PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

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1 With the exception of Lessons 5 and 10, much of the material in this course is drawn from a forthcoming book by Dr. Danny McCain and is used by kind permission of the author. All future publication rights for the borrowed material remain with the author.
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Lesson Objectives

In this lesson, the student will:

1. Memorize a definition for expository preaching.
2. Learn and practice the steps of preparing an expository sermon.
3. Appreciate the power of expository preaching to change lives.

Lesson

In the previous two lessons, we have studied the preparation of various types of sermons. In this lesson, we will take an in-depth look at expository preaching. As we saw in lesson 3, this will be the primary sermon form for most pastors.

Definition of Expository Preaching

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers. Please memorize this definition. It includes several concepts that are important for expository preaching.

- The Scripture Passage Governs the Sermon

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept derived from ... study of a passage in its context.

Expository sermons are grounded in the Scripture passage. The structure and primary content of the sermon comes from the passage itself. If the primary message of the sermon does not come from the Scripture passage itself, the sermon is not expository – even though the message of the sermon may be true.

73 The material in this lesson was contributed by Richard G. Hutchison, Dean of Academic Affairs & Spiritual Life at Bible Methodist Shepherd’s College in Villasis, Pangasinan, Philippines.

In expository preaching, we ask:

- What does this passage of Scripture say?

What did the writer say? When reading the text, what does the grammar of the passage say? In expository preaching, we are not looking for hidden messages; we are looking for the plain sense of the text.

- What does this passage of Scripture mean?

What did the author want his audience to understand as they read the passage? As we consider the historical context and the literary style, what does the passage mean?

- What is the primary message of this passage of Scripture?

Because the Scripture passage governs the sermon, the primary focus of an expository sermon will be determined by the primary theme of the Scripture passage. The theme of the passage will connect all the points of the sermon. All the points in the sermon will be connected to each other through the main theme of the Scripture.

The Preacher Communicates a Concept

*Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept* ...

Because the message of the Scripture passage guides the expository sermon, we will ask several questions:

- How does the writer of this Scripture passage express and explain his message?

This is where the preacher develops several points that express and explain the main theme of the Scripture passage. Remember that all the points in the sermon will be connected to each other through the main theme of the passage. Compare the examples below.
Romans 12:1-2
Main Point: What does God want us to do?

A. We must present our bodies to God.
B. We must not be conformed to the world.
C. We must be transformed in our thinking.

This outline is good, but there are some weaknesses we need to correct:

- The main point does not fully connect to the opening words of Romans 12:1; “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you ….”
- Although each of these points is true, they are not connected with each other through the main message of the passage.

Romans 12:1-2
Main Point: What kind of worship does God desire?

A. God desires worship that is motivated by his mercies.
B. God desires worship that involves the whole person.
C. God desires worship that transforms our way of thinking.

This outline is better.

- The outline is connected to the main theme of the passage.
- However, the three points could be better connected to each other.

Romans 12:1-2
Main Point: What kind of worship does God desire?

A. God desires worship that is motivated by his mercies.
B. God’s mercies should motivate you to present your whole self to him as an act of worship.
C. The presentation of your whole self to God should begin a daily process of inner transformation.

This outline is the best of the three choices. Each point of the outline is connected to the previous point.

This outline provides the main points for your expository (study) outline. Later in this lesson, we will take an additional step to make the points of the outline shorter and easier for the audience to remember. We call this the preaching outline.
How can the preacher communicate clearly the author’s message?

For effective expository preaching, the preacher must translate the author’s words into the language of today’s audience. He will express the original concepts of the Scripture passage in ways that today’s hearers will understand. To do this, the preacher will use:

- Word pictures
- Stories and illustrations
- Object lessons
- Explanations
- Outlines

The Concept is Applied to the Preacher

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept ... which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher.

After we know what the text says and what the text means, we must ask, “What is the text telling me I should do?” This is called application. In other words, we ask, “What does God want me to do?”

Before any sermon is preached to the congregation, it must first speak to the heart and life of the preacher. The preacher is always the first audience for a sermon. Before we try to apply God’s Word to the lives of our audience, we must first apply it to our own lives.

The Concept is Applied to the Hearers

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept ... which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.

A sermon that does not include an application to the hearers may be a very nice explanation of the Scripture passage; however, it fails to move the listeners. True expository preaching must be applied to the hearer. We apply the message of the Scripture to our hearers by:

- Asking questions that cause the listeners to connect the message to their lives
- Reviewing the key truths and principles that come from the text
- Considering the life situation of the hearers
Expository Preaching: Working with the Text

Choosing the Text

When choosing a text, the preacher should look for a passage that contains a complete thought that can be expressed in the sermon. Many preachers follow four steps for choosing a text:

- Choose the main verse or passage for the sermon.
  Since the Scripture passage will guide the entire sermon, it is important to select the right passage for the sermon.

- Look at the context of the chosen passage.
  Consider the surrounding verses. Should you use more verses in order to have a complete thought? Should you limit the text to fewer verses in order to focus on a single thought?

- Look at study Bibles and other reference books to confirm the choice.
  By looking at how the passage is used in a study Bible or commentary, you can confirm your selection. If other reference books divided the passage at a different point, ask, “Am I sure that my choice is the best selection for expressing the theme of this passage?”

- Make a final decision for the text.
  After you have studied the surrounding context and considered other reference books, you are ready to begin detailed study.

Absorbing the Text

From our definition of expository preaching, remember that the passage must speak to the preacher before it can speak to the hearer. After choosing the text from which you will preach, the next step is to begin identifying yourself with the message of the text. In order to do this, you must read it over and over again until you absorb not only the words themselves, but also the emotions which the writer must have been feeling when he wrote them.

*If you have a sponge, do this object lesson. Put the sponge in water until the sponge is saturated. Now squeeze the sponge. Notice how easy it is to get the water from the sponge. You do not have to work hard; the sponge is saturated with water. When you are saturated with the text, the words will pour from your heart like water from the sponge.*
As you absorb the text, you gain an “emotional connection” with the words of the author.

- If the writer was angry, allow yourself to become angry at the sin that angered the author!
- If the writer was rejoicing, let your own heart feel joyful!
- If the writer was sad, join with him in his sorrow!
- If the writer was worried, try to feel his anxiety!
- If the writer was laughing, laugh!
- If the writer was weeping, begin to feel tears in your own eyes as you think about what he was experiencing!

A hot coal from a fire “holds” fire, even though no flames are visible. When the coal is placed next to dry leaves, paper, or wood, the fire will begin to flame. In the same way, as you fill your mind and heart with the words of the text, they will begin to burn inside you!

It is not enough to know the information in the text; you need to feel what the writer was feeling. The passion of the writer should become your passion. Why? Since we are handling God’s Word, the passion of the text is the passion of God! You have been called to be God’s messenger.

How can you absorb the text until you feel the passion of the writer? Try these steps:

- Read the text silently at least five times.
- Read the text aloud at least five times.
- Continue re-reading the text.
  - Practice reading it with expression.
  - Try to feel what the writer was feeling.
  - Pause between readings to meditate upon what you are reading.

You will develop your own way of connecting with the text. Whatever your method for doing this, make sure that both your mind and your heart are engaged with the writer’s message. If you rush this important step, your message will be missing a crucial ingredient – PASSION. Effective passion in biblical preaching comes not only from prayer, but also from the preacher’s personal identification with God’s message as expressed in the text.

Read the following Scripture texts: Gal. 1:6-9; Matt. 17:1-9; Psalm 10:1-12; Rev. 4.

Read each text several times. Feel the passion of the writer. Imagine yourself in the writer’s situation. Do you feel the emotion of the text?

Now, choose one of these texts and read it aloud to class. Read expressively to the class. Ask the class to evaluate your expression. Did you communicate the emotion of the text in your reading?
Analyzing the Text

Many teenagers have watched a very good basketball player and have thought, “I want to play ball like that.” They go to the basketball court and begin to play. They love the game. They have passion, but they soon become discouraged. Passion is not enough. A great basketball player shoots thousands of free throws when no one is watching. He runs miles to build endurance for the game. He does stretching, jumping, weight lifting, and other exercises to prepare himself for the game. These exercises are necessary for a good player. Exercises are not about passion; exercises are about sweat. Exercises are not exciting, but they are necessary if he will fulfill his passion to be a great basketball player.

Analyzing the text is the hard work of preaching. Analysis is not about passion; analysis is about sweat! It requires spending hours in your study when other things would be more fun. It involves discipline, but it is necessary if you will communicate the passion of the text in a way that connects the truth of God’s Word to the needs of your listeners.

How do you analyze the text? Some steps to use include:  

- Ask simple questions about the text.  
  Who?  
  What?  
  When?  
  Where?  
  How?  
  Why?

- Look for key words or phrases in the text.

- Look for comparisons and contrasts in the text.

- Identify important parts of speech (or grammar).

**Noun (N)** – Nouns often answer questions such as “Who?” and “What?”

**Pronoun (P)** – Pronouns refer to specific nouns that are already known in the text.

**Verb (V)** – Verbs describe an action or a condition (state).

**Adjective (ADJ)** – Adjectives describe nouns and pronouns.

**Adverb (ADV)** – Adverbs often answer questions such as “How?” or “When?”

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75 For more on analyzing the text, see the *Shepherd’s Global Classroom* course, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation.*
**Coordinating Conjunction (CC)** – Coordinating conjunctions connect words or phrases that are of equal importance. Sometimes they will connect words which are equal and related. At other times they will connect words which are equal but opposite or different. We call this contrast. “For,” “and,” “nor,” “but,” “or,” “yet,” and “so” are coordinating conjunctions.

**Subordinating Conjunction (SC)** – Subordinating conjunctions connect phrases which are related but not equal to each other. Often they will connect two ideas in which one idea depends upon (or builds upon) another. Commonly used subordinating conjunctions in the Bible are words such as: “because,” “as,” “than,” “even though,” and “since.”

**Preposition (PREP)** – Prepositions introduce phrases that show a relationship and that end with a noun or pronoun.

Arrange the text into a natural outline.

This is often called “phrasing” the text. This “natural outline” helps you to see how the Scripture passage is structured. It allows the structure of the text to guide your sermon development.

Here is an example of an analysis of Psalm 1. At the end of this lesson, you will analyze a passage in the same way for the lesson assignment.

```
ADJ V N V PREP N CC V N N
Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners,

CC V N CC N PREP N N
nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

PREP N V P N V PREP N N
and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water

V P N N N V CC P V
that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

N V CC V N N V ADV
The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

SC N V N CC N PREP N PREP N
Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

N V N N CC N N V
For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (KJV).
```

1. Ask simple questions about the text.
   Who?
   - Who are the “blessed” ones?
   - Whose counsel do they avoid?

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76 King James Version.
Whose way is known by God?
Who are the ones who will / will not stand in the judgment?
Who are the ones who will perish?

What?
What do the righteous delight in?
What are the righteous like?
What are the wicked like?

When?
When do they meditate in God’s Word?
When do they bear fruit?

Where?
Where do the ungodly go for counsel?
Where are the righteous ones “planted”? 

How?
How does this psalm describe the way of the righteous?
How does this psalm describe the way of the ungodly?

Why?
Why are the righteous ones blessed?
Why do the ungodly perish?
2. Look for key words or phrases.
   Key phrase – “Blessed is the man …”

   Key words – “walking … standing … sitting …”

3. Look for comparisons and contrasts.
   “blessed” vs. “not so”

   “counsel of the ungodly” vs. “the law of the Lord”

   a planted tree vs. blowing chaff

4. Identify important parts of speech (grammar).
   See the example above.

5. Arrange the text into a natural outline.
   Blessed is the man
   that
       walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
       nor
       standeth in the way of sinners,
       nor
       sitteth in the seat of the scornful;

   But
       his delight is in the law of the LORD,
       and
       in his law doth he meditate day and night.

   And
       he shall be like a tree
       planted by the rivers of water,
       that bringeth forth his fruit in his season,
       his leaf also shall not wither;
       and
       whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

   [But]
   The ungodly are not so,
       but
       are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

   Therefore
       the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
       nor
       sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

   For
       the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous,
       but
       the way of the ungodly shall perish.
Expository Preaching: Preparing a Study Outline

What is the Study Outline?

The study outline is not your preaching outline. You will develop a preaching outline from your study outline in a later step. The study outline will help you organize your notes, insights, applications, and illustrations around the natural flow of thought that the biblical writer has given us.

The study outline is your working outline. You can make changes to your outline as you learn more about the text, but this outline will give you a basic structure to guide your preparation.

The outline is like a skeleton. Without a skeleton, our bodies would have no shape – like a bowl of jelly. No matter how beautiful your skin, eyes and hair, without a skeleton your beauty would be lost. No matter how big and strong your muscles may be, without the bone structure your body would become weak. Even the most powerful muscles must be attached to bones to function. The outline provides a structure for your sermon.

How to Prepare a Study Outline

- **Use your phrasing of the text as a guide.**

In the section on “analyzing the text,” you learned to find the natural outline of a Scripture passage. Use this phrasing as a guide for your study outline.

- **Look for the major points in the natural outline.**

- **Summarize the main thought of each point.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romans 1:16-17(^7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. He is not ashamed because the gospel is God’s power to save.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The gospel is God’s power to save because it reveals the righteousness of God which can be received by faith.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^7\) KJV.
I. Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.
   A. What does it mean to be ashamed of something?
   B. How does Paul define the Gospel of Christ?

II. He is not ashamed because the Gospel is God’s power to save.
   A. The Gospel is God’s power.
   B. God’s power brings salvation.
   C. God works his salvation in “everyone who believes.”
      2. God saves every believing “Greek.”
         (What does Paul mean by “the Greek”?)

III. The Gospel is God’s power to save because it reveals the righteousness of God which can be received by faith.
   A. The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel.
      (What does Paul mean by “the righteousness of God?”)
   B. The righteousness of God is revealed “from faith to faith.”
      (What does Paul mean by “from faith to faith?”)

For the study outline, it is important to follow the natural points and sub-points of the passage. Remember that an expository sermon is guided by the text itself. The preacher does not impose a structure on the text; he looks for the natural structure of the text. The job of a biblical expositor is to “listen to the text.”

Here are some hints for identifying the natural points and sub-points of a passage.
**Hint #1** – Coordinating conjunctions (CC) often signal that the writer is moving from one major point to the next major point.

\[ \text{CC} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{For} \]

- *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,*

\[ \text{CC} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{for} \]

- *it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth,*
  
  to the Jew first
  
  and also
  
  to the Greek.

\[ \text{CC} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{For} \]

- *therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith;*  
  
  **SC** as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

**Hint #2** – Prepositions (PREP) may signal that the sub-point is connected to one of the main points.

**Hint #3** – Coordinating conjunctions (CC) sometimes indicate sub-points that are connected to one of the main points.

**EXAMPLE:**

```
"salvation to everyone

A. who believeth

\[ \text{CC} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{1. to the Jew first} \]

B. and also

\[ \text{CC} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{2. to the Greek.} \]
```

PREP
Adding Content to Your Outline

After you have prepared your study outline, you are ready to begin adding content to this basic outline. In this step, you will transform your study outline and notes into a preaching outline. While analyzing the text, there may have been questions about the text which you have not yet answered. In this step, you will answer these questions. You have studied what the text says; you will continue to study what it means.

The next step in your preparation is to seek greater clarity about what the writer of these verses intended to say to us. This is important because “when the Bible speaks, God speaks.” What the author intended to say is what God wants to say to us. As a preacher, you must identify yourself with God’s message and communicate it with clarity and passion.

In order to do this, you will be wise to use whatever study tools are available to you. If possible, use the following study tools:

- Bible dictionaries
- Concordance
- Bible maps
- Bible encyclopedias
- Word studies
- Commentaries

As you gather information about the text and its meaning, summarize the most important information in brief notes under the appropriate heading in your study outline.

Be careful not to include too many notes, or your sermon will become too long and difficult for your audience to follow. Instead, look for important pieces of information that could help you to explain more clearly the meaning of the text. Record your study notes in a way that you can communicate to an ordinary audience.

Look for information such as:

- Historical background - What was happening when this was written?
- Word meanings – Do important words need to be explained more clearly?
- Geography – Are any cities or locations mentioned in your text? What was the location of the people to whom it was first written? See what you can learn from a Bible atlas, Bible dictionary, or Bible encyclopedia.

If you still have questions about the text, read Bible commentaries to gain insights from other Bible scholars.

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Transforming Your Study Outline into a Preaching Outline

Now that you have carefully studied the text, you will adapt your study outline into a preaching outline.

The purpose of a study outline is:

- To show the flow of the author’s thoughts.
- To shape your message in the direction of the author’s thoughts.
- To provide a structure for your study notes and message.
- To help you focus on the message of the passage.
- To avoid adding points that do not come from the text (even though they may be good points for another sermon).

The purpose of a preaching outline is:

- To make it easier for your audience to understand and remember the message.
- To apply the message to the hearts and lives of your audience in practical ways.
- To exhort your audience to act on the message of the Scripture text.
- To speak the truth of the passage with a prophetic voice into the lives of your hearers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Outline</th>
<th>Preaching Outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides a <strong>biblical structure</strong> for the message</td>
<td>Provides a clear and memorable presentation for the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connects the sermon to the text</td>
<td>Connects the text to the life of the listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on correct <strong>information</strong></td>
<td>Focuses on correct application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes sure the message is <strong>biblical</strong></td>
<td>Makes sure the message is relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds the <strong>purpose</strong> of the passage</td>
<td>Communicates the purpose with a prophetic voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides <strong>explanation</strong> of the text</td>
<td>Provides exhortation of the text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating a Preaching Outline

The preaching outline should follow the points you prepared in your study outline. You may use your study outline as part of the content of your message. However, your preaching outline should take the points of your study outline and express them in simpler, more creative ways.

The study outline helped you interpret and explain the text. For that stage, detail was very important. In the study, you were dealing with the science of interpretation.

The preaching outline is less precise. It pays more attention to the art of communication. Be creative and imaginative with your preaching outline.

Avoid using the same type of outline in every sermon; you want to be creative so that the audience listens carefully each time you preach. However, do not allow creativity to lead you away from the message of the text. While preparing the preaching outline, you should return frequently to the study outline to ensure that you are remaining faithful to the text.

Suggestions for a Preaching Outline

- Let your preaching outline speak directly to the audience.

Since a sermon calls for a response, your outline should speak directly to the audience whenever possible. An outline that speaks directly to the audience will carry more impact. They will know that they must do something. This is not just information to know; this is something to apply in their lives.

Example

Study outline: Christians must put on the whole armor of God.
Preaching outline: Put on your armor!

- Use complete sentences.

In order to communicate clearly, use complete sentences whenever possible.

Example

Incomplete sentence: The Priority of Prayer
Complete sentence: Make Prayer a Priority.
Use action words.

Since a sermon calls the audience to a response, you should use active language when possible.

**Example**

Passive language: *There are blessings that come from obedience*
Active language: *Obedience brings blessings!*

Use simple language.

The goal of the preacher is to communicate to people, not to impress people with the preacher’s vocabulary. When you use big words that people cannot understand, you fail to communicate a life-changing message. Impress people with the power of God’s Word, not with the long words you have learned.

The apostle Paul was a brilliant scholar. He knew multiple languages; he could argue Greek philosophy, Hebrew theology, and Roman politics. If Paul had chosen, he could have used complicated words that no one understood; but when Paul preached, he communicated the simplicity of the gospel. He knew that the gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

In the Middle Ages, a bishop named Johannes was a famous orator. He could speak with passion and brilliance. Many people came to hear Johannes speak. The people were very impressed with their bishop. However, each time Johannes left the pulpit, an elderly lady would look at him and mumble, “Big Johannes; Little Jesus.”

The bishop was bothered by her words. Finally, he requested a leave of absence from the pulpit. For nearly a year, he read the New Testament and meditated on the life of Jesus and the power of the gospel.

On Easter Sunday, Bishop Johannes returned to the pulpit. The cathedral was crowded with people. After one year, they expected a brilliant sermon. Johannes stepped into the pulpit to speak. He began, “Jesus Christ” – and stopped. He began to weep as he remembered what he had learned about Jesus during this year of prayer and study. After several attempts to preach his sermon, Johannes stepped down and walked to the back of the cathedral in embarrassment. As he walked past the elderly lady, he heard her say, “Little Johannes; Big Jesus.”

As preachers, our goal must be, “Little Me; Big Jesus.” Simple language that communicates the gospel with power lifts up Jesus instead of the speaker.

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79 Rom. 1:16.
Conclusion

Review the definition of expository preaching. *Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.*

Expository preaching is hard work. It requires a commitment to dig into the text, to understand what God’s Word says, and then to communicate the text to today’s listeners. It is hard work, but it is rewarding. We preach because “it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.” When we preach Christ crucified, we see the power of the gospel “because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

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80 1 Cor. 1:21,25.
Lesson Assignments

There will be no test on this lesson. Instead, you will practice preparing and preaching an expository sermon.

Assignment 1: Sermon Preparation
Choose a text on which you would like to preach. Do a detailed study of the Scripture passage using the steps in this lesson.

1) Absorb the text. Read it at least ten times and feel the emotion of the author.
2) Analyze the text using the five steps given in this lesson.
3) Prepare a study outline of the passage.
4) Prepare a preaching outline of the passage.

Assignment 2: Sermon Presentation
Preach the sermon you prepare to the class. This sermon should be 12-15 minutes. Each member of the class will complete an assessment form found at the back of this course guide.