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EXPOSITORY PREACHING: ITS DEFINITION AND DEFENSE

Introduction

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19). And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people (Matthew 9:35).”¹ Jesus’ spent His earthly ministry as a preacher and by doing so He has defined and demonstrated the purpose and power expository preaching. Many books have been written on expository preaching but to understand it fully one need only examine the preaching of Jesus Christ. Gleaning from the Lord’s life, **expository preaching can be defined as “the Spirit-filled, systematic proclamation of the gospel of Jesus with the intent to inform, inspire and influence the hearers.”**

The Necessary Instrument

Jesus’ purposeful statement in Luke 4:18 identifies Himself as the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to carry out the ultimate will of God. Hebrews 1:1 reminds us that God spoke through prophets and the Holy Spirit moved these men to record God’s Word (II Peter 1:21). Despite the all-powerfulness of God, He chose to utilize

¹ All Scripture references are from the King James Version.

man as His instrument for declaring His Word. **Therefore, expository preaching must involve a Spirit-filled man of God who is humble, holy and hungry.**

The preacher must be Spirit-filled. The disciples were given strict orders to wait until they received “power from on high” (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit would equip, enlighten and empower them to be effective “witnesses” (Acts 1:8) because all spiritual responsibilities had been bestowed upon the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ’s absence (Luke 16:7-15). The Spirit-filled life is not an option but a command (Eph. 5:18) and it is the preacher’s requirement and responsibility to avail himself to the leading and filling of the Holy Spirit.

The preacher must be humble, holy and hungry. In humility, the preacher understands that he is only the earthen vessel and not the heavenly treasure (II Cor. 4:7) so that the spotlight will shine on God and not on him. In holiness, the preacher strives to be a vessel “meet [fit] for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work (II Tim. 2:21).” The preacher’s hunger is his passion for the Word of God and the Will of God. Jesus declared that His “meat” was to do the will of the Father and “finish His work” (John 4:34).

The Essential Ingredients

Jesus preached the gospel which the Apostle Paul later defined as the good news concerning Jesus Christ’s death, burial and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4). Jesus was systematic in His approach as revealed with the disciples on the Way to Emmaus. Luke 24:27 states, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.” When present with the eleven disciples, Jesus shared with them from the Law, the

Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44) neglecting no scripture. **Thus, expository preaching is the systematic proclamation of the gospel of Jesus.** The Apostle Paul could say that he had provided the people of God a healthy diet because he had preached “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) unto them.

In a fast-food, microwave age when people’s taste buds have been reduced to junk food, the preacher must resist the temptation to water down the gospel, to sweeten up truths (i.e. avoid sin and consequence) and to serve up T.V. dinners (the latest tele-evangelist’s name it claim it). Politically-correct, contemporized philosophies have no place on the church’s sermon menu. Jesus’ words should ring in every preacher’s ears, “. . . preach the gospel . . .” (Mark 16:15).

Finally, the gospel must be proclaimed, not whispered, not just shared, but proclaimed. Preaching is passionate, dynamic. The passion of Jesus’ preaching is seen in the two words He used in Luke 4:18, *euangelizō and kēryssō*. *Kēryssō* means “to be a herald, to officiate as a herald. 1a to proclaim after the manner of a herald. 1b always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed.”² *Euangelizō* means, “to bring good news, to announce glad tidings.”³ As Isaiah 58:1 instructs, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

The Purposeful Intent

Jesus had a purpose in His preaching. Therefore, He was intentional in where He went, what He did, and what He said. His goal was to reach the poor, heal the

²Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G2784

³ Ibid.,

brokenhearted, free the captives, heal the blind and bruised and to shed light on the times (“the year of the Lord’s favor” ESV).

The preacher informs the hearers of the truths of God’s Word. In this sense, preaching is teaching, instructing individuals. The preacher is responsible for dispensing accurate and clear principles of God. The preacher inspires the hearers with the hope of God’s Word which is able to comfort and encourage. Finally, the preacher influences the hearers with the power of God’s Word. When properly handled, the Word of God is powerful in the changing of lives. **The preacher preaches to persuade.**

Conclusion

Jesus’ purpose statement of Luke 4:18 offer a clear and compelling definition and demonstration of expository preaching. **Addressing the SOURCE of the preacher (the Holy Spirit), the SUBJECT material for the preacher (the Gospel) and the PURPOSE of the preacher (changed lives), it is easy to see how God has used expository preaching in accomplishing His perfect will.** Although some call it foolishness, “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (I Cor. 1:21b)

EXPOSITORY PREACHING: ITS NEED IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Introduction

“... and there is no new thing under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9)⁴ The wise preacher in his futile search for meaning and fulfillment concluded that what has been done will continue to be done because nothing changes. All remain the same. True enough technology has brought about tremendous change but man and the problem with mankind has not changed. Adam sinned; disobeying God’s command because of what appeared good in his own eyes (Gen. 3:6-7). The days of Noah were marked by man’s continuous inclination to sin (Gen. 6:5). The trend continued in the days of the Judges of Israel. Everyone did “that which was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25) Matter of fact the wisdom of Proverbs 16:2 states that “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.” Fast forward to the New Testament and the problem and pattern of sin does not change. The Apostle Paul proclaimed in II Timothy 4:3 “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” The evidence is overwhelming. Our present society is a sin-sick culture driven by commercial greed, contemporary philosophies and a culturally mixed crowd.

The almighty dollar has many who worship at its altar. Issues are no longer black and white but green. Money talks and when one looks at the messages coming from Hollywood and Media, money has much to say. Despite America’s overwhelming support for the sanctity of marriage as a union between man and

⁴ All Scripture references are from the King James Version.

woman, money continues to attempt to colorize America as a tolerant nation. Most movies and television shows have a “gay agenda” which is quite apparent.

Contemporary philosophies have put a new face on old humanistic thinking and have blurred the lines of right and wrong and placed man as the engineer of his own destiny. This is quite evident in children’s games and movies. Good does not defeat evil. Heroes usually have a dark side. Also the billion dollar “self-help” industry sells the idea that the individual is in total charge of his destiny and through positive thinking anything is possible.

Just like the children of Israel came out of Egypt with a “mixed multitude” (Numbers 11:4) who complained of God’s guidance and provision and who challenged God’s leaders and commands, America has her own culture of mixed multitudes. There is a popular car bumper sticker called, COEXIST⁵ which seek unity or tolerance among all belief systems. As a result, in the name of unity, Christians march with Muslims and church denominations succumb to appointing homosexual bishops and priests. The mixed multitude is still challenging God’s commands and laws.

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;” (I Corinthians 1:23) **The key to the ills of our times is the expository preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** “. . . Necessity is laid upon me; . . .” (I Corinthians 9:16) I must preach the gospel.



Church Growth: The Enemy

I truly consider myself among a dying breed. *Everything is found in our churches today (drama, social programs, daycares, seminars, job centers, cafes, bookstores, schools and the list goes on) but expository preaching.* Dr. Stephen Olford believed that expository preaching is essential to revival in the church and defined expository preaching as “the Spirit-empowered explanation and proclamation of the text of God’s Word with due regard to the historical, contextual, grammatical, and doctrinal significance of the given passage, with the specific object of invoking a Christ-transforming response.”⁶ If expository preaching was commanded by Jesus (Mark 16:15) and even practiced by Jesus (Luke 24:44), why are pastors so reluctant to preaching the unadulterated, undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ which has power to transform the hearts and minds of people (Rom. 1:16)? Why has Sunday morning been reduced to a Hollywood production with a popsicle-prosperity message of living and having our best life now? If our best life is now, what is the purpose of the after-life? Why are preachers afraid to mention sin and ashamed to declare Jesus as the only Way? As with the Corinthians church, the world and its mixed multitude, contemporary philosophies, and commercialization have invaded the church. In an attempt to achieve “Church Growth” many have adopted Wall-Street methods and mentality within the church.

Church growth trumps spiritual growth. The church has become consumed with building buildings instead of building lives, raising offerings instead of raising standards. Within the African American context, liberation theology has

⁶ Stephen F. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 69.

reduced the church to a social agency for change promoting political correctness, the prosperity gospel and compromising tolerance of every deviant behavior and special interest group.

Now, understand me, I believe that Jesus came that we may have the abundant life (John 10:10) and I have no problem with individuals, including Pastors, being blessed and living a prosperous life. I believe that obedience to God's commands will lead to a certain amount of blessings (Dt. 28; I Timothy 6:17). Where I differ is in the motivation, message and method of contemporary preachers.

The Master is my motivation for ministry (I Timothy 1:12). I am humbled that Jesus Christ has chosen me to be His instrument to inform, inspire and influence change in the lives of His people and my community and I want my motivation to be the glory of God. Jim Shaddix stated that "preaching should not be driven by a preference, a program, or even a purpose . . . preaching should be driven by a passion for the glory of God."⁷

Maturing saints through Biblically sound preaching and teaching is my mission for ministry (Colossians 1:28-29) and the message is evident according to the Apostle Paul "Him we proclaim" (Colossians 1:28). I preach Christ. I do not preach philosophies or ideologies. The gospel is not outdated and out of touch but it still and will always has power (Romans 1:16) to change gang-bangers, conquer habits, convince the atheist, convict the criminals, challenge the youth, and even straighten out crooked.

⁷ Jim Shaddix, *The Passion Driven Sermon* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 3.

The Apostle Paul even describes our **method for preaching**. ***Preach Him sincerely*** because we are told to “warn” every man. This is serious! People are dying and going to hell. Bad choices are leading to disease and devastations. The time is out for slick slogans, popscience principles, soothing suggestions, and compromising choices. ***Preach Him simply*** because we are told to “instruct” every man. The Word of God should be preached so simply that a child can understand and a fool would have no excuse. ***Preach Him soundly*** because we should declare the gospel “in all wisdom.” The preacher must rightly divide the Word of God (II Timothy 2:15) as we declare the whole counsel of God.

If this is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit who is at work in us (Colossians 1:29) the result will be astounding, a healthy Christian! **A growing Christian will result in church growth that is significance and sustaining.**

My Humble but Most Accurate Opinion

Since I started preaching in 1981 at the age of eleven and since I started pastoring in 1989 at the age of 19, I have witnessed God resurrect a ministry and grow it from seventy-five in attendance to forty-five hundred in attendance through the systematic expository preaching of the Word of God. I grew up listening to Dr. Adrian Rogers and attending the old Mid-South Bible College as a boy preacher. Long before seminary, I saw the importance and advantage of preaching series of messages through books of the Bible or through topics. Even before I announced my calling at age eleven (I turned twelve later that year), I had envisioned God calling me to pastor a church that ministered to the whole person, spiritually,

physically, financially, emotionally, etc. **I have concluded that the key to a successful ministry is five “W’s” (1) Worship, (2) Word, (3) Warmth, (4) Witnessing, and (5) Working.**

We exist to bring glory to God and the corporate **worship** should reflect our ultimate purpose. Although worship styles differ according to the temperament of the people, BMBC worship style is dynamic, informative and inspiring. Hearts and mind should be touched and the fellowship should be strengthened as we worship God “in spirit and in truth.” Even the preaching moment in the worship should be lively and spirited. Emotionalism should never be manufactured or used to measure spirituality. However, the old folks were right when they said, “I wouldn’t have a religion that I couldn’t feel sometime.”

The **Word of God** is the foundation we build upon. In a time when people are searching and struggling, nothing satisfies the longings of the heart like good soul-food (the Word of God). My approach to the Word of God is to keep it simple, accurate and applicable. I am an “object” preacher who loves to illustrate the Word of God through practical, tangible items the church can identify with. I preached a sermon on forgiveness and for the first half of the sermon, I had a child on my shoulders because if you haven’t forgiven someone, you are carrying that person around on your shoulders. Of course the child was picking at me the whole time because your so-called enemy will taunt you. I preached another sermon on grudges entitled, “Chips on my Shoulders,” only to reveal at the end of the sermon that I had actually Lays and Cheetos pinned to my shoulder underneath my coat. Of course, I ate them up because we should “eat it up before the grudge eat you up.” I

had Lays because we don't lay aside every weight and the Cheetos represented folks cheesing in our faces and stabbing in the back.

Warmth describes the church's atmosphere. We are family and it should feel like it. Jesus was approachable and the common people received Him gladly. The effective preacher must be a people person. How can a preacher expect the congregation to listen to him if they don't feel the love from him? Interaction among the people outside of the pulpit is a part of the preaching within the pulpit.

Witnessing refers to the member involvement in telling others about Christ and His Church. The preacher cannot do it alone. And **working** speaks of the ministries in the local church. The Apostle Paul did state that pastor/teacher should equip the saint for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12).

Conclusion

What a tremendous opportunity we have in this dark world in which we live! My life statement sums it up for me. **As a divinely called leader to my family and community and guided by integrity, humility and excellence, I will bring glory to God by investing my life to inspiring the best in others and to influencing positive change in my community through the teaching and preaching of God's Word.** It works for me!

EXPOSITORY PREACHING: THE SERMON AND ALL ITS WORTH

Introduction

“... it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (I Corinthians 1:21b)⁸ The plan of God was simple; redeem fallen man so that he may worship God Almighty. His reasoning rested in His very nature of being “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Exodus 34:6). But His means and method to man’s salvation raised serious questions in the minds of many. God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and paid the ultimate and only sufficient price of sin through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ is the means which accomplished what centuries of traditions and rituals could not do (I Peter 1:18-19). **In His Sovereignty, God even chose the method, THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, to call sinful mankind to salvation in Jesus Christ.** The Apostle Paul stated in I Corinthians 1:23 that this preaching of the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Wayne McDill calls the sermon, the preached Word of God, a “momentous occasion . . . to meet God, to hear His voice, to sense His presence, to know His will . . . to respond in faith to His call, to conduct eternally significant business.”⁹ Not only has God chosen the means and the method for man’s redemption and salvation, He has so graciously called the messengers to bear this good news. As the messenger of God, the preacher has been entrusted with a “treasure in earthen vessels that the

⁸ All Scripture references are from the King James Version.

⁹ McDill, Wayne V. *The Moment of Truth* (Nashville: Broadman & Homan, 1999), 3.

Excellency of the power may be of God, and not of [man].”¹⁰ **Only when the preacher recognizes the sermon for all of its worth, will he prepare it meticulously, deliver it convincingly and live it faithfully.**

The Significance of the Sermon

What makes the sermon so special? Why are books devoted to its development and delivery? Why design even Doctor of Ministry programs to equip pastors to effectively communicate it? Could not God who spoke in creation, speak again and save mankind? Could not God who declared His commandments in the midst of lightning and thundering on Mt. Sinai roar once again to shake mankind into obedience? Why is the sermon so significance? **God chose it to convey His truth, declare His love and call His people unto Himself.**

The heavens may declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1) but God has chosen *man through the sermon to declare the gospel of God* (Romans 1:16). The voice of nature speaks and makes man inexcusable of his sins and wrongdoing (Romans 1:20) but it is the *voice of the preacher in the sermon which makes man accountable to the commands of God (Jeremiah 3:15) and approachable to the very throne of God (Hebrews 4:16).*

In the Garden of Eden, in the infancy of mankind, Adam and Eve listened to a deceiving messenger with a distorted message and the results plunged mankind into hell’s awaiting destruction. But God yet speaks even now to fallen man. In these last days, God speaks through His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2) and

¹⁰ II Corinthians 4:7.

through the preached sermon, lives are snatched from the clutch of hell's wrath (Jude 23). **In the sermon, God is revealed, Jesus is magnified and the gospel plan is clarified calling people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. The sermon is significant because God has chosen it as the means to dispense His gospel message.**

The Effectiveness of the Sermon

The Apostle Paul stated in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The Word of God saves the sinner by revealing God's simple and free plan of salvation of believing [faith] and confessing [repentance/making Jesus Lord] (Romans 10:9). The Word of God is "powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is like X-ray revealing the depths and darkness of our most inner being. King David even saw the effectiveness of the Word of God to "convert the soul, make wise the simple, rejoice the heart and enlighten the eyes" (Psalm 19:7-8). Despite all of this power, many churches have been reduced to what Warren Wiersbe calls, "skeletons in the pulpit and cadavers in the pews"¹¹ because preachers do not recognize the worth of the sermon and reduce the sermon to just a skeleton of an outline disseminating information but no inspiration. The true effectiveness of the sermon is revealed when a preacher knows it for all its worth.

¹¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Preaching and Teaching with Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 60.

With clarity, the preacher must allow the Word of God to illuminate the dark lives of individuals. God's Word is a "lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). People are searching for answers to their questions and solutions to their problems. Millions of dollars are spent each year on self-help when God's Word is free and available. When the Word of God preached with simplicity and imagination becomes "pictures, mirrors and windows."¹² The Word of God will paint a picture and allow the individual to see the truths of God. As a mirror, the Word of God gives insight and one is able to see themselves clearly. Finally as a window, the Word of God gives vision and the individual sees God in a fresh way.

With intensity, the preacher must allow the Word of God to inspire. The Apostle Paul in I Timothy 4:13 stressed to Timothy to continue to read the Word, encourage others in the Word and even teach others the Word because the Word of God is "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."¹³ Sunday Mornings should not be a classroom to bore folks with facts. Sunday Mornings should not be a concert to entertain folks with song and dance. As Donald R. Sunukjian in his work, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, "The purpose of the sermon is not to impart knowledge but to influence behavior – not to inform but to transform. The goal is it not to make

¹² Ibid., 52.

¹³ II Timothy 3:16-17.

listeners more educated but more Christlike.”¹⁴ People are hurting; marriages are crumbling; youths are exploring; the elderly are in need of hope. They need a touch from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit through the scriptures moves upon the altar of a person’s heart and change takes place.

The Requirements of the Sermon

What makes up a good sermon? One obvious element has already been discussed which is the *Scripture, the Bible, the Word of God*. Since as McDill points out, “the text shapes the sermon,”¹⁵ biblical preaching must center on a Biblical text. The preacher must not preach contemporary ideologies or out-dated philosophies but the Word of God.

Another essential requirement for the sermon is the *Holy Spirit of God*. Only the Holy Spirit knows and can impart the mind of God (I Corinthians 2:11-16). Without the Holy Spirit, sermons are just speeches, a collection of powerless phrases and eloquent words. The power to give the sermon life will only come from the Holy Spirit. As York and Decker remind us, this power “cannot be manufactured . . . comes only when we saturate ourselves with the Word, surrender ourselves to God’s will, and discipline ourselves in God’s way.”¹⁶ For there to be the anointing during the preaching moment, the Holy Spirit must be at work in the *speaker* and *hearers*, the other two requirements for a good sermon.

¹⁴ Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 12.

¹⁵ McDill, *Moment*. 154.

¹⁶ Bert Decker and Hershael W. York, *Preaching with Bold Assurance* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 8.

A good sermon requires a ***Spirit-filled messenger*** who is “walking in intimate fellowship with Christ, trusting Him completely in all things, obeying Him without question or hesitation.”¹⁷ The Apostle Paul urged Timothy to be a “vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s us, and prepared unto every good work” (II Timothy 2:21). Despite the perceived humility of the familiar prayer, “Hide me behind the cross that the people might see thee and not me,” that is impossible. The people will not only see the preacher but if they cannot perceive Christ in his preaching, he loses credibility with his audience. McDill wrote concerning Aristotle’s fundamental factors in persuasive speech: logos (the subject), ethos (the speaker and his goodwill and rapport with the audience) and pathos (the desired response of the audience). Ethos, involving the character, conduct and conversation of the speaker, is what makes him believable and acceptable by the audience.¹⁸

The last requirement is the ***audience***, which McDill believes is the most important requirement in the preaching moment. He writes, “Had there not been a world of people in need of a word from God, there would be no Bible.”¹⁹ Thus in a good sermon, the preacher is mindful to know and understand his audience. Jesus was always mindful of whom His audience consisted of and He adapted His message accordingly. As a result, the common people heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37); wealthy and influential women supported His ministry (Luke 8:1-3); even religious leaders sought a personal meeting with the Savior of the world (John 3:1-2). The

¹⁷ McDill, *Moment*, 180.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

preacher must know his audience and through prayerful wisdom craft his message to minister to the hearers at hand even if it means changing the message on the fly to reach the intended audience. McDill calls this kind of preaching, “audience-centered” preaching which takes into consideration H. L. Hollingsworth’s five types of audiences: (1) pedestrian, (2) passive, (3) selected, (4) concerted, and (5) organized.²⁰ In each audience, the preacher has a different aim and challenge. The pedestrian audience: the speaker’s challenge is getting their attention. The passive audience: the speaker’s challenge is awakening their interest. The selected audience: the speaker’s challenge is to make an impression. The concerted audience: the speaker’s challenge is to arouse conviction. The organized audience: the speaker’s challenge is to give direction.²¹ Wiersbe summarizes the requirements as such, “for our preaching to be biblical, the message must be based on the truth of the Word of God, presented by a messenger who lives under the authority of that Word, organized in a manner that instructs the mind and moves the heart and captures the will, and interpreted and applied in a way that is true (intrinsic) to the text.”²²

The Methods of the Sermon

The sermon has been chosen by God to be His effective means to call mankind unto salvation. It requires the Bible as its source, the Holy Spirit as its power, the preacher as its carrier, and the audience as its hearers. Now that it has

²⁰ Ibid., 42.

²¹ Ibid., 43.

²² Wiersbe, *Preaching*, 307.

been established what the sermon is and why it is important, the next question becomes, “How must it be prepared and presented to achieve maximum results.”

Preparation. Master Chefs know that having the right ingredients alone is not enough for a tasty meal; those ingredients must be prepared in a certain way. Likewise, there must be proper preparation for the sermon. In a clear, simplified, refreshing manner, Decker and York lays out a detailed method for the preparing of an expository sermon which “shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it to their lives.”²³ **To begin, the preacher plans his preaching** by “reading the text many times and determining the preachable units with the book or section.”²⁴ *The preacher then determines the main thought, the Big Idea, of that particular pericope.* Each division receives a personal folder so that the preacher may organize his research and work. *Their final step in the planning stage is diagramming the text.* Although diagramming is best done in the original language, it can also be done in translation. They suggest using the King James Version. When in seminary, the professor suggested The New American Standard Version. Diagramming helps identify the intent of the author by examining subject and verbs and their modifiers.

Once the planning has been done, the preacher can proceed to “**mining the meaning**” of the text by “distinguishing the context, determining the content, and discerning the concern.”²⁵ The context deals with the historical setting (the big picture), the surrounding text (the author’s immediate attention) and the literary

²³ Decker and York, *Preaching*, 33.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 52-81.

devices (what genre and other literary devices did the author employ). The context establishes the backdrop for interpreting the content. For example, the Apostle Paul's letter of joy to the Philippians takes on new meaning when the reader understands that he is writing from prison. Finally, the concern identifies the author's intent. Why did Paul want to encourage the Philippians? Every author has one intent when writing.

Now the preacher is ready to **begin thinking about sermon** which is the "bridge we build between the text and the congregation . . . [which] carries God's Word to man's ears and on to his heart."²⁶ York and Decker provide a four-step process to sermon development. The first step, Cornerstones, is where the preacher takes the subject, the big idea, and determine what his point of view (his approach to the text) will be, who his listeners will be, what action step he wants to the listeners to do and how will the listeners benefits. The authors suggest using sticky post-it notes to lay this out. The other three stages consist of create (brainstorming ideas), cluster (organizing those ideas) and compose (deciding on main points and subpoints). Add a SHARP (SHARP stands for Story, Humor, Analogies, References, and Pictures²⁷) opening and closing and a deliverable sermon has been prepared.

Presentation. Again with the Master Chef, presentation is everything. Why go through the process of preparation of right ingredients if the presentation is just thrown together. The Master Chef will include even the green grass which is not edible but pleasing to the eye. York and Decker writes, "A spoken message is made

²⁶ Ibid., 101.

²⁷ Ibid., 159.

up of only three components: the verbal, the vocal, and the visual.”²⁸ **The verbal is the sermon’s words. The vocal is how the sermon sounds. The visual is what the audience sees** (gestures, expressions, body language, dress, grooming, etc.).

When Professor Albert Mehrabian of UCLA measured each of the components, he discovered that when there is mixed signals (our words do not match our gestures) that the audience rates believability 7% verbal, 38% vocal and 55% visual. “When we learn how to coordinate all three of these components to form one totally consistent message, we are not only believable; we have impact.”²⁹ For Decker and York, effective presentation will include a great takeoff (introduction) and landing (conclusion) using the SHARP method. Main points are stated as action statements since the whole purpose is to influence change in the hearer and offer them application to God’s truths. The preacher should master nine communication skills: (1) give good eye contact (at least five seconds), (2) show energy through gestures and expressions, (3) reveal confidence through posture and movement; (4) dress appropriately; (5) have variety with voice, pitch and volume; (6) avoid filler words (ahs, you know, I mean); (7) use appropriate humor; (8) involve yourself as a listener; (9) be your natural self.³⁰ One final note on presentation involves the use of manuscript in the pulpit. York and Decker strongly urge and McDill includes a whole chapter (chapter 8) on the subject. Don’t do it!

The Objectives of the Sermon

²⁸ Ibid., 201.

²⁹ Ibid., 203.

³⁰ Ibid., 224-225.

Preaching a sermon is not just to inform. The aim of preaching is “to make God known in order to call for a faith response in the hearer.”³¹ Even York and Decker has “application as its [the Bible and preaching] ultimate goal. Remember, as Paul stated that God has used the foolish message of our preaching to lead to the salvation of mankind.

The No’s of the Sermon

Do not bore the people. As Warren Wiersbe masterfully reveals, God desires the preacher to preach and teach with imagination. Paint the picture so the hearer may see truth. Unveil the mirrors of the Word of God so the hearer may see themselves. Clean the windows of God’s Word so the hearer may see God. Do not use manuscripts. Saturate yourself with the Scripture; surrender yourself to the Holy Spirit. Free yourself from being bound by notes. Do not alliterate. Wait, let me modify. Do not force alliteration.

My Personal Story

I repent in ash and sackcloth. I am not being arrogant but for twenty-nine years I thought I was a decent preacher. I started preaching standing on crates and boxes at the age of eleven. I thought I was true to the text seventy-five percent of the time. I admit that I alliterate even to the point of forcing one more letter. I have even come up with new words to make a point. I have often used props and visual aids even though my father would often tell me to just preach the Word. But after

³¹ McDill, *Moment*, 14.

reading and examining McDill, York and Decker, and Wiersbe, I desire to visit the altar to receive my calling all over again. I must admit that I did not get much out of Donald R. Sunukjian's book, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*. I especially did not agree with his treatment of dictionary definitions, statistics, quotations, parallel passage and Biblical illustrations as useless supportive material to a sermon. If they are not good enough to support sermon why do authors use them to support books?

The changes I must make are in thoroughly preparing the sermon, spiritually preparing myself and physically freeing myself from notes. I cannot be thoroughly prepared rising at 3:00 AM on Sunday Mornings. My nightmare has always been standing up and not being able to find my sermon notes. On the times it did happen, the Holy Spirit moved surprisingly and I felt special after the event.

Conclusion

The sermon is worth too much and can accomplish so much more. **The preacher must research it thoroughly, prepare it accurately, believe it fully, practice it faithfully, declare it convincingly, and pray God's anointing of His Holy Spirit upon it consistently.**

EXPOSITORY PREACHING:
THE PREACHING CALENDAR

◆ 2011-2013 EMPHASIS “BUILDING FOR THE KINGDOM” (I CORINTHIANS 3:9)

Sustaining the Momentum by:

MASTER ~ *Our Motivation for Ministry (I Timothy 1:12)*

MEMBERS ~ *Our Mission for Ministry (Colossians 1:28-29)*
Maturing Saints through Biblically sound preaching and teaching

MAINTENANCE ~ *Our Fuel for Ministry (Ecclesiastes 10:10)*

TEAMWORK ~ *Our Method for Ministry (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)*

◆ **2011 Emphasis**

Our Affirmation ~ We Must Know and Do

Our Scripture ~ Joshua 1:8

Our Activity ~ Reading the Bible

◆ **2012 Emphasis**

Our Affirmation ~ We Must Go and Tell

Our Scripture ~ Acts 1:8

Our Activity ~ Witnessing to Others

◆ **2013 Emphasis**

Our Affirmation ~ We Must Love and Serve

Our Scripture ~ Galatians 6:10

Our Activity ~ Serving

◆ **2011 Preaching Series**

What has happened to the Church? As the church faces scandal, slander and strife, it is imperative that the church return to her roots so that she can be fit and focused for the fight at hand. In the book of *Acts*, we read of the early church as she was endowed with power, discovered her purpose, dealt with problems and persecution, and mobilized her people for ministry and missions. As a result, there was growth, both spiritually and numerically. God's message and mandate for the church has not changed; therefore, in 2011 I will preach a series of sermons from *Acts* for the purpose of maturing the members to the basics of "doing church well."

Furthermore, as we embark upon a building project (the final one I pray under my pastorate), I want to challenge Brown of our responsibility in building not just buildings but building the kingdom to the glory of God. Brown is a Traditional Progressive Baptist Church in a Suburban setting. These messages will be preached Sunday Morning during our four worship times (7:00, 8:30, 10:00 and 11:30). We are currently at three worship times (8:00, 10:00 and 11:30) and will probably begin four worship times in January 2011. I always preach the same sermon at each service.

Date	Subject	Text	Notes
1/2/2011	Giving Beyond Yourself	II Cor. 8:1-7	Stewardship Series: Sacrifice
1/9	Living Within Your Means	Luke 14:28-30	Stewardship Series: Budget
1/16	Making the Most of Your Life	Matt. 25:14-30	Stewardship Series: Investing
1/23	Stay Connected	Col. 1:24-29	My 22 nd Pastor Anniversary
1/30	Getting the Most Out of Life	II Cor. 9	Stewardship Series: The Return
2/6	In the Meantime	Acts 1:1-11	The Book of Acts Series
2/13	A Full House	Acts 2:1-4	The Book of Acts Series
2/20	Your Best Sermon	Acts 2:14-41	The Book of Acts Series
2/27	How It Ought to Be	Acts 2:42-47	The Book of Acts Series
3/6	What You Want is not What You Need	Acts 3:1-10	The Book of Acts Series
3/13	Philippines Mission Trip		Out of Country
3/20	Repent	Acts 3:11-26	The Book of Acts Series
4/3	Government or God	Acts 4, 5:29	The Book of Acts Series
4/10	Economic Empowerment	Acts 4:32-5:11	The Book of Acts Series
4/17	Trouble in the Church	Acts 6:1-7	The Book of Acts Series
4/24	What do They See in You	Acts 6:8-15	The Book of Acts Series: EASTER
5/1	Widening the Circle	Acts 8:1-8	The Book of Acts Series
5/8	Lydia: The Single Mother	Acts 16:11-15	Mother's Day
5/15	When Jesus Get a Hold of You	Acts 9	The Book of Acts Series
5/22	What Will They Have To	Acts 9:36-43	The Book of Acts Series

	Show		
5/29	ISRAEL/GREECE TRIP		Out of Country
6/5	Abraham: How To Pick a Mate	Gen. 24:1-14	Lessons from Daddy Series
6/12	David: How To Survive in a Cruel World	II Kings 2	Lessons from Daddy Series
6/19	Prodigal Father: How to Rebound	Luke 15:11-32	Lessons from Daddy Series If you stray, don't stay
6/26	Paul: How to Raise Children	Ephesians 6:4	Lessons from Daddy Series
7/3	Still Shackled/Let Freedom Ring	Luke 4:18-29	4th of July Worship
7/10	Young Joshua: Stay in the Church	Exodus 33:11	YOUTH MONTH SERIES
7/17	Young Samuel: Answer the Call	I Samuel 2-3	YOUTH MONTH SERIES
7/24	Young David: Don't Back Down	I Samuel 17:31-37	YOUTH MONTH SERIES
7/31	Young Josiah: It's Never too Early	II Kings 22:1-7	YOUTH MONTH SERIES
8/7	When Good Enough is Not Enough	Acts 10	The Book of Acts Series
8/14	WOMEN'S DAY	-----	-----
8/21	Antioch: The Happening Church	Acts 11:19-30	The Book of Acts Series
8/28	Don't Underestimate Prayer	Acts 12:1-19	The Book of Acts Series
9/4	Don't Steal the Glory	Acts 12:20-24	The Book of Acts Series
9/11	America: Stop Making Crooked the Straight	Acts 13:4-12	The Book of Acts Series
9/18	Shake Off the Dust	Acts 13:48-52	The Book of Acts Series
9/25	The Returned Trip	Acts 14:19-23	The Book of Acts Series

10/2	A Change in Plans	Acts 16:6-10	The Book of Acts Series
10/9	Making the Best out of a Bad Situation	Acts 16:6-40	The Book of Acts Series
10/16	Right Side Up in an Upside Down World	Acts 17:1-9	The Book of Acts Series
10/23	Going Deeper	Acts 17:10-15	The Book of Acts Series
10/30	Going Against the Tides	Acts 17:16-34	The Book of Acts Series
11/6	We're Covered	Acts 18:1-11	The Book of Acts Series
11/13	No Play Thing	Acts 19:11-20	The Book of Acts Series
11/20	They Ought To Be Upset	Acts 19:21-41	The Book of Acts Series
11/27	Saying Good-Bye	Acts 20	The Book of Acts Series
12/4	Seasoned Saints: God's Not Through with You	Luke 1:5-25	Doing My Part
12/11	Surrendered Youths: Willing to Be Used	Luke 1:26-56	Doing My Part
12/18	Shepherds: Can't Help but Tell It	Luke 2:8-21	Doing My Part
12/25	Jesus: A Name Worth Shouting About	Luke 2:22-38	Doing His Part