12) demonstrate our Lord's superiority to: the temple, i.e., the Levitical law; to Jonas, i.e., the prophets of Israel; and to Solomon, i.e., the Davidic throne. Taken together our Lord shows here that He is the superlative, i.e., the greatest of these three areas of Israel's national significance. We could say He is the ultimate: *prophet, priest, and king*.

When God says something, He surely means it. When something is stated in a text twice, it is intended by emphasis to gain attention. And when a threeness is discovered, we may be on to the heartbeat of that text.

## **OBSERVING REPEATED WORDS AND PHRASES**

Why would God repeat Himself? Isn't it sufficient for Him to speak just once? We must believe that our God is neither redundant nor verbose. He will not use more words than are necessary. Therefore, to find words or phrases repeated in a Bible text is to expect emphasis, intensification, and noted purpose on God's part.

Note here the following interesting texts that illustrate this repetitive aspect: Psalm 62:11 - "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." Job 33:14 - "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."

Frequently in Scripture a man's name is called by God. No doubt for added emphasis his name is called twice. For example, see Genesis 22:1: "Abraham, Abraham..." Surely for God to call the patriarch's name once would be significant; but calling him twice must be for added emphasis. The same would hold true in God's repeating the names of Samuel (in 1 Samuel 3:10), Martha (in Luke 10:41), and Saul (in Acts 9:4). In this same vein note Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem..." What agony of heart does our Lord here express with this repeated call to the "city of peace." It evidences great intensification!

Also in Matthew 23:13-39 notice eight uses of the word *woe*! In addition to this word *woe*, the additional phrase *scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites* is repeated. Eight repeated phrases are here to be found; no wonder Job 33:14 said: "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." What does this say for Matthew 23 when God spoke eight times? Undoubtedly the point is affirmed.

This feature of repetition may be found in a more subtle manner. Paul authored both Ephesians and Colossians. Both letters appear to have been written close to the same time. It is interesting in studying these two books that Paul's repetition of ideas can be seen. The words and phrases may differ but they evidence the same thought.

For example, compare Ephesians 1:17 ("That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation *in the knowledge of Him*...") with Colossians 1:10 ("That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing *in the knowledge of God*...").

Many similar words and phrases can be found in these two Pauline writings. Therefore contexts may be wider than just a single text in one Bible book. This

demonstrates the tendency of Scripture to say similar things in the same words, and in different texts to say the same things using differing words.

## **CHAPTER 11-STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. What is meant by studying the Bible homiletically?
2. How do we know that homiletics is a legitimate science?
3. Why would we expect to learn about Christ wherever we are in Scripture?
4. What is a *textual theme*?
5. Why is a textual theme called the heartbeat of a text and sermon?
6. Why do we make so much over *threeness* in homiletics?

### **True or False**

7. Three points must be found in every Bible text.
8. God repeats Himself in Scripture so man will learn therefrom.
9. Repeated words and phrases in a given text show emphases.

### **Exercises**

Use the second chapter of Philippians as your text. Read and study through it from the homiletical perspective. Note specially: the textual themes, the principle of threeness, and all repeated words and phrases. Other chapters may be so used for extra practice.

## Chapter 12

### Structural Analysis

---

The material before us is directly related to expository sermons. We have advanced from the topical sermon on to the textual sermon culminating in the expository sermon. The expository sermon deals with its chosen text word by word. We use the word *analysis* in this chapter because "it involves a detailed examination of the text or of some one portion of it, by analyzing its grammatical structure, and by the formulation of a detailed outline which will express exactly the meaning of that structure."<sup>68</sup>

This above quote from Tenney will be summarized and hereafter referred to as *the analytical method*.

In order to determine exactly what a given body of the Bible text says, the *analytical method* should be used.<sup>69</sup>

#### THE ANALYTICAL METHOD

*The analytical method* consists of three distinct stages:

- First: the mechanical layout, which involves rewriting the Bible text in a form that will reveal the grammatical structure.
- Second: the formulation of an outline which will show by reasoning back from the grammatical structure to the meaning how the inner thoughts of the text are related to each other.
- Third: the recording of personal observations on the text thus analyzed, in order to find both the explicit (specific, definite, and plain) and implicit (potential) truths that it contains.

#### The Mechanical Analysis

*Mechanical analysis* means the rewriting of the text so that the grammatical components of the paragraph are clearly discernible.

- The main statements of each paragraph, whether *declarations*, *questions*, or *commands*, are placed at the extreme left-hand margin of the sheet.
- Each line contains one main statement and its modifiers (provided that there is not more than one modifier in each class and provided the modifier is not of extraordinary length).

---

<sup>68</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, Ph.D., *Galatians*, Eerdmans, 1950; p. 21

<sup>69</sup> For more detail here see: Merrill C. Tenney, *Galatians, The Charter of Christian Liberty*, Eerdmans Publishing, copyright renewed in 1973 by Merrill C. Tenney; pp. 165-185; from which the following pages are a distillation, and have been used here by special permission of the publisher.

- Subordinate clauses and phrases are *indented* above or below the lines of the main statement, depending upon whether they precede or follow it in the order of the text.
- Two or more modifiers, including subordinate clauses or phrases or plural objects, are usually written directly *beneath* the word on which they depend, unless they are so brief that they can be retained conveniently in the original order of the text.
- This type of analysis uses the paragraph while chapter and verse divisions are ignored (though noted in the margin for reference to the text). Outlines should follow the thought as indicated by grammar rather than by artificial or traditional arrangement.
- Coordinate clauses connected by *and*, *but*, *either*, *or*, *neither*, *nor*, and *for* are generally regarded as containing main statements and are written from the extreme left-hand margin. (After the conjunction *for* it is difficult to evaluate. It may simply introduce a statement fully coordinate with the one that precedes it, or it may make an explanation which seems quite secondary to the main line of thought.)
- Lists of names, qualities, or actions are listed in vertical columns for sake of clarity. (Leaders [...] indicate that part of the text has been removed to another position because of its subordinate relation to the sentence as a whole.)

## **The Outline**

*An analytical outline* should be textual; that is, it should follow the order and content of the text in its headings and subheadings.

*Textual outlines* can be formed by determining first the main paragraphs of the text or the main topical sections which will give the principal divisions of the outline. (In each of these divisions the main declarative or imperative *verbs* will usually show what the next subheads ought to be and the modifiers will indicate what the smaller subpoints are.)

## **Personal Observations**

Mechanical analysis simply arranges the text so its component parts are easily visible and accessible and the outline affords a clue to its organization. Observations deal with the individual points of interest that the student can find in the material put before him. Such procedure is similar to preparing a dinner: *mechanical analysis* is like preparing the food for serving; the *outline* is like setting the table and arranging the courses; and the *observations* are like the portions that the diner selects as he fills his plate.

*Observations*, then, are notations of significant items that can be used for instruction and for devotion.

The *observations* should be classified as stimuli for thinking, so that they will not become collections of trite remarks or the endless reiteration of wearisome platitudes.

The *outline* may suggest some direction for detailed search in the text, or one may pursue the time-honored method of answering the six following questions: *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* and *Wherefore?*

*Who?* deals with persons mentioned in the text, whether they are discussed as characters or introduced in dialogues, or assumed as author or authors.

*What?* involves action or content of the text. It sometimes includes what is implied as well as what is actually recorded. Usually the outline will answer this question quite adequately.

*When?* should list all the time clues in the context whether they pertain to the action of the narrative or to the thought concerning it.

*Where?* deals with geographic locations whether streets, cities, or provinces. Check such out on maps or diagrams so as to get the full meaning of the author's intent.

*Why?* probes the reason(s) for the action or thought behind the item observed. Always seek the cause for the action or utterance recorded as well as the reason for recording it. Interpretation is formulated reason and is always dependent upon the answer to this question. In each *question* remember 2 Timothy 2:15; the principle of *rightly dividing* must guide in one's interpretation.

*Wherefore?* questions will relate to the student's understanding of the text and context. All Scripture ultimates in the man of God being perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The final application of truth comes via doctrinal and dispensational conclusions of the given text as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Not all these questions will apply equally to one text. No attempt will be made to exhaust the possibilities of the text. The student will find upon each return to the text in question new and further insight forthcoming.<sup>70</sup>

## **A SAMPLE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF EPHESIANS 2:1-10**

2:1 And you hath he quickened  
who were dead in trespasses  
and sins.

Wherein in time past  
2:2 /...ye walked  
according to the course of this world  
according to the prince of the power of the air  
the spirit that worketh in the children of  
disobedience

Among whom

---

<sup>70</sup> For some procedural helps in using these questions, see pages 175-185 of *Galatians*, by Tenney.

2:3 /...we all had our conversation  
in times past  
in the lusts of our flesh  
fulfilling the desires of the flesh  
and of the mind  
and  
/...were by nature the children of wrath  
even as others.

But God

2:4 /...who is rich in mercy  
for his great love wherewith  
/...he loved us  
Even when

2:5 /...we were dead in sins  
hath he quickened us together with Christ  
by grace are ye saved.  
And

2:6 /...hath raised us up together  
and  
/...made us sit together in heavenly places  
in Christ Jesus

That in the ages to come

2:7 /...he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace  
in his kindness toward us  
through Christ Jesus.

For by grace

2:8 /...are ye saved  
through faith  
and  
/...that not of yourselves  
it is the gift of God.  
Not of works



2:9 /...lest any man should boast.  
For  
2:10 /...we are his workmanship  
created in Christ Jesus unto good works  
which God hath before ordained  
that  
/...we should walk in them

### **SAMPLE OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS 2:1-10**

[God's Salvation by Grace, Ephesians. 2:1-10]

- I. Conditions for God's salvation by grace (2:1-3)
  - A. Dead in trespasses and sins (2:1)
  - B. Walking influenced by (2:2,3)
    - 1. World
    - 2. Flesh
    - 3. Devil
  - C. Twice children of (2;3)
    - 1. Disobedience
    - 2. Wrath
- II. Application of God's salvation by grace (2:4-7)
  - A. God's doing (2:4)
    - 1. Rich in mercy
    - 2. Great love-he loved us
  - B. Jointly with Christ (2:5,6)
    - 1. Quickened
    - 2. Raised
    - 3. Seated
- III. Effect of God's salvation by grace (2:8-10)
  - A. A salvation by grace (2:8)
    - 1. Received by faith
    - 2. Not of human origin

- B. It is the gift of God
  - 1. Proven by grammar<sup>71</sup>
  - 2. Not of human activity (2:9)
  - 3. None dare boast
- C. Special creation of God (2:10)
  - 1. God's workmanship
  - 2. Created in Christ Jesus
  - 3. Walking in prepared-of-God-works

## **A SAMPLE OF OBSERVATIONS FROM THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF EPHESIANS 2:1-10.**

**Who? (i.e., the Ephesian believers and Paul)**

- 2:1 *you* quickened... *who* were dead
- 2:2 *ye* walked ...*children* of disobedience
- 2:3 *we all...our* conversation  
*our* flesh  
(*we*) were by nature
- 2:4 loved *us*
- 2:5 *we* were dead  
*us* together  
*ye* are saved
- 2:6 raised *us*  
made *us* sit *together*
- 2:7 toward *us*
- 2:8 *ye* are saved  
not of *yourselves*
- 2:10 *we* are  
*we* should walk

---

<sup>71</sup> See Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. pp 69 & 70.

### **Who? (else?)**

2:1    *He* (God) quickened  
2:2    the *prince*  
         the *spirit*  
2:3    as *others*  
2:4    But *God*  
2:4    *who* is rich  
         *His* great love  
         *He* loved us  
2:5    [*He*] hath quickened  
2:6    [*He*] hath raised  
         [*He*] made us sit  
2:7    *He* might shew  
         *His* grace  
         *His* kindness  
2:8    gift of *God*  
2:10   *His* workmanship  
         in *Christ Jesus*  
         *God* before ordained

### **What? involves action or content of text**

2:1    Life given those once dead in sins  
2:2    Past lifestyle re: world and Satanic influences  
2:3    Active "fleshly" lusts, desires, and mind  
2:4    God's rich mercy and great love  
2:5    Grace saves  
2:6    Jointly raised and seated in heaven in Christ  
2:7    Exceeding riches of grace in the ages to come  
2:8    The gift of God proven grammatically in text  
         Not of human effort  
         Through faith

2:10 God's special creation in order to walk in predesigned works

### **When?**

2:3 In times past...

2:5 When we were dead in sins...

2:7 In the ages to come...

### **Where?**

2:6 In the heavenly places In Christ

### **Why?**

2:4 For His great love wherewith He loved us

2:7 That (purpose clause) he might shew exceeding riches of His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus

2:8 ... it is the gift of God

2:10 Unto good works which God before ordained that we should walk in them

### **Wherefore? i.e., personal conclusions drawn from the text:**

1. Dead in sins means active in a lifestyle of the world, flesh, and the Devil.
2. God's salvation is of His mercy, love, and grace.
3. Salvation is the gift of God.
4. God's best in grace is yet to come
5. God creates believers new in Christ with a disposition to good works.

## **CHAPTER 12 - STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. What do we mean by an expository sermon? How is it different from a topical sermon? from a textual sermon?
2. Define the analytical method as used in this chapter.

3. Name the three stages of which the analytical *method* consists?
4. True or False?
- a. The main statements of each paragraph are centered on the line assigned.
  - b. Each line always contains only one main statement.
  - c. Subordinate clauses are indented above or below the line as they follow or precede it in the order of the text.
  - d. Modifiers or plural words should not be written under the word on which they depend.
  - e. In this form of analysis chapter and verse divisions are totally ignored.
  - f. Coordinate clauses are regarded as unimportant.
  - g. Lists of names, qualities, or actions are listed in horizontal form to aid clarity.
  - h. Leaders [...] indicate that part of the text has been removed to another position because of its subordinate relation to the sentence as a whole.

**Multiple choice**

5. An analytical outline should be:
- a. Topical
  - b. Textual
  - c. Both of these
  - d. None of these
6. Textual outlines can be formed by:
- a. Trial and error
  - b. Determining the main paragraphs of the text and their principal divisions
  - c. Using the thematic approach
7. The main/leading verbs help:
- a. Determine what the subheads of the outline ought to be
  - b. Determine the action and movement of the text
  - c. Both a. and b.
  - d. Neither a. nor b.
8. What does the mechanical analysis do to the text?
9. What does personal observation deal with in the material that is before the student?
10. How may the student pursue the details observed from the text?

## **Exercises**

Make an analysis, outline, and personal observation of the following texts (similar to the examples given for Ephesians 2:1-10):

1. Romans 6:1-10
2. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
3. 2 Corinthians 1:1-7
4. Galatians 2:1-10
5. Philippians 2:1-4
6. Colossians 3:1-4
7. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10
8. 1 Timothy 2:1-7
9. 2 Timothy 2:1-13
10. Titus 2:11-15

## Chapter 13

### Pulpit Decorum

---

My mentor, the late William B. Hallman, embodied the pulpit demeanor that he stressed. It could be summed up in one word: *dignity*! Although *dignity* may mean: "the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed," I prefer Webster's additional definition: "formal reserve or seriousness of manner, appearance or language."<sup>72</sup>

The Apostle Paul uses three times in the pastoral letters a word similar to our English word *dignity*. It is the word translated *gravity* in Titus 2:7: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, *gravity*, sincerity." This word is translated *honesty* in 1 Timothy 2:2 and *gravity* in 1 Timothy 3:4. This Greek word *semnotes* means: *venerableness, gravity, dignity*.<sup>73</sup> Significantly it is only found in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, Paul's special pastoral workfellows.

The calling to "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2) demands a sacred seriousness that is certainly close to the meaning of *dignity*. Today's looseness in the church services greatly subtracts from a dignity that should attend the ministry of the Word of God. Is it possible that preachers in their undignified manners in the pulpit may cause this looseness in the church services? If that possibility exists, then surely it behooves the minister to take special pains to bring his pulpit demeanor into a more serious and dignified presentation.

#### THEMATIC PREACHING AND PULPIT DECORUM

The thematic sermon does not preach itself. No amount of right division, correct exegesis, and biblical homiletics of themselves moves the audience. Ultimately, God's Holy Spirit must energize these mechanics to bring forth life.

The audience does not just hear our sermons. They hear a preacher. We have emphasized as the major part of this book the science of preparing sermons, i.e., homiletics. There must be some effort put forth in consideration of how that sermon now will be delivered. The sermon will need a preacher's body through which it will flow. The preacher's mind and intellect will contribute to his sermon delivery. His feet must convey the body's movement with ease and smoothness. His hands will communicate with spontaneous, natural, and meaningful gestures. His eyes need to encompass every hearer; they must compassionately focus on each listener; they will weave together with his words in the developing of the sermon. The preacher's voice is the prime communicator of his sermon. If your church facility is blessed with an adequate public address system, happy are ye (both preacher and people!). Most smaller churches, unfortunately, cannot afford or are in serious need of a PA system.

---

<sup>72</sup> Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, Merriam Webster, Inc. 1993.

<sup>73</sup> F. W. Bullinger; A Critical Lexicon and Concordance; The Lamp Press, Ltd., 1957.

Regardless of the amplification available, the preacher must make the best possible use of his voice. Many of our grace churches started as home Bible classes, then in process of time a church building was procured. In the living room setting the minister could speak conversationally as to the tone of voice he used. However, even a small church building demands the speaker to project his voice, articulate distinctly, and enunciate clearly.

This word *project*, regarding one's voice, needs emphasis here. To project means: "to throw forward, to throw or cast forward."<sup>74</sup>

With more of our population fitting into the senior citizen category, we find them also in our church services. With advance in age also goes deterioration of one's hearing. Where do the "seasoned citizens" sit in church? They sit in the back of the church, if not in the very last rows. Today's preacher must project his voice! If he does not, his beautiful, thematic, homiletic, sermon falls on (literally) deaf ears! From a minimal standpoint the preacher must be "heard" (see Romans 10:14b - "...how shall they hear without a preacher?").

I have been told by the hearing impaired that when I lower my voice (often done for emphasis) in the sermon, I lose them. I doubt that the opposite of this would always be true! In other words, that whenever my voice was well projected and intoned, these same hearers would always be in step with the sermon. Regardless, our hearers deserve to hear our sermons. We might suggest that they move to the front of the church, but too often that calls attention to their handicap; thus it is the preacher's responsibility to ensure that the listeners *hear*!

Generally, the preacher's opening statements modulate his volume acceptably. Farther into the sermon the volume tends to increase or decrease; either extreme will create a problem. There may be places in the sermon for extremes in voice modulation. The rule of thumb is to maintain an acceptable balance of tone and volume in one's preaching at all times.

## THE PREACHER'S DRESS CODE

Will dignity carry over into pulpit attire? The answer must be affirmative! Colossians 3:17 sets the pace here: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Nothing is directly said here about the believer's attire. Is that specifically needed? Wouldn't the general "whatsoever ye do in word or deed" cover the specific of how the minister is attired? I think it does. May I suggest here 1 Timothy 2:9,10: "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women *professing godliness*) with good works." Surely Paul would expect *godly men* (i.e., ministers and preachers) to adorn themselves *in modest apparel* even as he directed these godly women.

Must the preacher always wear a suit and tie in the pulpit? At the beginning of my ministry over forty years ago this question never would have been asked. The answer being a resounding "Certainly!" Today the pendulum has swung almost totally the

---

<sup>74</sup> Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co., Pub; 1971.



other way. In many churches the casual attire predominates, and that leading question would no longer be asked today either.

Weddings and funerals, as held in our churches, necessitate more than casual dress - both by the minister and by the attenders. Although our regular preaching services do not approximate the form nor style of the wedding or funeral, still a dignified balance must be struck. If we must err, let us err on the side of dignity. I do not mean to go to the extremes of formality or tradition in our pursuit of dignity.

The preacher's dress code should never be (or allowed to become) a distraction to his sermon delivery. In reality his attire should complement and enhance that delivery. Neatness, proper grooming, personal hygiene (including a clean handkerchief, appropriately used deodorant, breath fresheners, etc.) should be considered assets to ministering. These are not liabilities. Note carefully that these all involve serious consideration. How blessed is the minister whose wife coaches him in these sanctified amenities.

Frequently the pastor and his wife set the standard regarding the dress code in their local church. This holds true more often for the minister who has been in that local pastorate for a number of years. The very ministry of the Word itself elevates the standard that needs to be respected in the local assembly. And those so ministering are to be "highly esteemed for their work's sake" (1 Thessalonians 5:13). Often this high estimation is difficult to *hold* when many social graces are transgressed by the preacher in his dress code.

## THE PREACHER IMAGE

Once in a former pastorate a parent showed me a drawing her child sketched during my Sunday morning message. When that parent asked the child who it was behind the pulpit in the drawing, the child said; "That's God!" In her young eyes I represented God! What an awesome thought-and one that needed to be adjusted with reality in this young girl's mind. Too often the preacher is assigned a status that does not square with reality by those in his congregation. Unreasonable expectations have hounded many preachers right out of the ministry. We all have feet of clay. I am reminded of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:7: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." What is this *treasure*? In context we might see a parallel with *this ministry* of 4:1; *the word of God... the truth* of 4:2; Paul's *our gospel* of 4:3; *the preached Christ Jesus the Lord* of 4:5; *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* of 4:6 - all of these melding into *this treasure*. There the treasure exists in fragile, clay vessels. The one does not exist without the other. Readily may we see an allegory (according to Wilson) here: first, in each preacher will be evident *the treasure* of the living Christ and the ministry thereof; second, there will be evident the *earthen vessel*. The one does not exist without the other. Often upon leaving the pulpit I am reminded of the earthen vessel concept. The message of the hour, just delivered, seems to lie on the pulpit as a stillborn child. It had been conceived, nurtured, and carried to term. Now it looked to me lifeless! In such times the truth of *the treasure* and its residence in earthen vessels reminds me "that the excellency of the power may be of God *and not of us*."

The preacher-image must not be overdone. Paul mentions this quality in 1 Corinthians 4:1-8. To *ministers of Christ* and *stewards of the mysteries of God* Paul was careful to admonish in 4:6, "that ye might learn in us not to think [of men] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." Its noteworthy that Paul seldom warns the believer (or minister) against thinking too lowly of himself?

Thus to our word *dignity*, in relation to the preacher's image, let us add the word *humility*.

## GESTURES

One major word covers the field of gestures - **naturalness**. "Unnaturalness often springs from imitation. It is every man's privilege to train and use in his own way the gifts and talents God has given him. Mannerisms and peculiarities of speech which are effective in the man with whom they are natural are ridiculous when imitated. Every preacher should develop his own style. He should *develop* it but be sure to keep it his own. An original style full of imperfections is infinitely better than a perfect style which is imitated."<sup>75</sup> Unnaturalness, says Jones, gives the impression of insincerity.

Along with gestures goes the subject of movement. "God designed the human body to move. If a congregation wants to look at a statue, they can go to a museum. Even there, however, the most impressive statues are those that appear alive."<sup>76</sup>

The following quotes come from Robinson in his section "Movement and Gestures," pages 198-201:

"Content should motivate movement."

"Gestures are for expression and not exhibition."

"Gestures emphasize our speech."

"Gestures maintain interest and hold attention. A moving object captures the eye more than one at rest."

"Gestures put the speaker at ease."

"Gestures help our listeners experience what we feel as they identify with us."

"Gestures should be definite. A half-hearted gesture communicates nothing positive."

"Gestures should be varied. Stand in front of a mirror and note how many different ways you can use your body. Someone who has bothered to count them insists that we can produce 700,000 distinct elementary signs with our arms, wrists, hands, and fingers."<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Bob Jones, Jr., *How To Improve Your Preaching*; Revell; 1945; p. 93.

<sup>76</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*; Baker; 1980; p.198.

<sup>77</sup> Richard Paget, *Human Speech: Some Observations, Experiments, and Conclusions as to the Nature, Origin, Purpose and Possible Improvement of Human Speech*, as referenced by H. W. Robinson, *Ibid*, p. 201.

"Gestures should be properly timed. Poorly timed gestures usually reflect a lack of spontaneity and proper motivation."

Luke records a specific gesture attributed to Paul regarding one of his great sermons: "And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying..." (Acts 21:40).

In my observation of pulpit decorum, few examples of the misuse or improper use of gestures can be recalled among seasoned or veteran preachers. I am certain they did not all start out that way. Therefore, I conclude that in time and given more experience the average novice preacher will become natural, spontaneous, and communicative in his gestures.

### THE STAMMERING LIPS SYNDROME

A noted feature in American speech is what I call the stammering lips syndrome. It is the inclusion of *bits* and *pieces* of sounds as fillers in our talk. Some of these *bits* and *pieces* are: *-er*, *-ah*, *-um*, et al. I have heard that some political speeches were recorded and these extraneous *bits* and *pieces* of sound were screened out. The result was an appreciably shorter speech! This concept was illustrated to me in the summer of 1968 while attending a course in intensive Portuguese at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. One of our professors of Portuguese (a lady from Brazil up for the summer courses) taught us conversational Portuguese one hour each day. We could speak no English in her class. In my faltering Portuguese I asked her if Brazilians would recognize us as Americans by our handling of their language. She said our vocabulary would not give us away; nor our pronunciation; not even our grammar. She assured us that those technical aspects were relatively proficient. However, there was one telltale, unmistakable *Americano* trait that immediately would tip the Brazileiros off. That betraying quality was (what I now call) the stammering lips syndrome! Brazilians do not add sound bits or pieces to their sentences. The characteristic: *-ah*, *-er*, *-ugh*, *-um*, et al. of Americans bled over into our Portuguese and betrayed our foreign status!

Does this stammering lips syndrome go with us into the pulpit? Far too many preachers are afflicted with this artificial filler. Some have suggested a way to cure this malady is to write out one's entire sermon. The purpose for this exercise is to visualize complete sentences. When in our talking nothing is forthcoming - that is the time to say it! As with any bad habit, there must be strong concentration in order to break this syndrome. Recording one's sermons and objectively listening to them should point out the symptoms. By prayer, and a sincere willingness to improve, the desired effect may be realized.

The interjecting of periods of silence in one's sermon delivery holds audience attendance and also gives time for your thoughts to flow in complete sentences without fillers.

My mother recounted to me her observations after listening to Ethel Barret's children's records. She noted how slowly, distinctly, and deliberately Miss Barret spoke. Mom started to follow that pattern in her work in Sunday School and Junior

Church. She found less attention drift and fewer discipline problems. A special side affect was that my mother could group her thoughts and sentences more easily via the reduced pace. Too often it is thought that a rapid-fire, machine-gun-type delivery is what gets the job done in preaching. Obviously, working with children is not quite the same as sermonizing before adults. Surely some rehabilitation is needed if one is heavily infected with the stammering lips syndrome.

Again let me strongly urge you to periodically tape record your sermons given before live audiences. This will display your sermon in a completely different light. And if you want a real *eye opener*, video tape the sermon's delivery. Of course what the camera captures will be your sermon in three dimensions: body, soul, and spirit! It will appear just like the congregation receives it. Now it is the preacher's turn to critique his own sermon and its delivery.

## **CHAPTER 13-STUDY QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

### **Study Questions**

1. Define *dignity*. What Bible word approximates the word *dignity*?
2. Why would dignity be suggested as the epitome of good pulpit decorum?
3. State in one sentence the theme of chapter 13.
4. Explain the following statements:
  - a. "The thematic sermon does not preach itself."
  - b. "The audience does not just hear a sermon. They hear a preacher."

### **True or False?**

5. Consideration of sermon delivery is not important.
6. Eye contact by the preacher with his audience is important.
7. Gestures are the prime communicators in the preacher's delivery.
8. By projecting his voice the preacher guarantees that all will hear him.
9. Those hard of hearing usually seat themselves near the front of the auditorium.
10. A preacher must always wear a suit and tie while in the pulpit.
11. The preacher's attire should never be a distraction to his sermon delivery.

### **Multiple Choice**

12. Some unreasonable expectations placed upon preachers are:

a.	be well groomed	c.	oratorical excellence
b.	fashionable attire	d.	godliness
13. What words best describe "the preacher-image"?

- a. neat and clean
- b. honest and humble
- c. organized and alert

14. Gestures should be:

- a. used sparingly
- b. natural
- c. spontaneous
- d. all of the above

15. Gestures essentially involve the preacher's:

- a. feet
- b. hands
- c. face
- d. shoulders

16. Put in your own words a definition of the *stammering lips syndrome*.

17. How may a preacher determine if he has this syndrome? How may it be corrected?

### Exercises

1. Tape record three of your sermons given before a live audience and critique them using the homiletic sermon analysis sheet presented here.

2. Using the same analysis sheet, critique three other sermons heard in person or via the media (duplicate this sheet for multiple usage - you may wish to enlarge it for easier use).

3. Video tape three of your sermons given before a live audience and critique these with your wife or a trusted friend.

4. Practice in front of a mirror using your hands in gesture; using either hand, both hands, an open hand, closed hand, palm up, palm down. Experiment with the arms, head, eyes, face.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Haddon W. Robinson; *Ibid*, p. 200.

## HOMILETICS SERMON ANALYSIS SHEET

Preacher:

Date:

Critic:

I. Text of Sermon:

II. Type of Sermon:

III. Theme of Sermon:

IV. Thesis of Sermon:

V. Introduction:

VI. Transitional Sentence:

VII. Development: List the major and minor points of the sermon

VIII. Conclusion: Give Objective Sentence if there was one.

Rate the preacher from one to five on each item indicated below. (Highest rating: 1)

	1	2	3	4	5
Personal Appearance					
Organization of Material					
Presentation of Material					
Exposition of Scripture					
Acceptance of Message					

Please use the back for any further comments you wish to make concerning the preacher and his preaching.

## Chapter 14

### Conclusion

---

Each preacher will consciously or unconsciously adopt his own homiletical style. In my own experience I was exposed to the discipline of thematic preaching before I stepped into the active ministry. That exposure was to me a confirmation from God of His call to preach.

Would it be possible that this book may be that kind of exposure to some of its readers? This principle of thematic preaching (i.e., the art of biblical homiletics) serves best: men of God (2 Timothy 3:17), strong in grace (2 Timothy 2:1), learned in Pauline doctrine (2 Timothy 3:10), and all such who are called of God to preach (2 Timothy 4:2).

As William B. Hallman influenced me in this field of homiletics, so in the making of this book other *helpers* (Romans 16:9) when asked to critique this manuscript, willingly obliged. William P. Heath has proved an invaluable member of our *Committee of Critique* (along with Larry Gabbard and Phil Robinson). Don and Sarah Webb of Day of Grace Ministries specially helped in formatting and typesetting the manuscript. Bill and I collaborated on these concluding remarks. The following are my sentiments, but he must receive the recognition for verbalizing them in such a *thematic* fashion!

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

"Much of the instruction set forth in this book has been to select, arrange, perfect and deliver the words of a thematic sermon. This is of vital importance, but, as Paul points out in this verse, there is more to a sermon than words. Three ingredients are listed which must accompany them. While these items have been touched on in the preceding chapters, it is well to emphasize them in conclusion.

"The gospel must be presented 'in power.' It is not lung power, though projection of the voice has its place. It is not the power of the Holy Spirit, all important as that is - for that is taken up next. It is the power manifested by the *kind of man* who lives and ministers among those to whom he preaches. Paul was a sample of what the power of God, working through His word, could accomplish in a man's life. We get a resume of what that life was like in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 - 2:12. A salesman does not have to be eloquent in praise of his wares if he has a good sample of an excellent product. With a poor or defective sample not all the polished presentation in the world will make up for it.

"The effective preaching of the gospel also requires *the ministry of the Holy Spirit*: to burden our hearts with the specific message needed, to give life to that message, and to bring conviction to the hearts of the listeners.

"Preaching 'with much assurance' involves being fully convinced of the truth we preach and convincing in our presentation of it. 'Possibly,' 'it seems to me,' 'most commentators agree,' and such expressions, though needed in some contexts, are no substitute for 'Thus saith the Lord!' Paul not only preached, but he 'so *spake*, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed' (Acts 14:1).

"Paul's ministry in Thessalonica had *the power of a godly life* behind it - and produced believers whose lives were 'ensamples' to other believers all around them (1 Thessalonians 1:7,8). His Spirit directed, confident dependence on the Word of God resulted in these formerly godless Gentiles receiving the Word of God 'not as the word of men but as...the word of God' - and it effectually worked in them (1 Thessalonians 2:13)!

"*Go thou and do likewise!* May God's richest blessing be on your ministry for our wonderful Lord!" <sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> By William P. Heath; Leavenworth, Washington.