

(Cover page)

To my son William whom I have had the privilege of help preparing
for a ministry of expository preaching and teaching (Acts 6:4).

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Pearls for Preaching

(Practical Pointers for Preparing and Presenting Bible Sermons)

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

Gentlemen, Start Your Engines!

Starting a sermon is like starting the engine of a car. You must fire up the engine to start propelling the car forward and moving down the street. In a similar way, preachers must start their sermons properly and then move through the sermons effectively and clearly, so people will understand what the Bible says. Gentlemen, we must learn to start our Bible messages correctly, and then move throughout a text of Scripture teaching, explaining, and preaching in a homiletical fashion, so our listeners can understand what the Bible is teaching and how it applies to their lives today. Have you heard about the young man who preached his first sermon in church? Someone wrote a little poem about the experience.

“They gave him twenty minutes
But he finished up in ten.
Oh, there’s a prince of speakers
And servant unto men!
His diction wasn’t such a much,
He hemmed and hawed a bit;
But still he spoke a lot of sense,
And after that—he quit.
At first we sat plumb paralyzed,
Then cheered and cheered again;
For they gave him twenty minutes
And he finished up in ten!”

Where’s the Beef?

Many sermons have no “meat” (Heb. 5:12, 14), or in-depth teaching and preaching to them, which brings out the exact meaning of a Bible text. They are like chicken bones without meat. They are also comparable to cotton candy – light and fluffy! The Scriptures are *talked* about but they are not *taught* and brought to light through sound interpretive principles (hermeneutics), exegesis (using the context, grammar, study of words, and a literal hermeneutic to arrive at the proper meaning of a text), and then exposition (declaring the meaning of a text). When we correctly interpret and explain the Bible, we will make the *original* text of Scripture clear and understandable to our listeners, through sound teaching and preaching. We will also compare similar Scriptures with each other (1 Cor. 2:13), or look for cross-references, which teach a similar truth. Do yourself a favor and purchase the “The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge” (also available in electronic format). This book is unsurpassed in cross-referencing. Men, our sermons need some depth (meat), and we can only preach with depth, and become “mighty in the scriptures” (Acts 18:24), when we are

willing to study the text and explain its meaning to our people. We should preach with content, conviction, compassion, and courage.

Someone wrote: "Often, I'm afraid, the church is a place where preachers preach not out of their depths, but out of their shallows." Men, we are commanded to "Preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2); not preach *around* the Word, *add* to the Word, *distort* the Word, or *play* with the Word, but proclaim the exact meaning and message of Bible texts to our listeners. **God's Word - God's way!** This is our calling and mandate. We should never corrupt (2 Cor. 2:17) or handle the Word deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2), even out of ignorance! Ignorance is not bliss, when it comes to preaching. We are not to edit God's mind; we must communicate God's mind. Men, let us stand with God and Scripture! Be loyal to truth!

2 Timothy 2:15 is a command: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We are given the mandate to "rightly divide the word of truth" which means to literally "cut it straight" as plowers, road builders, and tentmakers were required to cut their paths and material straight, or in an accurate and correct fashion. Paul knew that in making tents all the pieces needed to be cut in a precise manner and fit together properly. The same thing is true about the Scripture. It must be *cut straight or handled accurately*, through sound methods of Bible interpretation and exegesis, if one is going to arrive at the correct meaning of a text. The Bible is God's impeccable standard of truth ("word of truth"); therefore, it demands skillful and responsible interpretation. Preachers must cut is straight – not crooked! Our prayer when studying and preaching should be: "Lord, help me to get it right." Beware of slipping away from the cutting edge of excellence when it comes to accurately handling the Scripture. The "Book of Common Prayer" gives a general confession of lazy and loose preachers when it states: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

Preaching

Preaching and presenting the truth of the Bible is an awesome responsibility. Let us remember that those who preach and teach will receive the stricter judgment and be held *accountable* for what they have preached (James 3:1). The shame of God's disapproval awaits those who mishandle His Word in Christian service and ministry ("take heed how he buildeth thereupon" - 1 Cor. 3:10). In short, be careful how you build your sermons! We might conclude that a lot of ministry and sermons are comparable to wood, hay, and stubble, which will go up in smoke at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11-14). In fact, many sermons are going up in smoke as they are being preached because they are unprepared (2 Tim. 2:15), unskillful (Heb. 5:13), and unsound (2 Tim. 4:3-4) in meaning and message.

"O be careful preacher boys what you preach,
O be careful preacher boys what you preach,
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
So be careful preacher boys what you preach."

Our preaching or proclamation of truth should be natural, neat, clear, personal, sympathetic, and bold. Men, we should be quiet enough before God to get a message but bold enough before others to give it. A good sermon should interest the people, inspire the people, instruct, and investigate the people. Preaching has been called “The sacred Stand.” When preaching one will explain something, illustrate something, and apply something.

In preaching you should always remember to be yourself. The first law of preaching is that we are not actors. Be yourself! We all have a preaching style, but by all means, don't try and imitate or copy the style of another person. You should be the same person in the pulpit that you are out of the pulpit. Preaching is not performing. Be yourself. This does not mean we should not preach with boldness for both the disciples (Acts 14:36) and Jesus (Luke 4:36) spoke this way. Acts 4:31 says “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” Men, when preaching, we must avail ourselves to the filling ministry of the Spirit of God. Our sermons may have good homiletical structure but lack dynamic power when we do not possess the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Sameness in our preaching leads to tameness in our preaching! Beware of a deadening effect in your preaching because it's not empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

President Lincoln used to say that he liked a man who preached like he was fighting bees. Of course, this does not downplay the pastor who delivers a sermon in a quieter fashion; it merely emphasizes the need for passion and zeal in our preaching which is born of the Holy Spirit. You cannot separate the message from the messenger. Both the man and the message must be prepared! Preachers need to spend time preparing themselves (the devotional life) for ministry on the Lord's Day. Gentlemen, we need to meet with God and hear from God. So a preacher must do his heart-work as well as his homework!

Hermeneutics

(Interpreting the Bible Correctly)

Interpreting the Bible involves rules and guidelines that are linked to interpreting and understanding all human language. The term hermeneutics is often defined as the science (using certain interpretive principles) and the art (using various skills and tasks) by which the meaning of a Biblical text is determined. It involves using interpretive principles that help us comprehend the meaning of a text of Scripture. One key interpretive principle is the literal approach to Scripture (opposing the allegorical). Tyndale said, “Scripture has but one sense, which is the literal sense.”

The Golden Rule

God is a God of sense, not nonsense! Dr. David L. Cooper, the founder of *The Biblical Research Society*, was proficient in the Biblical languages. He studied Greek under Dr. A. T. Robertson. Dr. Cooper is known for his “Golden Rule of Interpretation” which is as follows:

“When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense,
Seek no other sense; Therefore, take every word,
At its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning,
Unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light,
Of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths,
Indicate clearly otherwise.”

There are several tests that will determine if one holds to a literal hermeneutic or interpretation of the Bible.

1. Do you believe in the six literal days of creation? (Ex. 20:11)
2. Do you believe the Church has replaced Israel? (Rom. 11:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:32)
3. Do you believe in the change of the nature of wild animals during a future time period? (Isa. 11:6-8)
4. Do you believe in a literal one thousand reign of Christ over the earth? (Rev. 20:1-6)
5. Do you interpret the three and one half years (1, 260 days, or 42 months) of Daniel and Revelation literally? (Dan. 12:7; Rev. 11:2; 13:5; 12:6,14; Dan. 9:27)
6. Do you believe in a future sacrifice of animals during a Millennial kingdom (Ezekiel 43:19-27; Isaiah 56:6-7; Isaiah 60:7; Zechariah 14:16-21) and a millennial river running out of Jerusalem? (Ezek. 47:8-10)
7. Do you believe that Christ died for the whole world? (John 3:16; 6:33,51; 1 Timothy 2:6 Hebrews 2:9)

Genre (the type of Bible literature), dispensational feature, the agreement principle (2 Pet. 1:20), and comparing Scripture with Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13 – “comparing spiritual things with spiritual”) should also be considered when interpreting the Bible. The Bible never contradicts itself. God never disagrees with Himself. Always remember that Scripture is its own best interpreter. Scripture interprets Scripture as we compare and place texts of Scripture side by side. For instance, we discover that the Book of Daniel interlocks with the Book of Revelation and helps us arrive at proper interpretative conclusions regarding Bible prophecy and prophetic symbols. Obscure passages are to be understood in light of clear passages. Look for the meaning of symbols in the context in which they appear or in some other section of the Bible. The main things are the plain things; therefore, the more obscure passages must be interpreted in light of the clear and unmistakable truths. Since the dead know nothing (Eccl. 9:5), does this mean annihilation, or do other clear verses contradict this teaching (Matt. 25:41; Luke 16:23-24; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23)? Actually, the dead can no longer possess any knowledge about the normal daily activities that are being carried out on earth (Eccl. 9:5). The point is this; the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. Beware of the “private interpretation” (2 Pet. 1:20) of Scripture and proof-texting (stringing together Bible verses out of context to teach one’s own theology and opinions).

For the most part, principles of Bible interpretation are not manmade; they are part of the way man normally and sensibly communicates, and should be considered universal for all languages. They are not special rules only applicable to Bible study. Arriving at the proper conclusion of a text of Scripture is sometimes called methodical Bible study. The word "method" comes from the Greek word which literally means "a way or path of transit." Methodology in Bible study is therefore concerned with "the proper path to be taken in order to arrive at Scriptural truth." When a person in a group might say, "To me this verse means this," and another person in the group may respond, "To me this verse does not mean that; it means this." This is studying the Bible without proper hermeneutical guidelines. It places feelings (a subjective approach) above exegesis (an objective approach to discovering a text's meaning) and leads to confusion and interpretations that are in direct conflict with what the Bible is actually teaching. If the text can be said to mean *everything*, it ceases to mean *anything*. The questions we must ask when approaching Scripture are these: **What does the text say? What is the exact meaning of the text? How did the original readers understand the text? What else does the Bible say about the text? How does the text apply to me?**

Reformed Theology

Covenant or Reformed theology is a theological system historically linked to the Protestant Reformation (Luther, Calvin). Its anti-Semitic roots date back to Marcion (AD 160), which are seen in its rejection of the Jews, as God's people. It stresses only two major covenants, a covenant of works that God gave to Adam before the Fall and a covenant of grace/redemption given to Adam and the entire world after the Fall. However, it should be noted that these covenants are not actually found in the Bible! Reformed or Covenant Theology sees all the covenants of the Bible, such as the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New covenants, as an extension of the so-called *spiritual* blessings of the covenant of grace, which was given to Adam and every elect sinner down through the ages of time. Covenant Theology wants to stress the overall picture of salvation by grace through all of God's covenants, which this system claims is the one unifying theme of Scripture. However, they do this at the expense of the covenant programs of God by repudiating the literal features and fulfillments of these covenants in relationship to national Israel and abandoning the prophetic significance of Christ's literal Millennial Kingdom over the earth (Rev. 20:1-6).

Reformed theology stresses only one primary group of elect people (Israel) that is in need of salvation. According to their theology, God has only one true people of God throughout history and one goal in history – to save a single, elect group, and bless them with salvation. Therefore, any mention of Israel in the New Testament must be construed as referring to the "new spiritual Israel" (the Church or new people of God), since God is finished working with His original people (the Jews). In short, everyone else (Old Testament Israel) and everything else (Israel's covenant promises) is abandoned according to the teaching of

Reformed Theology. Israel is no longer God's people (God has forsaken the Jewish people), the literal covenant promises given to Israel have been revoked, and a literal future Millennium will never occur over the earth. Everything is now centered upon the Church which has replaced national Israel in God's plan.

In order to keep only one people of God (Israel) and one theme of history (salvation), Covenant Theologians must bypass sound hermeneutics. Most Reformed Theologians allegorize (assign a different spiritual meaning) to certain parts of the Bible and teach that *Israel's literal covenant promises have become spiritual promises, which have been transferred to the Church of today*. The major covenants can no longer be taken literally; they only represent *spiritual* and *salvation* blessings that have been transferred to the present-day Church, which becomes the new Israel of God (replacing the old Israel). In short, Israel's *literal* promises of an earthly kingdom are no longer valid; they are now being fulfilled in the spiritual blessing of Christ's kingly and spiritual rule in our hearts by faith. Notice how the literal has become the spiritual in this allegorical approach to Scripture. Israel (a different class of people) becomes the Church (spiritual Israel); Israel's literal land promises of a future earthly Kingdom become spiritual promises that are given to the Church today (the new spiritual Israel), as Christ rules in our hearts by faith, and throughout eternity (the eternal state). Therefore, there is no future Millennium and the texts that clearly teach it (Rev. 20:1-6) are allegorized to mean something other than a literal reign of Christ over the earth. Nothing is taken literally in the Old Testament regarding a future Millennium or Kingdom over the earth (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:6-7). Transferring literal promises into spiritual promises, and exchanging Israel (a different class of people) for the Church (Replacement Theology), in order to create a single, elect, unifying people of God called Israel, which He wants to save, has been called "illegitimate transfer" and is a clear violation of proper hermeneutics (Bible interpretation).

The church is not an extension of Judaism (spiritual Israel). It is a new entity entirely (Eph. 2:15; 5:32). The Bible nowhere states that the Church replaces Israel and that Israel's covenant promises have been revoked and transferred to the Church. The Church is not Israel (1 Cor. 10:32; 1 Cor. 9:4-5). God's promises for His national people (the Jews) will yet be fulfilled in the future (Rom. 11:1-2; 26-27). When one interprets the Bible literally, he will embrace *dispensational theology* (God works with different people in different ways and has different goals throughout history) and *premillennial theology* (Christ is coming back before the Millennium to establish a literal Kingdom over the earth for 1,000 years). Dispensationalism (different plans through the ages) and premillennialism (a literal and future plan for Israel in the Millennial Kingdom) are the result of rightly dividing (correctly interpreting) Bible texts (2 Tim. 2:15). Literal interpretation consistently applied will bring a person to believe premillennialism (a literal Millennium in the future) and not amillennialism (no literal Millennium in the future). Literal interpretation will conclude that God is not finished with national Israel but has a future plan for His beloved people (Isa. 49:14-16), that the *original* and *literal* covenant promises given to Israel have not been revoked

(Ps. 89:34; 105:9-10), and the Millennium is still in the future (Zech. 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:24-25; Rev. 20:1-6), when Jesus Christ will rule over His national people Israel on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32-33), fulfilling the covenant promises (2 Sam. 7:16).

Exegesis

(Determining the Meaning of a Text)

An old recipe for a rabbit dish starts out, “First catch the rabbit.” This is what the preacher must do when coming to a text of Scripture. He must put first things first and catch the meaning of a text of Scripture before he can deliver it to his people. The fact that the Bible is a book means that it is to be read and understood. Exegesis is the actual interpretation of the Bible while hermeneutics consists of using the right principles to arrive at the correct interpretation. Exegesis involves *exploration*. The word literally means “to lead out” (fully explain or bring out into the open). In exegesis we study the background or context, the historical setting, the meaning and definition of words, explore the grammatical structure of sentences, and take the literal approach to interpreting Scripture, whenever possible, in order to arrive at the original understanding of a Bible text. When we exegete a passage of Scripture we draw out the meaning of the passage. The term exegesis involves determining the actual meaning of a text in its historical context or in its original God-intended meaning.

Grammar

The grammar or syntax (the way words and paragraphs are linked together to form thoughts, phrases, clauses, and sentences) can make a huge difference in the interpretation of a passage. Syntax or grammatical construction is very important when forming major points and subdivisions for your sermons. It may be tedious work but it is necessary that you take time to review grammar in every Bible passage. For instance, a major sermon point should never be reflected in an incomplete phrase or dependent clause, since these reflect back to the main subject and verb of the sentence. Rather, the main points in the outline should always begin with a full sentence.

Also, observe participles, connective words, and other specific words that begin a purpose clause (“that”) for these relate back to a previous thought and should never be used as a main subject and point in your outline. Always observe where a sentence ends and where it does not end. Look for commas, semicolons, and colons for these will give you clues about the continuation of the sentence. In general, observe where the author’s thought begins and ends within a paragraph or section of Scripture. Look for grammatical breaks where an outline can be formed. Remember the old saying: “Whenever you see the word *therefore* find out what it’s there for.” The tenses of verbs should also be considered in both English and Greek. The proper rendering of Greek words is also important. For instance, in Revelation 3:10 the Greek preposition “ek” means “out from” and not “out through” as some suggest it should be rendered. The expression “out from”

is a strong argument for a pretribulation Rapture. The grammar of God's Word enables us to both interpret and exegete the meaning of a passage correctly. The way words are used grammatically is very important. This can be illustrated in these sentences.

"The man hit the ball hard."

"The ball hit the man hard."

"The man hit the hard ball."

"The hard man hit the ball."

"The hard ball hit the man."

One can also study the Bible text in the original languages (Greek and Hebrew), since this can open up the meaning of a text, deepen our study, and assist us in our interpretation. However, it still works in English! We can effectively interpret most sections of Scripture by using proper English grammar. Exegesis involves the literal, grammatical, historical approach to interpreting Scripture in order to arrive at a proper meaning of a Biblical text. It also involves proper *syntax*, the understanding of sentences, phrases, and words, how they are interconnected or related to each other grammatically.

Context

Exegesis also involves understanding the meaning of words in the *context* they were originally written. Context is very important. For instance, in Romans 6:23 the meaning of "death" is spiritual death, not physical death, since it is being contrasted to eternal life. Does being baptized with fire (Matt. 3:11) mean to experience the spiritual dynamic of the Spirit's power, or to be judged in hell? The context suggests the literal fire of hell is in view (Matt. 3:10, 12).

As one reads the Bible they need to remember three things – "Context, context and context!" One of my friends told me, "I was saved out of context." What he meant is that he was saved when a preacher was giving a Gospel presentation out of a text of the Bible that really did not relate to the Gospel. However, the Holy Spirit used the truth about the Gospel to penetrate his heart. Nevertheless, we are responsible to preach correctly and in context.

Remember the old adage: "A text out of context becomes a pretext." A pretext is something spoken that conceals and does not reveal the true meaning of a Bible text. Disregarding the context is one of the greatest problems in Bible interpretation. We need to take into consideration the total surroundings of a text, look at the sentences and paragraphs that precede and follow the verse or text, and also consider the cultural setting in which the passage and entire book is written. Both the immediate and larger context of the entire Bible is important. Context keeps us from making contradictory statements and conclusions about the Bible. The Bible does not contradict itself since it is "the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The principle of self-consistency of Scripture is this; there is perfect agreement among the Bible. Context includes several things:

- The verse(s) immediately before and after a passage
- The paragraph and book in which the verses occur
- The message of the entire Bible
- The dispensation (economy) in which it was written
- The historic culture and environment it was written (this keeps us from reading our Western 21st century ideas into the Bible – Ex. 23:19; Mal. 1:2-3; Matt. 25:1-13; Col. 1:15; James 5:14; Rev. 3:16).

In addition, the understanding of words in their context is also important. The word “water” can refer to physical water (Mark 10:42), spiritual life (John 4:14), the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39), the Word of God (Eph. 5:26), the nations (Rev. 17:1, 15), or spiritual cleansing (Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 36:25) depending on the context in which it is given. It is always important to look at these contexts. Furthermore, when the term water is used in a certain passage in an obscure way (John 3:5 – “Except a man be born of water”), then interpret the meaning of the word in light of the context that it is given and the way it would be understood to the people at that time. In this case, Nicodemus should have understand water, as being used in an Old Testament sense, and referring to the spiritual cleansing needed for salvation (Ezek. 36:25).

Who, What, When, Where, and Why?

Who is given the experience? When did the experience occur? Was it something that could only occur in the Acts transition period from the Old to the New Testament (Acts 19:1-6)? Why did the experience occur? Is it promised for New Testament Christianity? Did New Testament believers practice it? Is the experience designed to be a normal occurrence for today? Was it intended to be part of church life based upon the teaching of the New Testament epistles? Was it a promise only given to Israel? Is this something that is going to occur in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 2:4)? Who? What? When? Where? Why? These are all good questions to ask when interpreting the Bible.

McQuilkin has observed: "All Scripture should be received as normative for every person in all societies of all time unless the Bible itself limits the audience." For instance, I have fed traveling evangelists and Bible teachers, but I do not expect God to restock my food supply as He did for the widow of Zarephath in I Kings 17:8-16. God could miraculously stock all of our homes with food but this is not *normal* for today. Leprosy patients do not dip seven times in a river to be cured (II Kings 5:1-14). Nor do we throw sticks on the ground and expect them to turn into serpents as Moses did in Exodus 4:2-3. It's very wise to see that not everything you read about during Bible times is necessarily the normal occurrence for our lives today. The fact that God used Elijah, Elisha, and Peter to restore life to people (I Kings 17:17-23; II Kings 4:17-37; Acts 9:36-43) does not mean God intends for believers today to raise others from the dead. Jesus' command to the twelve to raise the dead does not mean He gave the command to every Christian (Matthew 10:8). Likewise, the signs that were said to follow the apostles (Mark

16:20) were not signs that were experienced by all Christians during the early Church and they certainly were not signs that were intended to be duplicated by Christians today. Beware of *misapplied promises* taken out of context!

McQuilkin again writes: “That an event was reported to have truly happened does not necessarily make it a revelation of God’s universal will.” This is certainly true in connection with the supernatural sign gifts that were used in the infant days of Church life and ministry and the events of Pentecost. Just because some Christians were given supernatural gifts does not warrant the conclusion and belief that all Christians would receive the same types of gifts throughout the history of the Church. The sign gifts such as tongues, miracles, healings, and protection from snakes and poisons (Mark 16:17-18) were used to authenticate both the man and message (Mark 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12) before the canon of Scripture was complete. However, these gifts were not intended to be normal operative gifts that would remain and be part of God’s continuing plan and purpose for the church (1 Cor. 13:10). This is very clear to see when viewing Scripture, church history, and believers today. We cannot empty hospitals of people who are sick, drink deadly poison and survive, and authentically duplicate any of the apostolic sign gifts of casting our demons and speaking in tongues.

Culture

When it comes to culture, we must remember that some commands and laws are transcultural or repeatable, which means they are not revoked or nullified elsewhere and remain a universal moral code, mandate, and the revealed will of God for all personal, group, and societal living (Lev. 18:22; 20:13 with Rom. 1:24-27; Jude 7; Gen. 9:6 with Rom. 13:1-5, 8-9). Other cultural expressions and practices are later revoked in the New Testament epistles. For example, the New Testament explanation of hair lengths (1 Cor. 11:14) has revoked the Nazarite practice of wearing long hair on men (Judg. 13:5; 1 Sam. 1:11), which was part of the culture and practice of the Mosaic Covenant. Betrothal or the engagement is no longer considered to be a legally binding marriage covenant (Deut. 20:7; 22:23). We don’t have kings in the United States, but we do have a president and we should pray for him (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Women are no longer commanded to wear shawls on their heads (a cultural expression); however, the principle of submission is transferable to all societies, since a sufficient hair covering symbolizes the woman’s submission to her husband (1 Cor. 11:15).

There is no command given in the New Testament Church epistles regarding the cultural practice of foot washing (Gen. 18:4; 19:2; Luke 7:44; John 13:5-6). Many times we must maintain the *timeless principle* expressed in a cultural practice (Rom. 16:16 – “a holy kiss”) and apply it to our day. Principles are transferrable. For instance, foot washing and kissing teaches us the principles of courtesy, serving, and loving others. We must be careful of assigning a cultural custom, such as the use of oil (James 5:14), which was a gesture of courtesy, friendship, refreshment, and kindness (Ps. 23:5), especially to Jewish brethren (James 1:1), and make it mandatory for today. The Bible possesses the authority to set limits

on which commands are temporary, which practices are culture-bound, and those which are not. One way to determine which commands and practices are to be repeated is by examining whether a similar command or situation is paralleled in the Scripture elsewhere, and is found in the New Testament Church epistles.

Genre

A proper approach to interpreting Scripture also recognizes that the Bible contains a variety of literary genres, each of which has certain peculiar characteristics that must be recognized in order to interpret the text properly. Biblical genres (different types of Biblical literature) must be taken into account which include the legal (Exod. 20-40; Leviticus, Numbers 5-6, 15, 18-19, 28-30, 34-35), historical (Acts), the narrative or Biblical story (Job, Ruth), poetry (Psalms), wisdom literature (Proverbs), apocalyptic writings (Daniel, Revelation) and instruction (epistles).

Figures of Speech

The literal approach to the interpretation of Scripture also recognizes the use of metaphors and figures of speech which are given to convey some literal truth. There are two major types of figures of speech. First there is a *simile* which is when something resembles another thing (“All flesh is as grass” – 1 Pet. 1:24 or “he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water” - Ps. 1:3). A simile always uses the words “like” or “as” to make the comparison. Second, there is a *metaphor* which is when something actually represents something else (“All flesh is grass” – Isa. 40:6). Notice the difference between 1 Pet. 1:24 and Isa 40:6. A simile resembles something else but a metaphor represents some specific thing (“Ye are the salt of the earth” – Matt. 5:13). When an announcer says, “The Falcons beat the Lions” we know he is using two figures of speech which represents football teams. Third, *anthropomorphism* (ascribing human characteristics to God – Ps. 8:3 says “the work of thy fingers”), *anthropopathism* (ascribing human emotions or feelings to God – Zech. 8:1 says “I was jealous for Zion”), and *zoomorphisms* (ascribing animal characteristics to God – Ps. 91:4 says “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust”) are also figures of speech. Fourth, a *hyperbole* is also a figure of speech where deliberate exaggeration is given (Ps. 6:6 – “all the night I make my bed swim; I water my couch with my tears” or Deut. 1:28 - “the cities are great and walled up to heaven”). But how can we distinguish what portions of the Bible are to be taken literal or figuratively? The answer to this question is fivefold:

1. Figurative language is present when the statement taken in its normal sense would be impossible (Isa. 55:12; Ps. 57:1; Micah 1:2; Rev. 1:16; 5:6-13; John 1:29; Rev. 11:5; 17:9; 19:15; 20:1).
2. Take the figurative sense if the action is immoral (John 6:53-58).
3. Note if a statement is followed by an explanatory literal statement (Eph. 2:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-16).

4. Sometimes a figure of speech is marked off by a qualifying adjective (John 6:32; 1 Peter 2:4) or a word such as “like” or “as” or “as it were” (Rev. 4:6; 18:12; 15:2; Isa. 53:6; Dan. 12:3; Rev. 21:21).
5. The prophecies of God’s Word all have a literal fulfillment even if the language is symbolic (Dan. 2:31-35; 7:1-7). There is always a literal message of fulfillment behind the figurative. The figurative is a colorful vehicle for presenting a literal truth (Ps. 22:16; Isa. 53:6; 1 Peter 5:8).

There are two important things to remember about symbols. In order for something to be symbolic it must possess:

- a. Some degree of absurdity when taken literally.

On the other hand, it must possess:

- b. Some degree of clarity when taken symbolically.

Parables

Then there are parables. A parable is a form of a figurative language involving comparisons. However, it does not use a single word or phrase to make the comparison. Instead, it uses an entire story. The word parable comes from the Greek *para* (“beside or alongside”) and *ballein* (“to throw”). A parable is a story thrown alongside the truth to illustrate the truth. It’s like a sermon illustration. It teaches one primary truth. When interpreting parables we need to ask, “What is the main point being made? What spiritual truth is being taught? What analogy is being given? Jesus’ 35 parables are never unlikelike or fictitious. They are true-to-life stories designed to teach spiritual truth. (Matt. 13; 21:28-32; 5:1-13; Luke 14:7-15; 16-24; 15:3-31). Jesus spoke in parables (Matt. 13:10; Mark 4:10) to reveal truth to His followers and conceal truth from unbelievers (Mark 4:11).

An allegory is a narrative or word picture which may or may not be true to life. It uses symbols and personifications to teach spiritual realities and lessons. A parable (an extended simile) usually has one main point of comparison, whereas an allegory (an extended metaphor) has several points of comparison. A parable records an incident that is true-to-life, whereas an allegory may be either true to life or fictitious. Proverbs 5:15-20 compares marital fidelity to a cistern; Isaiah 5:1-7 compares Israel to an unproductive vine; John 10:1-6 compares Jesus to a Shepherd; John 15:1-5 compares Jesus to a vine and His children to branches; Gal. 4:21-31 compares Hagar and Sarah as two covenants; and Ephesians 6:11-17 compares the Christian’s spiritual defense to armor.

Prophecy

Interpreting prophecy correctly is also very important. Since prophecy does contain figurative and symbolic language, it’s assumed by many that there is an allegorical or hidden, spiritual meaning attached to many prophecies, instead

of a literal meaning. This is a false assumption which leads to a denial of the literal interpretation and meaning of prophetic events such as the Tribulation Period (Rev. 4-19), the personal coming of the Antichrist, and a literal Millennium or 1,000 year rule of Christ over the earth (Rev. 20:1-6). For instance, amillenarians (those who don't believe in a literal future Millennium) "spiritualize" or "allegorize" (mysticize) those prophecies that deal with Christ's coming Kingdom over the earth, claiming that they refer to Christ's rule in our hearts today, as our King. They argue that the New Testament views many Old Testament passages non-literally and that prophecy can be allegorized because it contains many figures of speech and much symbolic language. For example, they accept the literal birth of Christ in the first part of Isaiah 9:6 but then allegorize the coming Kingdom and government of Christ over the earth in the second part of Isaiah 9:6. This is not fair exegesis and becomes a case of using "interpretive scissors" to edit God's mind. If the first part of a verse describes something literal in relationship to Christ's first coming (His birth), then the second part of a verse must also describe something literal in relationship to Christ's Second Coming (His Kingdom).

There are those who teach that the genre of prophecy (apocalyptic literature) should not be taken literally. Of course, just because figurative and symbolic language is used in some prophecy does not mean that all prophecy should be interpreted symbolically. According to the allegorical way of thinking, most prophecies should be viewed as being fulfilled either historically (preterism – in the fall of Jerusalem AD 70), or today, in a general way, since they are interpreted as teaching only spiritual lessons for our present-day lives (idealism). Of course, we should not advocate "wooden literalism" (over literalizing) since there are some Bible passages that use metaphors (John 6:48; Ps. 91:4) and figures of speech or symbols, especially when predicting prophecy (Dan. 2, 7; Rev. 12:1-6; 13:1-3; 17:1-4). When looking at these passages and symbols one should look in the immediate context and natural setting to determine the meaning of a symbol (Matt. 13:36-43; Rev. 12:9; 17:12, 18), or look elsewhere in Scripture, since the Scripture is its own best interpreter (1 Cor. 2:13).

New England Bible Conference states it this way:

"The Bible must be interpreted literally which is the way language is normally and naturally understood. We recognize that the Bible writers frequently used figurative language which is a normal and picturesque way of portraying literal truth. The Bible must be understood in the light of the normal use of language, the usage of words, the historical and cultural background, the context of the passage and the overall teaching of the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15)."

We must always remember that figures of speech are a colorful vehicle for expressing a literal truth. A literal prophecy or promise that is spiritualized becomes exegetical fraud. Gentlemen, do not commit voodoo exegesis! Take the numbers in the Book of Revelation (144,000, 12,000, 1,260 days, 42 months, 1,000 years) according to their mathematical quantity, unless there is substantial

evidence to warrant otherwise. Also, interpret the prophetic passages literally, unless specific words (“like” or “as”), or a degree of absurdity, indicate otherwise. When there is figurative language, make sure to interpret the symbol or figurative language in light of other literal prophetic truth that is being portrayed in the context of the prophecy. Remember that we take away from Scripture by denying its obvious and apparent meaning; we add to it by supplying new meaning not supported by the text (Rev. 22:18-19).

Systems of Interpretation Compared

Name	Time Period	Revelation Chapters 4-19
Preterism	past	Book of Revelation describes the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Matt. 24) or the fall of Rome in A.D. 476. No major prophecies will come to pass in the future. Extreme preterism teaches Christ already came in His Second Coming.
Historicism	present	Book of Revelation describes major events of Christian history spanning from John’s time to the Second Coming of Christ. No major prophecies will come to pass in the future.
Idealism	timeless	Book of Revelation describes spiritual truths instead of prophetic truth. Good will eventually prevail over evil. Readers are encouraged in their current trials.
Ecclectic	mixed	This view typically favors idealism while borrowing some elements from other systems.
Futurism	future	Book of Revelation describes a literal, future Tribulation Period prior to the Second Coming of Christ and a literal 1,000 year Millennium over the earth.

Also, as we study prophecy we will need to remember the “gap principle” (Isa. 9:6; 61:1-2 Zec. 9:9-10), which teaches that prophecies jump from Christ’s first coming to His Second Coming. Certain prophecies also move from history to the end times (Dan. 9:26-27; 11:28-35 vs. 36-45). Sometimes there is a blending together of both a “near” fulfillment (close to the time it was written) and a “far” or distant fulfillment (during the end times) that is attached to certain prophetic passages of Scripture (Jer. 50:9-13). Look for God’s built-in interpretation of prophecies (Dan. 2:37-38 with 44-45; Dan. 7:24; 8:20-21; Zech. 5:6; Matt. 13:36-43; Rev. 17:9, 12, 18). Interpreting prophetic symbols (Rev. 12:1-2, 14) and other prophetic personages (Rev. 4:4; 11:3) that are not specifically identified in a passage requires an examination of the context and comparing Scripture with Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13), so one can arrive at conclusions based upon other

Scripture references, which point to the same concept. Sometimes you must also consider local customs (Rev. 2:17).

Types

Interpreting Bible types is also important. The Greek word from which we get “type” is “tupos” (Heb. 8:5) which means a stamp, imprint, example, copy, pattern, or model. A type is a divine design of an historical Old Testament event, person, or thing that is prefigured (anticipated) and planned by God to be represented in the New Testament. Of course, there needs to be a word of warning about types. If a person wants to interpret Biblical types, they should follow one primary guideline. *Every type should be confirmed in Scripture as a type.* Extremists often over-spiritualize the Word of God, to such an extent, that they find types, which the Bible never intended to convey. The early church fathers did this when they found types in many trivial incident and events. Others do the same thing today. For instance, one man suggested that the three floors on Noah’s ark represent the Trinity. The imaginations of people can run wild when it comes to types. They emphasize numbers, colors, objects, and give their speculative conclusions about what these things represent, when the Bible gives no indication of their meaning. Without a doubt, the Tabernacle is the clearest type written about in Scripture (Heb. 8:1-2; 9:23).

There can be no question that God intended the construction and offerings of the Tabernacle to represent Christ in some magnificent way (Heb. 10:1) as our High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16; 9:11). The Biblical writers used various words for types and give examples of types (1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 9:24; 1 Pet. 3:21; 2 Pet. 2:6; Heb. 4:11; 9:9; 11:19; 1 Cor. 2:17. Heb. 8:5; 10:11). Again, every type should be confirmed in Scripture, as a type, whether it’s a person (1 Cor. 5:7; Isa. 53:7 with John 1:29; Heb. 7:3; Heb. 5:4-5), event (1 Cor. 15:20-23; 1 Cor. 5:7-8) or thing (Heb. 4:3, 9, 11; Heb. 8:5; 9:23-24; Acts 2:1-47). Scripture in some way must indicate that an item is typical. The types spoken about always express the idea of some likeness between two events, objects, or persons. A type of an Old Testament person, event, or thing always has a historical base and reality, which is designed by God, to prefigure (foreshadow) in a preparatory way a real person, event, or thing that is designated in the New Testament. In other words, the type (shadow) is always found in the Old Testament and is the preordained shadow of the antitype (real object). The antitype is found in the New Testament and is the reality or fulfillment of what the type prefigured. The tried and true statement regarding Old and New Testaments is still valid: “The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed.”

Always note the distinction between types and illustrations. For instance, some teach that Moses and Joseph are types of Christ; however, where does the New Testament actually indicate this? It’s better to see them as illustrations instead of direct resemblances planned by God, such as Melchizedek (Heb. 7:3, 15-17) or Aaron (Heb. 5:4-5). Also note the distinction between types and symbols. A type

represents and anticipates something to come; whereas, a symbol has no historical time reference, but does represent or depict something else (Jer. 24:3-5; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 5:5).

Dispensations

A proper hermeneutic will also consider the dispensational aspects and distinctions of Scripture (Eph. 1:10; 3:2; 1 Cor. 10:32; 2 Tim. 2:15). The different stewardships or economies, or the way God chooses to work at different times in history and prophecy (innocence, conscience, government, promise, law, grace, kingdom) must also be considered when interpreting the Bible. Is the passage dealing with the Mosaic Law era in human history (Deut. 22:9-11), the Church age (New Testament epistles - Rev. 2-3), the Tribulation Period of seven years (Rev. 6-18; Matt. 24-25), or the Kingdom age (Micah 4:3)? Here are some important questions to consider. Why don't we bring a lamb to church, kill him, and place his blood on the communion table (1 Cor. 5:7)? Why don't we worship on the Sabbath (Ex. 31:16)? Why isn't tithing demanded in the New Testament epistles (1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 9:6-7)? It's because we believe in the dispensational approach to the Bible. We must remember that the moral or ethical laws of God never change and are transdispensational and transferrable to all societies (Rom. 2:14-16; 8:4; Gal. 5:19-21; Gen. 9:5-6 with Rom.13:1-4). However, some of God's unique promises, programs, and practices within a dispensation do change throughout the course of history and time.

A good reminder when interpreting and exegeting (determining the meaning of a text) would be to ask to *whom* it was written, *why* was it written, and *what* are the words communicating to their original readers? We must also remember that "All Scripture is for us (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16) but not all scripture is to us." The *misapplication of promises* has caused confusion among those who teach the Bible. Some promises (2 Chron. 7:14) and Scripture is given specifically to the Jews and applies to the era of the Mosaic Law (Rom. 6:14). I know of no person today who is willing to be placed under the minute Old Testament laws that pertain to dietary regulations, farming, clothing, worship, and sabbath days (Matt. 23:23; Exodus 30:19-21; Lev. 5:2; 11:29-32; Numb. 6:18). The Bible teaches that such laws have been rescinded (Col. 2:16, Heb. 9:10; Acts 10:11-14; Rom. 14:1-3, 17-20) and we are no longer living under the outworking of the Mosaic Dispensation (Rom. 6:14) with its strict procedures, practices, and penalties (Deut. 27:15-26). The non-moral laws of the Old Covenant have been revoked and superseded by the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:7-11), while other Scriptures (Church truth), such as the epistles, are fully operative for today, and still reflect the moral laws of God (Rom. 8:4).

We must also remember that different promises are given to different groups of people (Matt. 10:5-7) and different gifts (1 Cor. 13:10-13) are also distributed during various stages of church history (Mark 16:17-20). In other words, certain events, experiences, and practices belong to the transition from the Law Dispensation to the Grace Dispensation, such as waiting for the promise of the

Father or the arrival of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4), the experience of the Pentecostal phenomena (Acts 2:1-4), and praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17). These experiences were unique to the *bridge* or transition period, when Old Testament saints were becoming New Testament saints, and they are no longer being experienced today (Romans 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). Also, during the *bridge* or transition period between Law and Grace (book of Acts and early Church era) there were new men (apostles) and new revelation (truth) being confirmed by miraculous signs (2 Cor. 12:12; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4). These miraculous sign gifts and experiences were never promised to be normative or a prescribed standard for saints today, nor are they necessary, since the completion of the New Testament canon of Scripture (1 Cor. 13:8-10). The burden of proof rests upon the Charismatic Movement to prove that the miraculous experiences and sign gifts of the early Church have been reoccurring today after not occurring for almost 1,900 years of Church history.

Lastly, one must remember the progress of revelation given throughout the centuries. God has progressively revealed His purpose to mankind down through the ages. Abraham did not know what we know and understand today regarding the Church, Rapture, and prophecy (end times), since we have God's complete revelation of the Bible (Old and New Testament). We are a privileged people that can accurately assess and interpret God's plan for the ages and see His complete mind on any given matter (1 Cor. 13:8-12).

In short, we mislead people when we don't interpret the Bible in context, according to the dispensation it was written, and with the proper usage of grammar, understanding of words, and correct hermeneutical practices. Exegesis involves discovering the true meaning of a text while *eisegesis* involves reading something into a text which is not there. Our goal must always be exegesis (drawing the meaning out of the text) and not eisegesis (superimposing a meaning on the text). As we exegete a passage of Scripture we should use proper methods of interpretation and rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance (John 16:13). We should approach the Scriptures without prejudice or preconceived ideas and expect a revelation about the revelation!

Note: Interpretation is foundational to application. Sound interpretation is the only adequate basis for relevant application. If we do not interpret properly, we may end up applying the Bible wrongly. Also, we must remember there is only one interpretation, but many applications.

Exposition

(Communicating the Meaning of a Text)

G. Campbell Morgan, who has been called the Prince of Expositors, wrote: "Being sure that our text is in the Bible, we proceed to find out its actual meaning, and then to elaborate its message." Preaching is the proclamation or presentation of Bible truth (heralding a message). It involves announcing and

delivering truth (Mark 16:20; Acts 8:5; 2 Tim. 4:2). However, one cannot get to preaching without first having knowledge about the text. Exegesis involves *exploring* the meaning of a text while exposition involves *explaining* the text through the process of teaching and preaching. Hermeneutics and exegesis is the road that leads to exposition (teaching and preaching). You cannot deliver truth without first discovering truth. Exegesis is done through private study while exposition (teaching and preaching) is presented in public. Exegesis results in what we call expository or expositional preaching – preaching which communicates or explains the meaning of a text to the listeners, along with its relevance to present-day hearers. Remember that our task is NOT to create our own message; it is rather to communicate the author’s message.

A good definition of expository preaching is this: “A discourse that expounds a passage of Scripture, organizes it around a central theme and main divisions, which issue forth from the given text, and then decisively applies its message to the listeners.” An expositor is one who explains Scripture by laying open the text to his listeners in order to set forth its meaning, explain what is difficult to understand, and make appropriate application to his listeners. *Exposition involves presenting a Bible text entirely and exactly as it was intended by God.* Don’t base your sermons on suppositions instead of Scripture. Give the people divine certainties; don’t build a sermon on assumptions and dreams (Jer. 23:28).

To get to expositional preaching there must first be proper hermeneutics (Bible interpretation of a text) and then exegesis (Bible understanding of a text). Exegesis draws out the meaning of the text while exposition sets forth the meaning in an appropriate and effective order and manner.

Luke 24:27 says: “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” The word “expounded” means to explain to people what is said in Scripture. Expository preaching, or expositional preaching, which involves the explanation of Bible texts, does not mean a preacher moves verse by verse (a running commentary) without unity or outline. Nor does it involve rambling comments or remarks about a Bible passage and disconnected suggestions without a theme or structure. Here is some good advice for preachers. Don’t simply become a historical narrator that talks about a text; be an expositor of the Word that points people to the text and explain what the text actually means in its context, grammar, and words.

Exposition involves digging into the text of Scripture (the Bible) and explaining *what* the text says and words mean, *where* you are going with the text, and *what* the response must be for those listening to the text. All good exposition involves the defining of words and terms as the preacher moves through a text. A lack of definition has caused a lack of understanding in much preaching. The work of expositional preaching and teaching is no easy task. No shortcuts are acceptable. It must be understood that you will naturally bring some exegesis into

the pulpit to prove your points, as you teach and preach the Word of God, and apply it to the lives of the people. However, all exegesis without application results in a failed sermon. We must find an important balance as both teachers and preachers of God's Word. Spurgeon warned his students not to "throw the grain at the people. Grind the flour and bake some bread," he told them. "Slice the bread for them – and it wouldn't hurt to put a little honey on it." People need nourishment. They need a meal from God's Word. Feed them the truth!

The true spirit and intent of expository preaching is declared in Acts 20:26-27, when Paul stated: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The preacher's desire should be to "declare" or communicate in a clear fashion the entire meaning of God's truth to his listeners. He should not leave any rock unturned when seeking to understand and communicate God's Word to people. Jesus told us that we must live "by every word" (Matt. 4:4) – not just the portions of the Bible that interest us. As faithful preachers, we need to investigate all truth, as found in God's Word and the Bible passages we are preaching, and feed our people a steady diet of nutritious food – not just fast food.

James Rosscup explains the Bible expositor in this way: "In a sense, God's expositor is all at once an explorer, a detective, a historian, a tracker, and a prospector. In searching out God's message, he is a Columbus navigating the expansive seas of Scripture to bring news of a fairer world." Some of the aids that assist us in interpretation, exegesis, and proper exposition are good study Bibles (Scofield Study System, Thompson Chain Reference Bible, Nelson Study Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, etc.), concordance (original languages – Strong's Concordance), a Bible cross-reference book (Treasury of Scripture Knowledge), word studies (Strong's, Vines, Wuest Word studies; Robertson's Word Pictures, etc.), and commentaries written by godly, reliable writers, who interpret the Bible literally. There are many good commentaries today that have textual and background information which is helpful to interpretation (Robert Gromacki Commentary series, Don Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible, etc.).

Of course, always remember to read the passage yourself and draw from the passage what you can in your own personal study. Be yourself and preach your own message. If you use another person's outline, give him the credit, and fill in your own meat between the outline points. Don't be like the man who had a busy week and had no time to prepare his sermon. He decided to use a sermon of Alexander Maclaren. On Sunday the preacher did not know that Maclaren was in the audience until he greeted him afterward. He was very embarrassed and became even more so when Maclaren looked him in the eye and said, "Young man, I don't mind if you are going to preach my sermons, but if you are going to preach them like that, please don't say they are mine!" One of Spurgeon's students was charged with plagiarism for preaching one of his own sermons. When meeting with Spurgeon over the matter, Spurgeon said to the young preacher, "Young man, I understand you preached one of my sermons." The

young man replied, “Yes, I’m afraid it’s true.” “Well,” Spurgeon replied, “I just want to let you know that I got the sermon from Matthew Henry!”

My point is this; don’t be afraid to use what others have exegeted from the Scripture, so long as you preach your own sermon, and create important details about a sermon that are uniquely your own. We live in an information age, which has granted us with many valuable tools to enhance our Bible knowledge and study (commentaries, study Bibles, word studies). When it comes to sermon preparation, you can milk many cows, but make your own butter! In other words, you can use many helps and aids, but never forget to be original in your study, preaching, and teaching.

Homiletics

(Principles Used for Communicating the Text)

We should pity the congregation whose pastor has lost the joy of preaching! It does us good when we pause occasionally and thank God for the joys of preaching. And young man, as you develop in your preaching, godly people will not despise you of your youth (1 Tim. 4:12). They will stand by you and support you.

Richard Baxter’s words ought to stir us:

“I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.”

The meaning of homiletics involves the principles of *communicating* a text of Scripture through proper format and outlining. It’s the art of preaching or delivering sermons. It is also called pedagogy. Preaching is the oral communication of Biblical truth. It’s the study of sermon preparation.

In summary, *hermeneutics* (proper interpretation) is comparable to a cookbook that has a recipe for a cake. On the other hand, *exegesis* (determining the meaning of the text) is the preparing and baking of the cake, while *exposition* (explaining the text through teaching and preaching), along with the use of *homiletics* (delivering the text analytically – in a systematic and organized fashion), is serving the cake.

Clear preaching begins with clear thinking. Homiletics involves clear progression through a text of Scripture in an understandable format. If you don’t know where you are going with a text of Scripture, then no one else will know! The art of communication is very important. Your acceptance as a preacher will be determined by your ability to communicate the Word. Your influence on your audience will often be determined by your delivery. The acceptance of your message will be determined by your sermon delivery. You may have the finest exegesis and material, but you will fail, unless the sermon is properly prepared and delivered. Of course, preaching expositively and homiletically through Bible

texts and books is hard work (Ecc. 12:12 – “much study is weariness to the flesh”). However, not everyone thinks this is the case, as one add reveals.



You must remember that there is both a human element (“Study” – 2 Tim. 2:15) and a divine element (1 Cor. 2:13 – “Which the Holy Ghost teacheth”) that comes together when preparing a Bible sermon. Lazy preparation is not honored by the Spirit. As we study the Holy Spirit will teach us God’s Word. Being both studious and Spirit-directed is intricately woven together. Some preachers deliver a sermon to say something while other preachers have something to say. And remember this; if you don’t have anything worthwhile to say, even twenty minutes will seem like an eternity to your people! Learn to study and spend time preparing the dish that will feed the family! Men, study hard and surrender your sermon to God on the Lord’s Day.

Outlining

Homiletics is really the mechanics of sermon construction. We must learn to develop a homiletical heart and mind when approaching the Scriptures. Why do we need an outline? One primary reason is because God has given order and logical sequence to His Word.

Isaiah 28:10

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.”

The outline allows for this same logical sequence and order to be seen. God is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) and His Word has order; therefore, our preaching and teaching should have order. An outline that *corresponds to the grammatical construction and exact meaning of a text* assists us in fulfilling the obligation to preach in an orderly fashion and compliment God’s Word.

Using some alliteration in your outlining (rhyming and matching words) can be helpful while progressing through a text. It brings some life to the outline and enhances communication. However, don’t get too fancy. You don’t want to

become a homiletical harvester that is simply creating a lot of noise in order to sound impressive. My mother used to say: “You can have too much of a good thing.” She is right. Don’t become so homiletical in structure that you lose the primary message or thrust of the text through endless points and sub-points. Blessed are the balanced!

Remember to make your points with *simple* sentences. Long sentences are too hard to write down and remember. Also use *specific* words to outline and communicate your message. In other words, use words that convey your meaning accurately. Mark Twain once said the difference between the right word and the nearly right word is the difference between lightening and a lightening bug. Never force your own preconceived outline on a passage of Scripture. Outline what the passage actually says – not what you want it to say. Let the passage speak for itself. In addition, don’t merely become an analytical expert in outlining and forget to put meat into your sermon (1 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 5:14). Your outline must bring out the meaning and meat of the text. The audience will not respond to connected points or clever rhyming; they respond to God’s eternal Word. Therefore, if all you have is a good outline with little or no meat, your sermon will fail. You need meat on the bones! Study the text, explain words, and do not gloss over the historical, literal, contextual, and grammatical meaning of a text. While the use of homiletics is important for communication, we must put content and meat to our outlines and preach exegetically, doctrinally, and soundly.

All homiletical preaching contains a certain amount of exegesis, so the preacher can faithfully reveal the meaning of the text to his people, through the explanation of phrases, certain words, and how they fit together grammatically in a text. Preaching the Bible homiletically involves examination and explanation of the text. An outline of a passage of Scripture is not necessarily the message. Our people need a meal - not a recipe. When we give the people the exegetical meat of our outline we are preaching in a way that will count for eternity. Digging deep into God’s Word and presenting the truth of a text to our listeners is hard work and takes time (2 Tim. 2:15), but it is the most rewarding preaching for both the preacher and listener. Some preachers play golf all week and then play at preaching on Sunday!

Notes

Your notes should be the record of your study of any passage. They should contain enough exegesis, so you can remember what the text says, and also have them available to you for later use. Try to make your notes thorough enough. Scanty or inadequate notes often lead to inadequate preaching. Only those born with the gift of a photographic memory can preach without notes. I knew one preacher who could memorize the entire Book of Revelation before preaching through the book! Most preachers don’t have the kind of memory to recall everything they want to say about a text. Therefore, it’s appropriate to have

sufficient notes. Having notes and being bound to notes are two different things. You should learn to use notes without being noticed. We want to look at our people (eye contact) and not just our notes. And remember, we don't want to only give people are notes; we want to give them our heart!

If the fire does not burn in the preacher's heart, it is not likely that the congregation will ignite ("while I was musing, the fire burned: then spake I with the tongue" – Ps. 39:3). I have discovered over the years that if a man has a fire burning in his heart, then his delivery will come from within, and be natural instead of mechanical, even while using notes as a guide. Natural delivery and fire in the soul, along with good notes, can work harmoniously together. Without content in your preaching you might produce wild fire; however, with good notes and exegesis, there can be real fire! Men, you must rejoice that you are still God's man, or God's minister, that He has called. This truth, along with expositional preaching, should thrill your heart and keep you fresh in ministry.

Spurgeon said:

"I fall before the majesty of revelation."

This demonstrates the respect we should have to ascertain the meaning of God's Word. **As preachers, we must deal with the text, show people the text, read the text, and expound the text!** It's about the text – not your stories or outlines. The foundation is the text and everything builds from the text – outlines, illustrations, application, etc. However, communicating the message in a clear fashion is very important. This is ultimately accomplished by sound explanation and then application of the text to the listeners.

Application

Someone said: "The greatest twin sins of preachers are the sins of being confusing and uninteresting." This is why we need to apply God's timeless truths to the lives of our people. Doctrine, duty, and devotion should be balanced in our preaching. But we must preach!

2 Timothy 4:2 charges us:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

Jerry Sivinksty said:

"Shallow preaching will never reprove or rebuke anyone! It will always be neutral so as not to create a disturbance."

As 2 Timothy 2:4 declares, our preaching should result in bringing conviction, warning, and practical instruction to the listener. This is the application of the sermon. Notice that Scripture itself brings conviction, warning, and practical exhortation to the listener. Proper Bible teaching and preaching brings an

automatic application to the hearts and lives of people. Let us always remember that if we preach the Word of God powerfully and accurately, everything we say should apply to the lives of people.

1 Corinthians 2:4

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

The goal of preaching is to compel people to make a decision. I want people, who listen to me, to understand exactly what God’s Word demands them to do, when I am through preaching. They must leave the service saying, “Yes, I’ll do that” or “No, I won’t do what God’s Word says.”

Also remember that God’s Word is the only legitimate means of persuasion (2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 2:37, 41; 17:32-33) – not sob stories, dynamic illustrations, and other artificial methods of communication. God’s Word is powerful and penetrates the hearts of people (Heb. 4:12). Let the Word speak for itself! When preachers must use human drama and other communication gimmicks during their sermons, they are weak preachers, who need a crutch, since they do not actually believe in the power and life-changing truth of God’s Word. Nothing is as dramatic as the explosion of truth in the minds and hearts of people through powerful preaching (Acts 8:4, 12). In short, we are to persuade people from the Scriptures and not from tear-jerking stories that artificially stimulate the emotions apart from Biblical truth (2 Tim. 3:15). It is truth that moves the heart and stirs the human will (John 4:23-34; Acts 2:37). Two extremes must be avoided: truth without emotions and emotions without truth.

As you preach with fervor and zeal, remember to differentiate between persuasion and manipulation. The difference is detected by the means that we use. When you persuade people with the Word of God (Acts 13:43; 2 Cor. 5:11; Acts 2:14-37; 17:22-34), you won’t manipulate them into believing something, or changing something, without proper conviction and compelling from the Lord. The preacher should avoid the use of playing music, emotional outbursts, and other artificial methods, which are used to stimulate the emotions, while delivering his message. Let the Word do its work in the hearts of people and keep your preaching free from manipulation. Men, your preaching should be real, from the heart, and devoid of acting. Also, your expression should be correct, your pitch should be varied, and your tone should be in keeping with the truth being expressed.

Since there are so many varying degrees of spirituality in the church (young and older Christians in the Lord) it’s wise to balance your preaching with both meat (Heb. 5:14) and milk (1 Pet. 2:2). In short, don’t become a college professor who is simply lecturing to newborn infants. Billy Sunday once said: “Here is my first rule in homiletics: Never preach to the intellectual giraffes in your congregation. And the second ... Always leave some cookies on the bottom shelf.” This is

where the kiddies can get them! Another has wisely stated that “a good sermon should afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.” Preaching should repair and prepare people for service.

The fact that Scripture itself brings direct application to the hearts and lives of people (2 Tim. 4:2) does not negate the preacher’s responsibility to apply the general teaching of a Bible passage to everyday living, since Jesus used illustration in His teaching and preaching (Matt. 7:4-6; 13: 1-8; 21:28; Luke 15). The application and relevancy of the Bible to our present-day lives is very important. The preacher should look at his message and ask the hard question: “What difference can this sermon make in somebody’s life?” If you are not sure, or your response is neutral, then go back to the drawing board! Also remember that when making points in your homiletical outline, you should speak in the present tense, instead of the past tense. This makes the sermon up-to-date to the listeners. For instance, your point can say: “Abraham believed God” or it can say “We must believe God.” Your messages must relate to living for today. Men, learn to preach in the present tense!

The application of the sermon to the present lives of the people is very important. This is why we have studied well, prepared well, and preached well. We want to be able to apply the truth of the Scriptures to the personal lives of those listening. However, don’t get carried away with long illustrations and applications. Some suggest that 50 percent of the sermon should be application. While I believe in the importance of illustration and application, the 50 percent assessment is simply false.

Illustrations

Let me be very clear at this point. Beware of preaching stories and using a Bible verse or text as your illustration! We have all heard the preacher that ended up preaching stories instead of the Bible. This is called “skyscraper preaching” (sermons with one story stacked upon another). Beware of this pitfall in preaching. Too many illustrations and quotes can become distracting to the main theme of a text. As a general rule, do some illustration, more teaching, and mostly preaching. This will keep you balanced in your sermon delivery. Illustrations can help draw the attention of people to God’s Word, assist them in remembering important truth, cause them to think, and they can also give the people a rest! Some of the best illustrations are simple illustrations that relate directly to life. You can also derive illustrations by using the background of Greek words. They can provide valuable illustrations. And don’t forget Bible illustrations! There are many Bible characters, plots, stories, and parables that can be used, as an appropriate illustration, in order to bring out a sermon point.

One word of warning: never base your sermon on an illustration, no matter how good the story might be. Base your message on the Word. Men, God has called us to preach and teach the Bible – not tell long, drawn-out, tear-jerking, or funny stories. There is a place for proper illustration, but like anything, it can be abused

and become an escape hatch for lack of study and sermon preparation. When illustration takes the place of Bible exposition and preaching the Word (2 Tim. 4:2), then the people leave empty of truth and devoid of spiritual guidance. We need to discover the art of Biblical preaching – not illustrative preaching.

The reaction of the listeners should not be: “Wow, what a great illustration!” but “Thank you, for instructing me in the way of truth.” Truth changes the lives of people (1 Pet. 2:2) - not sermon illustrations. So “Feed the flock of God” (1 Pet. 5:2) instead of entertaining the flock with too many illustrations. Stories and illustrations are light weight when compared with the truth of Scripture. In fact, everything is lightweight (programs, puppets, Power Point presentations) when compared to the preaching or proclamation of God’s Word, as a man of God, with a message from Heaven. Don’t sell yourself short!

We sometimes think we have failed in presenting a message, and maybe we did! However, remember that the messages that nobody talks about are normally the ones, which have hit home, and those messages that God uses in a mighty way. Don’t become “men of moods,” as Phillips Brooks wrote “thinking we cannot work unless we feel like it.” Preachers have emotions, but they must learn to control them. When we follow our feelings, which might fluctuate based upon human responses to our preaching, and what is taking place in church ministry, it’s then we will become very discouraged. In short, don’t expect applause for your messages and try to hit a home run every time you preach. Just preach the Word and let God do the work in the hearts of your people. Lastly, be sensitive to people in your congregation, when using illustrations. If someone has recently lost a loved one by suicide, try to avoid using a “suicide story.” Use common courtesy and common sense. Don’t embarrass others by including them in an illustration. Remember that good illustrations are like windows into the Word and eyes that help us see truth in the Scriptures.

Humor

Also, don’t abuse humor in the pulpit. The preacher is not a comedian at a night show but a caretaker of God’s sacred truth. There is a place for some humor which is connected with a man’s personality. If humor is not natural to a preacher then he had better forget about it. Nevertheless, some humor can help make the medicine go down. A flash of wit can help resolve tension. It can also regain the attention of a sleepy congregation! Spurgeon confessed: “I would rather hear people laugh than I would see them asleep in the house of God.” However, we must learn to never do a standup comedian show and we should never joke about eternal things. Phillips Brooks calls this type of man “the clerical jester.”

Introductions

The main purpose of the introduction is to create interest and convince the listener that he can be helped by hearing your message. The introduction is the first

words out of your mouth. You will often gain or lose an audience by your introduction. For this reason, the introduction should be a well-prepared component of your message. A good introduction is interesting and should naturally flow into the message. There are different kinds of introductions. You can state a startling fact, ask a probing question that is related to life, use a powerful quotation, state an historical event, borrow an illustration that fits your sermon, or give a personal story or experience. You should emphasize your experience and not yourself (don't build up your ego or pride). While giving your introduction, don't announce your topic; instead, lead the people into it. Don't be tasteless and the same - be fresh week after week. Your introduction must captivate your people week by week.

Don't give long introductions. The longer you wander around during the introduction, the easier it is for the listener to tune you out. One elderly man shouted out to his pastor, "For goodness sake, start preaching!" This is a good constructive criticism for many a preacher. Our sermon introductions should not be long. Don't hem-and-haw around. Don't tell the people it's a hard passage to deliver. Never apologize for God's Word! You are God's man with God's message.

John Goetsch concludes with an illustration from Haddon Robinson: "There are three types of preachers: those to whom you *'cannot'* listen; those to whom you *'can'* listen; and those to whom you *'must'* listen. During the introduction the congregation usually decides what kind of speaker is addressing them that day."

Theme

A theme which appears as the title of a sermon is normally a saying that is designed to arouse interest. It should be clear, definite, and a single statement. Some examples of themes for a textual sermon would be: "Cheer Up and Dig Deep" (2 Cor. 9:7), "Deadly Poison" (James 3:8), "Defrosting a Spiritual Icebox" (Rev. 2:4), "Blessed Quietness" (Ps. 16:8), "A Sowing Lesson" (Ga. 6:7-9), "Are Your Spots Showing?" (James 1:27), "Perhaps Today!" (1 Thess. 4:13-17), "Born Again Bandits" (Mal. 3:8), "Christian Cannibals" (Gal. 5:14-15), and "I've Got Peace Like a River" (Phil. 4:6-7). Your themes in a book study would be linked to the specific passages of Scripture that you are preaching. You might deal with the same theme for several weeks as you move through certain texts of Scripture. A theme is a catchy statement that sparks interest for what is going to be said in the sermon.

Proposition

The proposition restates the theme in a different way. The proposition is a declaration statement of the main spiritual lesson or timeless truth in the sermon, which should be reduced to one main statement. It is a simple and clear declaration of the subject of the preacher's sermon. It's a single statement of the

central point of your message. You must take your whole message and boil it down into one sentence. The proposition of a text gives the people a starting point. The proposition is the best guarantee that your audience will clearly understand the main subject of God's Word. There are various kinds of propositions. There is a statement of fact ("A person who rejects Christ will go to hell") and a statement of policy - what a person should or should not do ("Every believer needs to study God's Word"). You can also use a question in your proposition ("What will you do with Jesus?"). However, this is not as common. The proposition should normally be a single, simple, declarative statement and not a compound sentence with two independent ideas. It should not be a title. It should indicate your purpose for the sermon. The most common faults of propositions are that they are too broad, too vague, or too brief ("God is love").

The proposition should also be interesting and relevant. It should be stated in the present tense, what God is doing for us today, and not what he did for Moses centuries ago. Also, there should be variation in the proposition. Instead of using the same three words in your propositional statement every Sunday like "reasons" or "results" or "things" make some changes. Don't be so predictable! Of course, each preacher has his own distinctive style and personality, but stating propositions clearly and maintaining homiletic structure is an important factor in communicating God's Word correctly and effectively.

The proposition statement is to the sermon what the spine is to the skeleton, and the foundation to the house: it holds things together and determines what the final product will become. If we are going to build a sermon, we need to have a foundation for the sermon. The proposition is the foundation which sets the stage for the entire sermon to unfold. If you don't have a good foundation, then what shall the listeners do? (Psalm 11:3).

Transitions

The transition is like a verbal bridge that takes us from the introduction into the body of the sermon. Once the proposition is stated and you declare the subject matter, you must then move or transition from the introduction to the main body of the sermon. Transitional statements can be boring or lively. The best piece of advice is to use variety. Instead of always using words like "things" or "facets" try being more unique. Would you want to listen to yourself repeating the same words over and over again?

Dr. John Goetsch provides a listing of some different words that can be used in the transition: "Arguments, Benefits, Blessings, Commands, Danger, Effects, Gains, Guarantees, Honors, Incentives, Invitations, Issues, Joys, Judgments, Lessons, Losses, Needs, Obligations, Orders, Penalties, Predictions, Privileges, Profits, Reasons, Results, Rewards, Satisfactions, Steps, Values, Blunders, Excesses, Extremes, Mistakes, Instructions, Guidelines, Patterns, Plans, Practices, Prescriptions, Rules, Stipulations, Admonitions, Commands, Laws,

Fears, Precautions, Sayings, Preparations, Provisions, Details, Directives, Injunctions, Teachings, Barriers, Fundamentals, Obstacles, Powers, Means, Alternatives, Systems, ... The list is endless – use your imagination!”

Variety is the spice of life!

Repetition

Repeating the major points of your sermon as you move through the text is always a good practice. Even when you are working through sub-points, it's a good idea to reiterate them to some degree. Don't start sounding like a robot by constantly repeating points, instead of preaching the Word, but keep in mind that some repetition helps to *reinforce* your progression through a text. It keeps people moving with you through the text. Repeating points also helps people to *reconfirm* what they have already learned and prepares them for the next step. Repetition leads people up the homiletical ladder so they can reach the top rung and see the entire picture that a text is presenting. Repetition keeps the sermon flowing, the people understanding where you are going, and it will ultimately bring the sermon to its logical conclusion. Also, don't forget to read and repeat Scripture texts that you are working through, since the power is in the actual words of the text – the wonderful words of life (John 6:63). This is sometimes forgotten by many preachers. Read the text and then expound it.

Clarity

Wiersbe has stated it well: “When the pilot does not know what port he is heading for, no wind is the right wind; and when the preacher does not know what he is trying to accomplish in his message, no service is a good service. Have a specific aim for each message, and be sure to tell your congregation what it is.” God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:40) but some preachers are! Good homiletics prevents us from becoming a confusing preacher. Some preaching is like the house garage – unorganized! If the sermon is the meal, then our delivery is the way we serve the meal. The delivery of the sermon is homiletics. Men, we should learn how to deliver the goods! Wiersbe again states: “Preach to your people. Look at them. Don't address your message to the back wall or ceiling, preach to the congregation.”

But how should we preach? We should completely understand the text, carefully explain the text, convincingly apply the text, and clearly illustrate the text. If there is one key reminder to homiletical preaching it's this: keep things clear! Beware of being foggy in what you are saying or communicating. Be crystal clear! Someone said: “If it's mist in the pulpit, it will be fog in the pews.” There are four points of interest when it comes to clear preaching or homiletics.

1. Clear proposition (this states what the text is teaching and where you are going with the text)

The proposition (declaration statement) should be definite and clear. If you don't know where you are going with the sermon, then nobody else will know! Make sure you make and state your proposition with clarity. When you introduce your sermon, it's no time to be fuzzy. Make a clear, concise, and captivating declaration of what your sermon is all about. Repeat it! Don't let people miss it! You should never enter the body of a sermon without having the wheels attached to it!

3. **Clear points** (supporting the proposition with every point)

Make clear points that support your proposition (declaration statement) and which are supported by the text of Scripture. Study the text grammatically. Your main points should never start when the writer is in the middle of a sentence. This is especially true when you are studying a larger portion of God's Word. Your main point must align with the author's sentence and your subpoints must be taken from the modifying clauses linked to the main sentence. Build your sermon points around the grammatical, historical, and literal interpretation of a text of Scripture - not your illustrations. Also, as a general rule, don't make your outline points too long. Keep them simple. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! This is an important key in communicating truth effectively. There is a difference between a point that states, "God wants us to grow up and progress in our spiritual lives every day" and a point which states more simply and succinctly, "God wants us to grow up" or "The need for spiritual growth," or "Growing." Keep your outline as clear and simple as you can.

4. **Clear progression** (start moving through the text)

After the proposition is stated, and you begin to enter into your sermon, make your transition flow out of your declaration statement and state your transition clearly. This will get the sermon flowing and enable you to start progressing through your text in a systematic and orderly fashion. It's always important to state clear transitions from your proposition and main points, as you develop subpoints, in order to keep the text unified and flowing together. Clear progression also involves working through, explaining, and repeating the text of the Bible. Again, support each point with the text. Gentlemen, we must spend time in the Word – not just *talking* about the Word. Show people the Bible text and progress through it in a clear fashion. Let the people see the Biblical text with their own eyes so the Holy Spirit can use the Scripture to change their hearts (Eph. 6:17; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16). There is power when a preacher systematically moves through the text of the Bible (Heb. 4:12) rather than just commenting about a text. There is too much surface preaching today. Preachers need to dig and find the gold. Put some meat on your outline. Remember that the people need both preaching and teaching (Acts 15:35) as you move through the homiletical outline. Blessed are the balanced preachers!

5. Clear presentation (sharing truth in a clear-cut fashion)

If you can't state it clearly, then no person is going to understand what you are saying. Make your presentation of truth clear. Exegete and explain the Bible text in a clear expositional fashion so people will come away saying, "So that is what this text means." Explain the meaning of theological words ("redemption"), harder words ("concupiscence"), archaic words ("conversation"), and even those words that you might think everyone might understand. Be specific and don't preach in circles or generalities. Again, clear thinking means clear preaching! Take time to think through the text, the purpose of the text, and develop a message that makes sense. Avoid fuzzy thinking and aim for precision. Don't wander or ramble without a definite purpose. Don't clutter your message. It's better your people grab hold of several meaty truths than become lost in a maze of sermonic material. Sufficient for each text is the truth thereof! Keep your preaching within the bounds of what the text says and what the people can receive at one sitting. Remember the old adage: "The mind can absorb only as much as the seat can endure." A sermon must not be eternal to be immortal! And lastly, never assume that your listeners know more about spiritual things than they really do. Spiritually illiteracy abounds. Teach them.

Nehemiah 8:8 is a good definition of expository (expositional) preaching, or preaching that expounds and explains a text of Scripture: "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Dr. Harry Ironside received his greatest compliment from a seven-year-old little girl. She said, "Mr. Ironside, I like your preaching because even I can understand what you are saying!" Almost every passage in the Bible could be approached with a basic four-point outline: the setting, the wording, the meaning, and the living. These four points can give you a helpful analysis of any Bible passage; however, they should not be used as a homiletical outline. How boring! Preaching through texts of the Bible and entire Books of the Bible ("precept upon precept; line upon line" - Isa. 28:13) involves hard study and work (Ecc. 12:12), but it's personally rewarding (Jer. 15:16), and is how the saints grow and mature (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:14).

One minister said this about his personal study: "I use a system called *planned neglect*. I plan to neglect everything else until my studying is done." Of course, in ministry it does not always work out this way, but we must plan study time and be very dogmatic about missing our precious study in God's Word. A chef must take time to prepare the meal and meals served out of boxes are not the same as homemade meals! If we are only "an evangelical errand boy" throughout the week and neglect our study, then we are forgetting our calling. **"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).** The goal of understanding and properly presenting truth is this; we don't want to be ashamed because we have mishandled and misrepresented the text ("not to be ashamed" - 2 Tim. 2:15). Not to be ashamed! Get this truth in your heart and allow it to stick.

Preaching or Teaching?

People have often asked me what is the difference between preaching and teaching (Acts 15:35; 28:31). This is a good question. Preaching and teaching are much alike in content and are distinguished primarily by the nature of presentation. *Teaching explains the message whereas preaching proclaims the message.* Preaching is the public proclamation of the truth, intended primarily to move the will of the hearers to respond (admonition and exhortation). Teaching is directed more at causing the mind to understand (illumination and explanation). Often the two functions overlap and are indistinguishable, as they are in many passages of Scripture (Matt. 4:23; Acts 5:42; Col. 1:28). This is because all good preaching has elements of explanation (teaching) and all good teaching should include some preaching or exhortation (“teach and exhort” - 1 Tim. 6:2). In short, when we “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2) we will also teach the word or provide people with “sound doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:3) or teaching (Matt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:24; Heb. 5:12), or else we will have no message to proclaim! Without teaching (explanation) there will be no basis to a man’s preaching (proclamation). However, preaching is primarily linked to exhortation, which means the preacher’s job is to urge and counsel people to make changes in their lives, as he provides them with sound instruction (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:15).

Barnes says that an exhorter is: “One who presents warnings and promises of God to excite men to the discharge of their duty.” The preacher as an exhorter means he is aiming for the heart and human will of the person. He is seeking to illicit a response and change in the hearer. It might be concluded that teaching systematizes and explains the truth but preaching with its exhortation calls believers to obey and follow the truth, to live as Christians are supposed to live - consistent with God’s revealed will. The teacher brings a person to say, “I see that.” The preacher, as an exhorter, brings a person to say, “I’ll do that.” In many servants of Christ, these gifts (preaching, teaching, and exhortation) are uniquely and beautifully blended. **Preaching is proclaiming; teaching is explaining.**

In summary, moving through a text of the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, explaining and defining the meaning of words, considering grammatical construction, seeing the relationship of the text to the context and book (exegesis), and *teaching* God’s Word in order to unravel and explain the exact meaning of a text, along with confidently and boldly *preaching* or proclaiming the truth of a text to change the lives of people (exposition), while presenting it in a clear and understandable fashion (homiletics) is the speaker’s sole responsibility.

Conclusions

The conclusion of the sermon should not be stated in vague generalities. Challenge your people to respond. It must be personal. You may not always see the response immediately but you can know God is working. As you close, repeat

the proposition in a different way to tie the sermon together. Remember that a vague proposition leads to a vague conclusion, and worst of all, vague blessings. The conclusion is your last chance to drive home the key message of your sermon.

Here is a word of warning. Stop when you're through. The conclusion should conclude! Do not press on after a good stopping point. William Jennings Bryan's mother leveled with him, after an evening's address, with the painful words: "Will, you missed several good opportunities to sit down." Don't drag out your conclusion. Also, don't tell people you are closing. They just might stop listening to you! Don't say, "In conclusion." You are not writing a book but preaching the Word. Also, remember the closer you get to the closing and invitational part of a sermon, the harder the devil is going to be working. Therefore, be clear in your conclusion. You must lead people to a decision based upon the purpose of the sermon and exposition of the Bible passage. Conclusions should be well prepared. Jay Adams states: "What you say in the conclusion is what people usually take away with them."

Invitations

Something needs to be said about this. The writer of this homiletical treatise was saved after walking down an aisle. A very nice man pointed me to Christ. I will never forget the day! However, we must remember that people do not need to walk down an aisle, in order to be saved, or make a newfound commitment to Christ within their Christian lives (John 6:47). During the early church the unsaved were pressed for personal decisions (Acts 2:38; 8:35-37) with the direct result of being baptized. God's people were also commanded to change their lives (Rev. 2:5; 3:19). There was definitely some outwardly display of testimony promoted by the early church in relationship to baptism and the testimony of forgiveness (Acts 22:16). However, we don't find the altar call method being used by the apostles or preachers of the early assemblies. *The preaching was actually the altar call and not the invitation at the end of a service.* On the Day of Pentecost Peter pressed people to be saved and then identify with their salvation experience by being publically baptized (Acts 2:38). In Acts 8:35-37 a recent convert won through evangelism was baptized following his salvation experience. *There was no altar call but there was a follow up call.* To be sure, a person must "come" to Christ in order to be saved (Rev. 22:17; Matt. 11:28; Isa. 1:18) but this is the "coming related to faith" and not the "coming related to walking down an aisle." Coming to Christ is a metaphor for simple faith. It involves inward decision (Rom. 10:10) but not outward action.

One may read thousands of pages of the history of the Christian Church without ever finding a single reference to the "old-fashioned altar call" before the 19th century. Most Christians are surprised to learn that history, before the time of Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), knows nothing of this type of invitation. Charles Finney was among the first evangelists to call people forward during a service.

He defended the practice by saying it served the same purpose as baptism in the days of the apostles. But he was putting the cart before the horse; baptism is a sign that one has been converted, not a prerequisite for conversion (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 18:8).

Charles Spurgeon invited men to come to Christ, not to an altar. Listen to him invite men to Jesus Christ: "Before you leave this place breathe an earnest prayer to God, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner. Lord, I need to be saved. Save me. I call upon Thy name...Lord, I am guilty, I deserve Thy wrath. Lord, I cannot save myself. Lord, I would have a new heart and a right spirit, but what can I do? Lord, I can do nothing, come and work in me to do of Thy good pleasure.'" The invitations that Spurgeon gave directed men to Christ and not necessarily to the aisles. George Whitefield's sermons were long invitations to men to come to Christ, not to an altar. The same may be said of the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and many others in the past, who were blessed with a harvest of many souls.

Although the apostles, early church, and history as a whole, does not advocate altar calls, I am thankful for the time I walked down the aisle and was saved. In short, there is no definitive Biblical evidence that the early church actually used altar calls but this does not mean they are necessarily wrong. There is no evidence that the early church held Sunday School classes, but this does not make Sunday School a violation of any Biblical principles. Therefore, when altar calls are incorporated at the close of a preacher's message, he should never use human gimmicks, manipulation, and high pressure to get people to walk down an aisle. These are fleshly maneuvers that will not bring forth a true harvest ("the flesh profiteth nothing" - John 6:63).

Lewis Sperry Chafer once said this:

"It may be conceded that genuine results are sometimes obtained even where misleading methods are employed; but there may be great harm done as well. Far too little has been said on this point."

Men, use discretion when employing an altar call at the close of your message. Don't send the message that a person must do something (walk down an aisle) in order to be saved. Remind them that they can be saved right where they are in their seats. Invite them to come to Christ during the message. We would rather see a person get saved, while he was sitting in his seat, than to know that he will die and go to hell, because he was afraid to walk the aisle. Some people may be in hell because preachers were so one-sided in their invitations (never inviting men to be saved in their seats), while others are in hell because they were manipulated to walk an aisle without true repentance (Luke 8:13). There is a Christ-centered invitation and there is a carnal invitation. Gentlemen, be wise!

Also, we must always remember that the success of our preaching is not gauged by human response but by personal growth and change in the lives of people

(Acts 20:32). Don't forget that many people "walk the isle" in their heart, as they seek to commit the message to their personal lives. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you need people walking an isle to confirm the success of your preaching and message. Some preachers get caught up in the "numbers game" and the "success syndrome" that is often equated with church attendance, salvation experiences, and baptisms. As a result, they become discouraged, when they don't have immediate and outward visible results from their preaching. The harvest is not at the end of the sermon! Gentlemen, trust God and commit the results of your preaching to God's promise, which is found in Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Sermon Discourses

There are several types of sermons which can be preached.

A. Topical Sermons

When presenting a topical sermon you must begin with a general theme and use this as a springboard for turning to various texts in the Bible that are related to the theme or subject. The topical sermon is built around some particular subject. The preacher gathers what the Bible says about a particular subject and then brings the material together in one outline and sermon.

Examples of Topical Sermons:

Topic: "Reflecting on Jesus"

Proposition: Our hearts should be stirred when reflecting on Jesus.

Transition: There are six areas of reflection to consider.

1. The love of Jesus (John 13:1)
2. The face of Jesus (Rev. 20:11)
3. The tears of Jesus (John 11:35)
4. The cross of Jesus (John 19:17-18)
5. The blood of Jesus (1 John 1:7)
6. The name of Jesus (Acts 4:12)

Topic: "Living the Christian Life"

Proposition: Are you living the Christian life?

Transition: There are seven areas related to the Christian life.

1. The disciplined life (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
2. The consecrated life (Rom. 12:1-2)
3. The contented life (Phil. 4:11)
4. The prayerful life (Col. 4:2)

5. The abundant life (John 10:10)
6. The restful life (Ps. 46:10)
7. The victorious life (Eph. 6:10)

Topic: “The Ability of God”

Proposition: God is able to do anything.

Transition: There are five examples of God’s abilities.

1. He saves (Heb. 7:25)
2. He keeps (John 10:28-29)
3. He helps (Heb. 2:18)
4. He comforts (2 Cor. 1:3)
5. He enables (2 Cor. 12:9)

Topic: “Precious Things”

Proposition: The precious things of life are most important.

Transition: There are four precious things related to Christian living.

1. Precious trials (1 Pet. 1:7)
2. Precious blood (1 Pet. 1:19)
3. Precious Lord (1 Pet. 2:7)
4. Precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4)

Note: When topical sermons are used the texts should always be placed within the proper context of their books and sound interpretation and exegesis must also be used. However, when preaching topically, the preacher will often bring out one major point that is related to his subject, which he has been dealing with in her sermon.

Doctrinal sermons would normally fall under the category of a topical sermon. For instance, we could choose the subject of redemption and select a few key passages to develop the outline. Biographical sermons of Bible characters could also fall under this category of sermons, since a Bible character often appears in several texts of Scripture. Also, preaching a series of sermons on the “One Another” sayings found in the Bible, or teaching a series on “Principles of Proper Conduct” from various texts of Scripture, would also fall under the category of topical sermons. It must be understood that even though a preacher is working topically through various verses, he should still handle the appropriate texts in their context, exegete them properly, and give the overall sense of the verse. Topical preaching is no excuse for improper teaching and preaching.

***Lesson:** Prepare two topical sermons based upon one general theme or topic of your choosing.

B. Textual Sermons

In a topical sermon we begin with a theme and move to other Scriptures to support the theme; however, in a textual sermon we begin with one text, or a brief portion of Scripture, and use this text to support the sermon. In a textual sermon the main divisions are derived from one single passage of Scripture and the text itself provides the theme for the sermon. Of course, this does not mean we cannot draw from other portions of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13) while developing the main divisions of the text. However, each point should be fully explained and seen within the original text. We should always link the original text to any other passage that we might investigate.

A textual sermon is based on one or two verses from the Bible. It involves exposition of the entire text. The textual outline should be centered on one main thought in the text and the main divisions must be derived from the text in order to amplify or develop the one theme. More details on the formation of these sermons will be given later.

Examples of Textual Sermons:

Ezra 7:10

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

Theme or Title: “The Most Important Book in Your Life”

Proposition: The most important book in your life is God’s Word.

Transition: This is illustrated in three ways:

1. We must be set on knowing God’s Word (“seek the law of the Lord”)
2. We must be stirred to obey God’s Word (“to do it”)
3. We must be ready to study God’s Word (“teach in Israel statutes and judgments”).

The preacher should derive his main points from the one verse, even though he may use a few verses throughout his sermon to illustrate the points. However, always return to the main text and keep your progression of thought moving through the text. Don’t commit the error of beginning with a text, departing from it, and never returning to it. If you roam around the Bible with disconnected thoughts then your people will be disconnected from you!

Isaiah 55:7

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

Theme or Title: “The Blessing of Forgiveness”

Proposition: God will forgive sinners.

Transition: Two observations are seen in this text.

1. The requirement for forgiveness
 - a. Remorse (“Let the wicked forsake his way”)
 - b. Rethinking (“the unrighteous man his thoughts”)
 - c. Returning (“let him return unto the Lord”)

This requirement speaks of repentance (see also Revelation 2:5).

2. The results of forgiveness
 - a. God will show His mercy toward us (“and he will have mercy upon him”).
 - b. God will shower His pardon upon us (“for he will abundantly pardon”).

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Theme or Title: “God Loves You!”

Proposition: The loving arms of God want to embrace you today.

Transition: God’s love is presented in four ways.

1. The extent of God’s love (“God so loved the world”)
2. The expression of God’s love (“that he gave his only begotten son”)
3. The offer of God’s love (“that whosoever believeth in him”)
4. The promise of God’s love (“should not perish but have everlasting life”)

You should emphasize the grammatical structure of this text by noticing how the word “that” (result or purpose clause) is used several times and is connected with the previous thought about God’s love. Everything grammatically relates back to God’s love. Therefore, you should build the sermon around the theme of God’s love.

You can also preach a *series* of textual sermons that are related to one theme, such as prophecy, or the end times. It should be noted that sometimes there can be an overlapping of topical and textual sermons. You may pick a topic, such as prophecy, and then go to specific texts that support the prophetic topic, and faithfully explore and explain these texts of Scripture. The main thing is to keep the texts in their context, bring out the teaching of the passages, and preach the meaning of the texts to the people with zeal and fervor, in an orderly and homiletical fashion, and ultimately apply the texts to the lives of the listeners.

Examples of topical preaching that include textual preaching.

Theme or Title: “The Rapture”

Proposition: Jesus is ready to return in the Rapture.

Transition: There are three truths related to the Rapture.

1. The revelation of the Rapture (John 14:1-3)
2. The timing of the Rapture (Rev. 3:10).
3. The events of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

Theme or Title: “God’s Secret”

Proposition: God wants to share a secret with us.

Transition: The secret of God is revealed in three ways.

1. The Secret of Confidence (Matthew 14:28-29)
2. The Secret of Peace (Isaiah 26:3)
3. The Secret of Satisfaction (John 7:37)

***Lesson:** Prepare a textual sermon from 1 Corinthians 15:58 and 2 Cor. 9:6-7.

The Gospel or evangelistic sermon normally falls under the category of a textual sermon. A preacher can take a specific Gospel or salvation passage and preach an evangelistic sermon from the text. A doctrinal or theological message can also fall under this category. Textual sermons should always be interpreted within the proper framework of their context. Textual sermons do not give us “textual license” to commit wrong exegesis and exposition. We must always be honest with what the text is teaching. In fact, both topical and textual sermons should be subject to the expositional process, even if they use less exposition than a larger discourse on the Scriptures.

Do not neglect preaching the entire meaning of Bible texts. However, there is a place and time when the preacher might develop some simple “life principles” from several Bible passages and use these basic principles (rules of conduct and living) in his sermon delivery. These are sometimes called “devotional” studies and “seed thoughts” from the Bible. There is nothing wrong with doing this at times and it can prove immensely valuable. God’s Word is not bound (2 Tim. 2:9) and He uses truth whenever, wherever, and in whatever form it is presented (2 Tim. 3:16). Andrew Telford said: “The best way to preach is to preach every way.” This is true in the sense that it provides some variety to our preaching and for our listeners. Mixing in some topical, biographical, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and “principle-type” messages will give us some breaks between textual and book studies. Nevertheless, we must beware of becoming bound to only “topical preaching” or “principled preaching” and not teach what an entire passage says and means (2 Tim. 2:15). There is richness and great reward when exegeting and declaring an entire text in the flow of the writer’s thinking. This brings us to our next type of sermon.

C. Expository Sermons

Donald Grey Barnhouse said, “Expository preaching is the art of explaining the text of the Word of God ...” All textual preaching is in some sense expositional, since the preacher must explain and clearly communicate the meaning of a text to his listeners. Some have termed smaller textual sermons as *general exposition*, since it involves preaching expositionally (an expository sermon), on one or two verses. However, expository or expositional sermons get their name from preaching extended portions of Bible passages, which provide the listener with the meaning and understanding of a larger portion of God’s Word, within the scope of an entire Bible Book. This has been termed *systematic exposition* since the preacher moves through extended portions of the Bible in a systematic fashion.

If a preacher expounds on a passage of Scripture, such as 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, he will treat the Bible in an expositional manner. Instead of expounding or explaining one or two texts of Scripture, the expositor moves through a more extended portion of Bible verses. Many times the expositor will move through entire Books of the Bible, explaining the continuity of the texts, how they link together, and the general theme that they share. Since this involves major exposition or explanation of Bible texts within the framework of larger Bible passages and entire Books of the Bible, it is often termed specifically as “expository preaching.” It’s referred to as being a “pure expositor.” Andrew Blackwood describes the expository sermon as being based on “a Bible passage longer than two or three consecutive verses.” However, exposition is not really determined by the length of a passage but the *manner of treatment* of the passage. Nevertheless, it is true that a longer discourse in the Bible, whether a narrative or prophetic passage, will involve more exposition. When the preacher moves throughout an entire Book of the Bible and deals with an extended portion of Scripture, he will perform extensive exposition or explanation of Bible verses in their appropriate context, setting, and grammar. He will connect entire passages together grammatically, systematically, and analytically, verse by verse, providing a lengthy exposition and discourse of the Bible. Hence, the meaning of “expository preaching” is often assigned to the longer sermon since it deals with the Bible more extensively.

The longer expository sermon is a very effective form of preaching, above the other types of preaching (topical and textual), since the preacher is explaining a large portion of God’s Word as the Holy Spirit wrote it (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16) and put it together. The Divine Author has written the Bible systematically for a reason, which is to communicate its complete meaning to us in a clear and orderly fashion (1 Cor. 14:40). Expository preaching of larger Bible texts and books provide the benefit of accurately communicating the message of God, as He communicated it. When expounding or explaining an entire Book study, or passage of Scripture, the listeners begin to see God’s whole mind and purpose for writing a book and the continuity of God’s thinking and teaching.

Expository preaching through Bible books keep us from experiencing “the hop, skip, and jump” approach to studying the Bible. This type of preaching also provides us with an invaluable and endless source of sermon material. It keeps us from “preacher pitfalls” such as getting in a rut and saying the same thing in different ways (the monotony monster). It keeps preachers from leaving a text and never returning! It keeps preachers from swimming around in the sermon and only periodically visiting the text. It will prevent us from riding hobby-horses and provide a balanced diet for our people. It will also keep us digging out new truths from Scripture and bring great variety to our preaching. Preachers will stay fresh in their preaching as they discover new truth and make it known to their people.

Warren Wiersbe wrote:

“The preacher must be excited by the Bible; he must move into new pastures with his flock; he must grow with them if he hopes to have them go with him”

The expository or expositional preaching of larger sections or texts of the Bible in their appropriate setting or context, and preaching through entire Book studies of the Bible, will result in a Bible-taught and maturing congregation (Heb. 5:14). It will keep people from Biblical illiteracy. This type of preaching will enable us to preach and teach “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), as He has revealed in His Word. An old proverb says, “Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” Expository preaching not only gets the preacher fishing but the people fishing!

If we are going to preach the Bible expositionally, we will study the Bible exegetically (using exegesis), which involves studying the syntax or sentence structure and grammar of the Bible. *Our homiletical outline must correspond to the grammatical construction of a text.* For example, a major sermon point should never be reflected in an incomplete phrase or dependent clause, since these look back to the main subject and verb of the sentence. Rather, the main points in the outline should be reflected in the sentences and what modifies the sentences and main subjects should become subpoints.

Structural Diagrams

It’s paramount to see the way God wrote His Word. Our motto must once again be: “God’s Word – God’s way.” Therefore, creating some basic grammatical layout is important, so we can see the way God’s thoughts are linked together.

A lengthy but important quote is provided by Dr. Gerhard Raske, author of the Grammatical Blueprint Bible: “The uniqueness, importance and benefits of a concise, grammatical graphic layout of the Greek New Testament is without parallel. A true Biblical ministry involves the preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God (Matt. 28: 18-20, Acts 20:27). This is best accomplished through exegetical, expository preaching and teaching of ‘what saith the scripture’

(Romans 4:3; Galatians 4:30) which, in turn, is based on the literal function and use of the language of the text. The literal understanding or interpretation of God's Word consists of the grammatical, historical and theological principles of interpretation as explained in hermeneutics.

"Sentence diagrams are grammatical pictures, or graphical grammatical blueprints of each sentence. It is a means of placing the words, phrases and clauses of a sentence into a pattern, so that their grammatical and syntactical functions can more easily be seen. "A picture is worth a thousand words" according to the old Chinese proverb. Diagram pictures help us to link God's thoughts together.

"Diagramming helps the serious Bible student to see and to recognize:

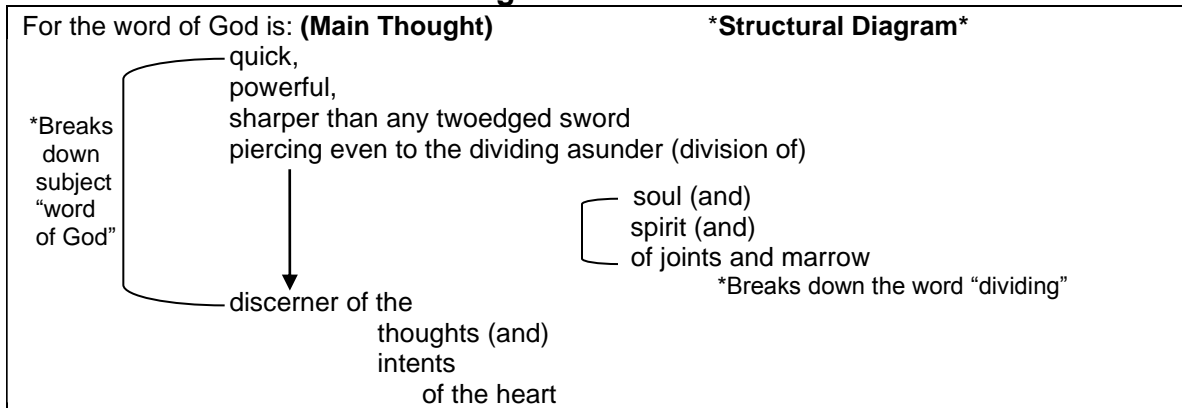
- The main thought of the sentence (main subject and verb)
- The subordinate thought or thoughts of the sentence (subordinate clause(s))
- The modifying and connective relationships within a sentence
- The thought flow and all the structures of emphasis within each sentence and ultimately within each paragraph
- The grammatical setting of each grammatical unit in the sentence
- The true Biblical inspired outline of each sentence or paragraph.

"The results of proper diagramming will enable the serious Bible student to have a complete and clear understanding of the meaning of each sentence. As a result, he can do correct exegetical, expository preaching and teaching without relying on someone else's grammatical analysis which may or may not be correct. Many expositions are not complete or are incorrectly analyzed because the passage has not first been diagrammed by the expositor."

Some expositors will take the time to use structural diagram charts, so they can visually see the syntax, or the way words are used grammatically and interrelated to one another in a verse, or several verses of Scripture. However, one can create a basic structural diagram without using the more extensive and sometimes complicated charts. Notice what the main sentence and thought is in the diagrammed verse below and how everything else modifies and looks back to the main thought. Breaking down the sentence is the key to correct exegetical and homiletical preaching. **Gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to exegesis of the English Bible!** Below are some examples of textual sermons complete with grammatical exegesis (the breakdown of the sentence).

Hebrews 4:12 says: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Exegesis for Sermon



You develop your outline (major points and sub-points) from the grammatical construction, as you view how certain words and phrases modify the main subject and sentence. Following grammatical breaks is how you generate an exegetical outline based upon the rules of syntax or grammar. Observation of sentence structure and clear breaks from one thought to the next is vitally important to creating a proper outline that corresponds to the actual text. The homiletical outline of Hebrews 4:12 would then proceed out of the correct grammatical breakdown of the sentence.

God's Word is described in four ways. —> **Main Transition**

1. It's living ("quick")
2. It's energetic ("powerful")
3. It's cutting ("sharper" and "piercing")

It's cutting in two ways —> **Sub-point Transition**

- a. It distinguishes what is of the soul (fleshly)
- b. It distinguishes what is of the spirit (godly)

(Illustration: "as the joints and marrow" are distinguished inside the human body)

4. It's critical ("discerner")

It's critical: —> **Short Transition**

- a. Of what we think ("thoughts")
- b. Of what we desire ("intents")

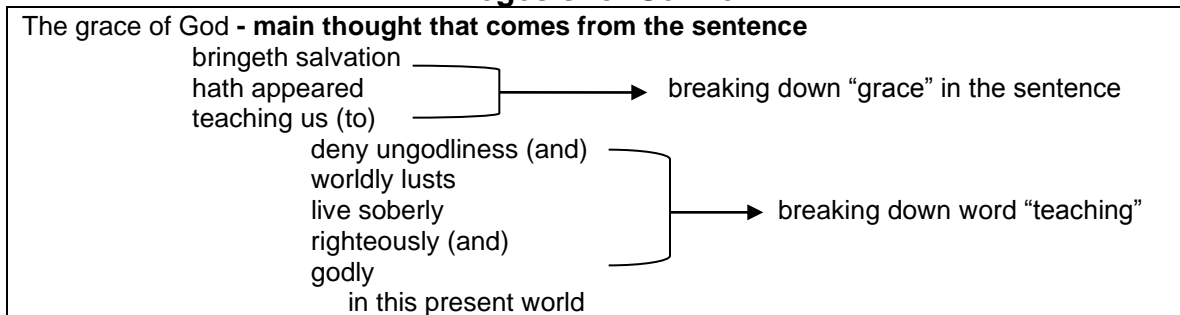
Now you are preaching expositively and grammatically by linking everything together in the way it was originally written by the author. Now you are really preaching! It's exciting to preach truth the way God has written and recorded it.

Making the right grammatical connections and seeing the flow of a sentence brings out the correct meaning of the text.

Below are some examples of textual sermons complete with grammatical exegesis (the breakdown of the sentence) which is then transformed into an accurate homiletical outline. A theme, proposition (declaration statement), and primary transition will be given for each sermon, along with the breakdown of the main points, main point transitions, sub-points, and sub-point transitions.

Titus 2:11-12: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

Exegesis for Sermon



Theme or Title: Amazing Grace

Proposition: God’s grace is amazing!

Primary Transition: God’s grace is amazing in three ways:

- I. His grace saves us (“bringeth salvation”) → **First Point of Sermon**
- II. His grace seeks us (“hath appeared”) → **Second Point of Sermon**
- III. His grace schools us (“teacheth us”) → **Third Point of Sermon**

There are two ways God’s grace teaches us: → **Main Point Transition**

A. Negatively → **Sub-point of Sermon**

This is seen in two ways: → **Sub-point Transition**

- 1. When we deny ungodliness (“ungodliness”)
- 2. When we deny lustfulness (“worldly lust”)

B. Positively → **Sub-point of Sermon**

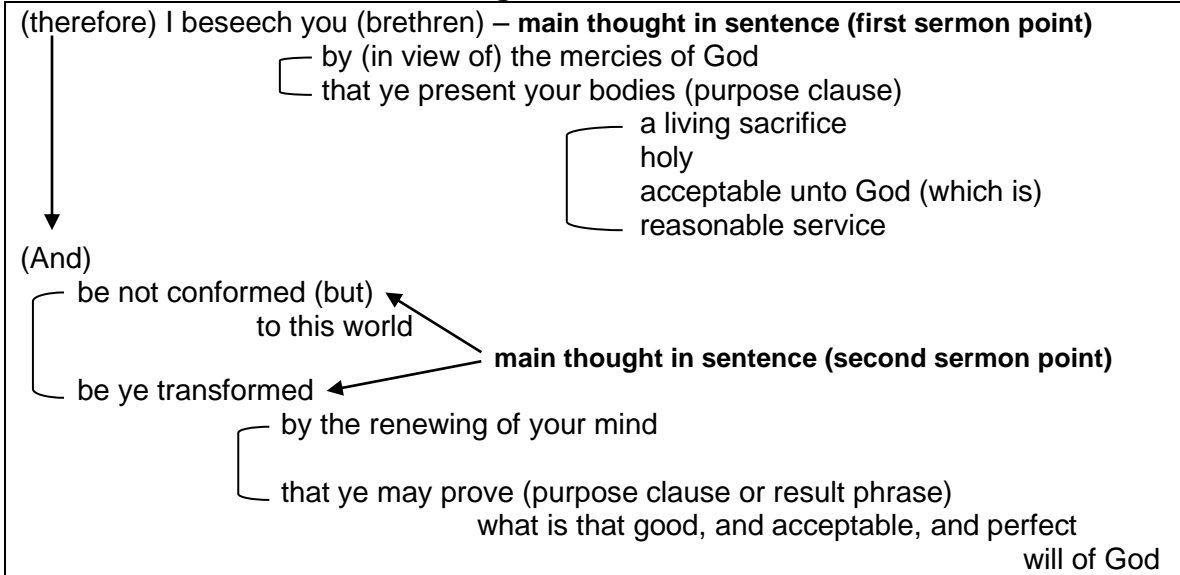
There are two positive results. → **Sub-point Transition**

- 1. So we can live right in the world (“righteously”)
- 2. So we can be like God in the world (“godly”)

Romans 12:1-2

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Exegesis for Sermon



Pick out the sentences in your text. In this case, notice the two phrases (“by the mercies of God” and “that ye present your bodies”) which modify the main thought in the sentence – “I beseech you” (Rom. 12:1). These two phrases will become the sub-points of your first main point. Notice also how the second sentence has two main thoughts clearly presented – “be not conformed” and “be ye transformed” (Rom. 12:2). These will become the sub-points in the second major point of your sermon. Let’s visually look at the breakdown.

Theme or Title: “A Living Sacrifice” (Romans 12:1-2)

Proposition: God wants us to surrender our lives to Him.

Primary Transition: There are five life changing truths about surrender.

- I. The request to surrender = “beseech” (vs. 1a) → **First Point of Sermon**
- II. The motivation for surrender = mercies of God (vs. 1b) → **Second Point**
- III. The vehicle of surrender = “your body” (vs. 1c) → **Third Point**
- IV. The description of surrender (1d) → **Fourth Point**

There are four descriptions of a surrendered body. → **Main Point Transition**

1. It’s sacrificial (“living sacrifice”)
2. It’s sanctified (“holy”)
3. It’s satisfactory (“acceptable to God”)
4. It’s sensible (“reasonable service”)

IV. The result of surrender – vs. 2 —→ **Fifth Point**

Two results are seen. —→ **Main Point Transition**

- a. We refuse to conform (2a) – We are CHALLENGED
- b. We determine to transform (“but be ye transformed”) – we are CHANGED!

Two observations are seen about transformation. —→ **Sub-point Transition**

- 1. The way of transformation is explained (“renewing of the mind”)
- 2. The purpose of transformation is explained (“that ye may prove ... will of God”)

God’s will is summarized as: —→ **Sub Point Transition**

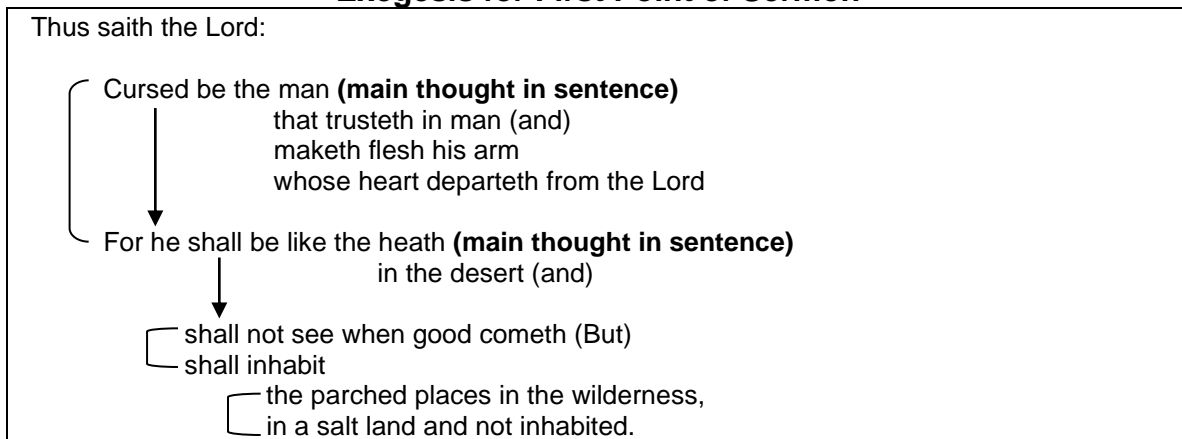
- a. Something that benefits us (“good”)
- b. Something that pleases us (“acceptable”)
- c. Something that is best for us (“perfect”)

Now let’s look at another text and its grammatical breakdown.

Jeremiah 17:5-6 (Develops First Point)

“Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.”

Exegesis for First Point of Sermon



Theme or Title: “Blighted or Blessed?”

Proposition: You can experience the Lord’s blessing or curse in life.

Primary Transition: This is explained by looking at two different people.

Here would be the first part of the homiletical outline based upon the correct breakdown of the sentence.

I. The man who is cursed (“Cursed be the man”) —→ **First Point**

Consider: —→ **Simple Transition**

A. The reason for His curse —→ **Sub-point**

A three-fold reason is stated: —→ **Sub-point Transition**

1. He trusts in other men (“trusteth in man”)
2. He relies on human strength (“maketh flesh his arm”)
3. He possesses a wayward heart (“whose heart departeth from the Lord”)

B. The explanation of his curse —→ **Sub-point**

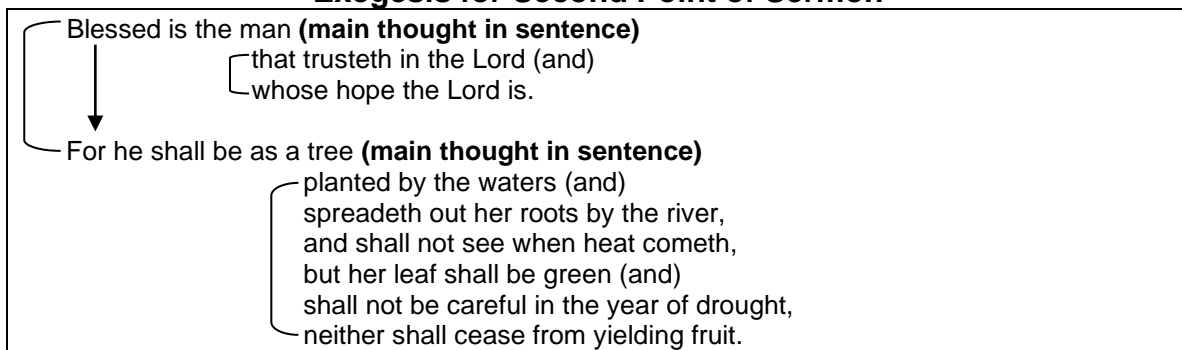
His curse is explained in three ways: —→ **Sub-point Transition**

1. As a desert shrub (“heath in the desert”)
2. As a disoriented man (“shall not see when good cometh”)
3. As a dry place (“inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited”)

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (**Develops Second Point**)

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.”

Exegesis for Second Point of Sermon



II. The man who is blessed (“Blessed is the man”) —→ **Second Point**

A. The reason for his blessing —→ **Sub-point**

There are two reasons given for his blessing: —→ **Sub-point Transition**

1. He has faith (“that trusteth in the Lord”)
2. He has hope (“whose hope the Lord is”)

B. The explanation of His blessing —→ **Sub-point**

His blessing is explained as: —→ **Sub-point Transition**

1. Supply (“tree planted by the waters)
2. Stability (“spreadeth out her roots by the river”
“and shall not see when heat cometh”)
3. Superabundance (“her leaf shall be green”
“shall not be careful in the year of drought”
“neither shall cease from yielding fruit”)

Now you can put the entire outline together for Jeremiah 17:5-8 since we have broken it down according to the sentence structure.

I. The man who is cursed (“Cursed be the man”)

A. The reason for His curse

A three-fold reason is stated:

1. He trusts in other men (“trusteth in man”)
2. He relies on human strength (“maketh flesh his arm”)
3. He possesses a wayward heart (“whose heart departeth from the Lord”)

B. The explanation of his curse

His curse is explained in three ways:

1. As a desert shrub (“heath in the desert”)
2. As a disoriented man (“shall not see when good cometh”)
3. As a dry place (“the parched places in the wilderness,
in a salt land and not inhabited”)

II. The man who is blessed (“Blessed is the man”)

A. The reason for his blessing

There are two reasons given for his blessing:

1. He has faith (“that trusteth in the Lord”)
2. He has hope (“whose hope the Lord is”)

B. The explanation of His blessing

His blessing is explained as:

1. Supply (“planted by the waters”)
2. Stability (“spreadeth out her roots by the river”
“and shall not see when heat cometh”)
3. Superabundance (“her leaf shall be green”
“shall not be careful in the year of drought”
“neither shall cease from yielding fruit”)

Now let’s state a theme, proposition, and transition for the next sermon from 1 Corinthians 15:1-9 and then support everything by the grammatical exegesis.

Theme or Title: “The Gospel Truth” (1 Corinthians 15:1-9)

Proposition: Have you ever heard the Gospel message?

Primary Transition: There are two fundamental observations about the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (**Verses Supporting First Point in Sermon**)

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

Exegesis for First Point in Sermon

<p>(Moreover) brethren, I declare unto you the gospel (main thought for first point in sermon)</p> <div style="margin-left: 100px;"> <p>which I preached unto you, which also ye have received (and) wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved,</p> <div style="margin-left: 100px;"> <p>if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain</p> </div> </div>

There are two fundamental observations about the Gospel.

I. The results of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-2) → **First Point of Sermon**

Four results are stated. → **Secondary Transition:**

- A. It was presented to the people (“I declare unto you” and “which I preached unto you”)
- B. It was received by the people (“which also ye have received”)
- C. It granted assurance to the people (“wherein ye stand”)
- D. It gave salvation to the people (“By which also ye are saved”)

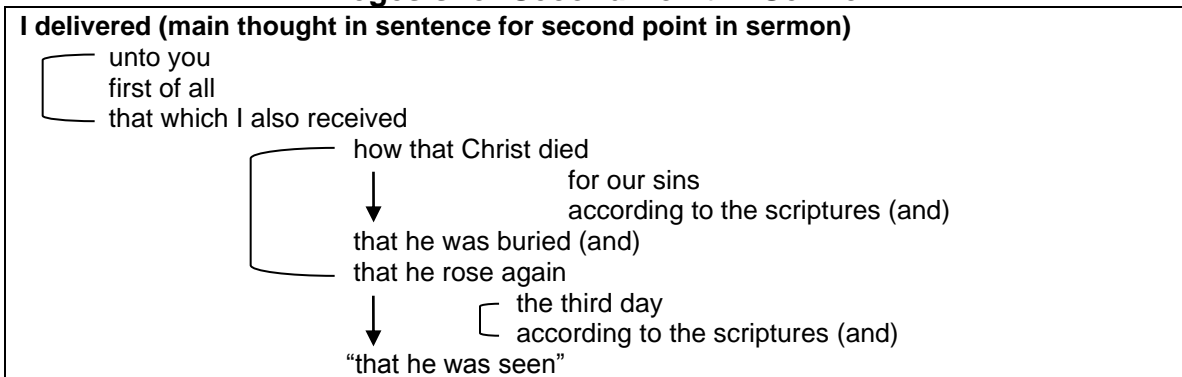
People can know they are saved: → **Sub-point Transition**

1. If they stick to the truth (“if ye keep in memory ... preached unto you”)
2. If they believe the truth (“unless ye have believed in vain”)

1 Corinthians 15:3-9 (**Verses Supporting Second Point in Sermon**)

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

Exegesis for Second Point in Sermon



II. The deliverance of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-9) → **Second Point of Sermon**

A. The way it was delivered (vs. 3a) – “For I delivered” → **Sub-point**

Consider: → **A simple Sub-point Transition**

1. The recipients of the Gospel (“unto you” and “first all”)
2. The revelation of the Gospel (“that which I also received”)

B. The content of the delivery (“how that” – vv. 3b-9) → **Sub-point**

The content of the Gospel is explained in four ways: → **Sub-point Transition**

1. Christ’s death (“Christ died for our sins”) - *Paying* the penalty for our sins!

Consider two matters about Christ’s death: → **Sub-point Transition**

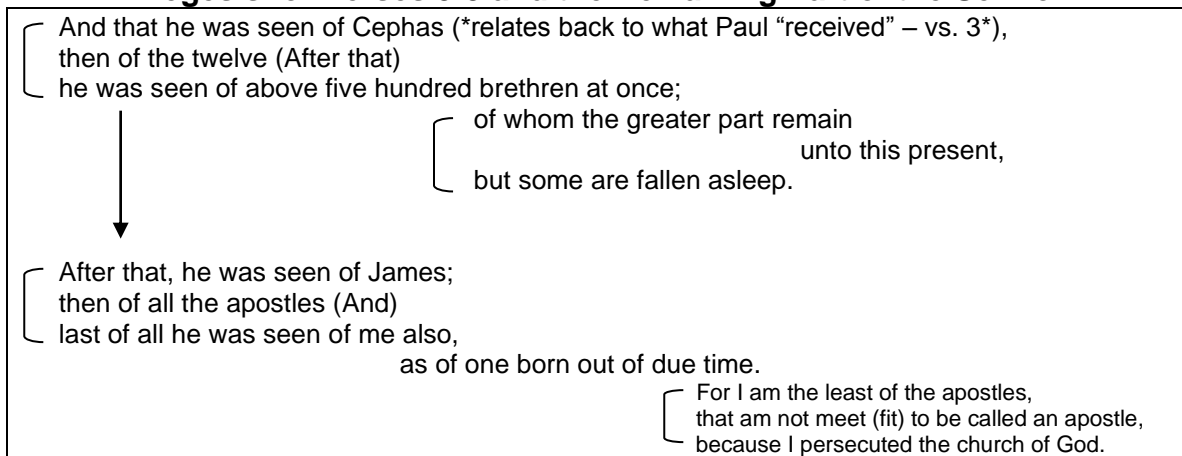
- a. It was sacrificial (“for our sins”)
 - b. It was Scriptural (“according to the Scriptures”)
2. Christ’s burial (“that he was buried”) - *Proving* the finality of His death!
 3. Christ’s resurrection (“he rose again”) - *Providing* evidence that the Father accepted His sacrifice!

Notice: → **Simple Sub-point Transition**

- a. It was specific (“on the third day”)
 - b. It was Scriptural (“according to the Scriptures”)
4. Christ’s appearances (“And that he was seen”) – *Producing* necessary verification of His resurrection!

We now want to develop the fourth point with our remaining exegesis. The final part of the message (“And that he was seen”) looks back to what Paul “received” (vs. 3). Remember that everything in a text looks back to something else.

Exegesis for Verses 5-9 and the Remaining Part of the Sermon



There were six resurrection appearances of Christ: → **Sub-point Transition**

1. Peter
2. The twelve
3. Five hundred Brethren

Note: → **Simple Sub-point Transition**

- a. Some were still living (“greater part remain”)
 - b. Some were sleeping (“fallen asleep” – death)
4. James

5. Apostles
6. Paul

Paul's experience is described as an untimely birth ("born out of season").

It was an untimely for two reasons: —> **Sub-point Transition**

- a. Because of his rank ("least of the apostles")
- b. Because of his reason ("not meet to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God")

It's your turn to break down the sentence grammatically. It's not really hard to do. Pick your sentence or sentences out and see how words modify the previous thought and are connected together. Use the empty graph to do your exegesis.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins (inward parts of mans being), even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

Now form a homiletical outline based upon your exegesis of the text.

Now you are really preaching! You have exegeted the text grammatically and are giving an outline according to the correct word order of the original author. This is

good expository preaching! Try one more for the road. You can do it! Think of yourself as an artist painting a beautiful explanation of Bible truth.

1 Corinthians 6:19: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"



Once again, create the homiletical outline that corresponds to the exegesis.



Examples of Expository Sermons:

Ephesians 5:18-25

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

Theme or Title: "Staying Spiritual"

Proposition: How can I be Spiritual?

Transition: There are two life-changing truths about spirituality.

I. The explanation of spirituality (vs. 18).

The answer to living a spiritual life is to be filled with the Spirit.

Explain what being “filled with the Spirit” means. Explain how being filled with wine compares or contrasts to being filled with the Spirit. Don’t bypass important truth. After explaining what it means to be filled with the Spirit, then proceed in your outline.

II. The examples of spirituality (vv. 19-25).

There are four examples of spirituality —→ **Main Point Transition:**

- A. Joy (vs. 19)
- B. Thanksgiving (vs. 20)
- C. Submission (vv. 21-22)
- D. Loving (vv. 24-25)

You will notice the grammatical connection between “Be ye filled with the Spirit” (vs. 18) and what follows in the descending verses. The participles “speaking” (vs. 18), “Giving” (vs. 19), and “Submitting” (vs. 21) are looking back to what it means to be filled with the Spirit and are actually explaining what a person is like when they are filled with the Spirit or living a spiritual life.

As you move through the points explain what words mean, such as “hymns” and “spiritual songs” (vs. 19), and make some application and appropriate quotes or shorter illustrations for the points. Write them out so you remember them!

Now let’s develop this sermon further. When you come to letter C (vv. 21-24) you can break down the main point and explain how the filling of the Spirit operates within the marriage relationship. It would look like this.

C. Submission (vv. 21-24)

There are two types of submission:

1. Mutual submission (vs. 21)

This means we meet one another’s needs in the marriage. A man should strive to meet his wife’s needs but should not be obligated to follow her lead.

2. Marital submission (vv. 22-24)

Someone said: “If two are on a horse, only one can lead.” Explain how a marriage works Biblically.

Note: When working through the sub-point on “Marital Submission” (vv. 22-24) you can once again suggest a homiletical outline that breaks down the sub-point further.

Consider: —→ **Simple Transition**

1. The command of submission (vs. 22)
2. The reason for submission (vv. 23 -24) – note the connective preposition “for” (vs. 23) which is explaining the reason for marital submission.

D. Loving (vs.25)

Notice: —→ **Simple Transition**

- A. The command to love (“Husbands, love your wives”)
- B. The illustration of love (“even as Christ loved the church”)

As you move through the text grammatically, systematically, and homiletically (by way of outline), explain the meaning of words, and communicate the exact meaning of a text, it’s then you are building a sermon on what the text actually says; you are using exegesis and exposition.

Theme or Title: “Lost and Found” (Luke 15)

Proposition: Every person is lost and needs to be found by Christ.

Transition: There are three lessons that illustrate this truth.

1. A lost sheep (vv. 3-7)
2. A lost coin (vv. 8-10)
3. A lost son (vv. 11-32)

When introducing this narrative chapter and text put the people into the setting. Show them how Jesus was willing to reach out and save the lost (Luke 15:1-2). Notice the repetition of the words “lose” or “lost” (vv. 4, 8, 24, 32) and “found” (vv. 5, 9, 24, 32). This gives evidence that you are supporting your proposition from the text. You could also rework the theme and proposition and still teach the same truth of this text.

Theme or Title: “The Friend of Sinners”

Proposition: Jesus is the sinner’s friend.

Transition: This truth is illustrated in three ways.

1. Finding a lost sheep (vv. 3-7)
2. Finding a lost coin (vv. 8-10)
3. Finding a lost son (vv. 11-32)

Again, when introducing this chapter and text put the people into the setting. Show them how Jesus was willing to reach out to sinners who were lost (Luke 15:1-2). This truth is then supported in the rest of the text. We must observe important repetitive words in a text. Sometimes, as in this text, the proposition is clearly presented (John 15:2), before the illustrations of this truth are given.

Now let's break this sermon down following our second proposition.

Proposition: Jesus is the sinner's friend.

Transition: This truth is illustrated in three ways.

I. Finding a lost sheep (vv. 3-7)

Christ points out two details.

A. The animal that is found (vv. 3-6)

You should relate this to Christ searching for the sinner (see Luke 19:10). This is what the illustration is pointing to.

B. The application to the sinner (vs. 7).

II. Finding a lost coin (vv. 8-10)

Christ points out two details.

A. The coin that is lost (vv. 8-9)

Again, relate this to how the sinner is lost and Christ finds the sinner (Rom. 3:11).

B. The comparison to the sinner (vv. 10)

III. Finding a lost son (vv. 11-32)

Christ describes the lives of two sons (Read vs. 11).

A. The younger son (vv. 12-24)

His story is explained in four phases.

1. He was given to worldliness (vv. 12-13)
2. He became in want (vv. 14-16)
3. He started to think wisely (vv. 17-19)
4. He received his father's welcome (vv. 20-22)

This welcome is expressed in three ways.

- a. The father's compassion (vs. 20).

The father expressed compassion to his repenting son! Express how the sinner needs to repent before God so he can receive Christ's compassion (Luke 7:38; Acts 17:30).

- b. The father's provision (vs. 22-23).
- c. The father's declaration (vs. 24).

Explain how this declaration is true for every person that repents of his sinful life and who is saved from his lost hell-bound condition. Lost and found! Jesus certainly does love sinners!

Repeat: Christ describes the lives of two sons (Read vs. 11).

- A. The younger son (vv. 12-24)
- B. The older son (vv. 25-32)

His story is explained in two ways.

1. The anger of the son (vv. 25-30)
 - a. It was rooted in pride (vs. 29a)
 - b. It was expressed in jealousy (vs. 29b-30)
2. The explanation of the father (vv. 31-32)

The father gives a two-fold answer.

- a. The older son already had the blessing (vs. 31)
- b. The younger son came home to the blessing (vs. 32)

You can conclude by reinforcing the proposition in relationship to what the father states regarding the son being lost and found. Jesus is a friend of sinners. He searches out and saves those who are lost. I one was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see! Amazing grace!

Below is an expository sermon by Pastor Sensenig which has been fully developed from Psalm chapter one. It is complete with proposition, transition, outline, explanation and running comments on the text, sub-points, sub-transitions, cross-referencing, and illustrations. It can be used as a "guide" and "teaching tool" for your own sermon preparation.

Again, it's good for every expositor to develop some notes for his preaching. Preaching and teaching the Bible "without notes" is a rarity when you want to really deal with the text and remember important truths related to the text. There are some things that just can't be missed. Every preacher will discover what he

feels comfortable with in relationship to his notes and delivery. *There is no set pattern for any expositor.* His gifts and abilities will determine the amount of notes and the way they are worded and written down. Below is merely an *example* of a sermon that will help the younger preacher understand the importance and application of expository preaching. Please note that more detail is given in this sermon to help the novice preacher understand the importance of exegesis, exposition, and clear homiletical delivery. Underlining, highlighting certain points, and making the main outline and certain statements in “bold-faced” type are helpful. You must practice glancing at your notes and not reading them. Your goal should be to look at your notes without people noticing.

Example of a Complete Expository Sermon from Pastor Sensenig

Theme or Title: “The Saint & the Sinner”
(Psalm 1)

Introduction: Samuel Chadwick tells this interesting story: "When I was a small boy about 6 or 7 years old, I was sent on an errand to an elderly neighbor, who was named Mrs. Davenport. It was around 9 o'clock in the morning, so after a quick knock I lifted the latch and entered her kitchen. There she was, kneeling at her fireside chair with a Bible open before her. She didn't notice my entry and kept right on praying. I stood there listening for a few minutes, then stepped quietly out again and closed the door. From then on, I knew she was a dear saint of God just from the way she prayed." Through the years many others testified to the fact that Mrs. Davenport was a true saint of God. Today we are going to look at the characteristics of God's people who are to act and live like they are saints – God's holy people.

The Bible passage in Psalm chapter one speaks of two people – the saint and the sinner. The saint is described in vss. 1-3 and the sinner is described in vss. 4-6.

Proposition: “Are you a saint or sinner?”

This is one of the great Bible passages that help us to develop our saintly walk or our holy walk before God. But it also helps us to know when we are retrogressing or moving backward in our Christian experience. Lastly, it tells the truth that lost sinners, who live without God, who are ungodly and show no signs of holiness or change in their life, have no hope for the future. They will suffer at the hands of God's judgment.

The contrast between the saint and sinner in Psalm one is really a contrast between the saved and the unsaved.

What is a saint? In this Psalm a saint is pictured as that person who is godly, who seeks to live holy, who desires to follow God's general path for righteous

living, and who manifests fruitful living and a change of life before God and the world. The term “**righteous**” (mentioned 2 times – vss. 5, 6) is a reference to the saints who are saved, a regenerated person, who wants God in their life, and who manifests godly traits in their overall living.

The unsaved individual in the Psalm is pictured as a sinner. Words like “**sinner**” (vs. 1, 5) and “**scornful**” (vs. 1) describe the wicked or unsaved person who has no time for God and who is going to be judged for rejecting salvation and God in their lives.

A key word is “**ungodly**” (seen 4 times – vss. 1, 4, 5, 6). The ungodly man is a reference in this psalm to the unsaved or unregenerate person without God and who does not want God in his life. Ungodly people are those who don’t have any personal relationship with God. God is not the center of their lives. When we were unsaved we were all ungodly in the sense that we were without God and did not want God to be part of our lives. Ungodly people might even be moral and live exemplary lives in many ways, but they are still ungodly, because they have no relationship with God.

Romans 5:6, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Christ died for the ungodly!

Primary Transition: There are only two types of people in the world.

I. The saint (vv. 1-3) ———> Main Point

1a – The Psalm begins with a benediction – “**blessed**” (how happy is the man). The man who is describes as a saint is a man who has been richly blessed by God. It’s actually plural: “O the happinesses! O the blessednesses!”

The word “**blessed**” means to experience happiness, pleasure, well being, enjoyment, and good fortune. The Bible has much to say about happiness. The familiar word “**blessed**” describes an inner happiness that comes from the fulfillment of every inner longing and the untouchable contentment and peace of God being experienced in one’s life. We are truly blessed if we know the Lord! Happiness is not found in a bottle, in bucks, or in big things, it’s found when we follow God’s will for our lives.

In other words, if we are going to experience true spiritual happiness or good fortune in life we are going to need to live differently. The key to being spiritually happy (fulfilled) in life revolves around living right and doing right. I want the blessing! I want the happiness! I want this kind of rich fulfillment in life. Do you?

The saint is described in three ways ———> Main Point Transition

A. The saint is a separated man (vs. 1b) ———> Sub-point

The rest of the verses (**1b-3**) actually explain how to discover a life of true spiritual happiness, enjoyment, and pleasure. The man who is a saint is blessed because he seeks to live a life separate from sinners!

vs.1 - We should view this verse as an exposition of what the godly man should not do. Three negative statements are seen in this verse which is related to the teaching concerning separation.

God does not begin the psalms with the power of positive thinking but the power of negative thinking! Modern psychology tells us to emphasize the positive; God begins by emphasizing the negative. If we are going to be truly happy and fulfilled in life, then we must avoid certain things!! The happy and fulfilled man is marked by the things he chooses not do! In short, he seeks to live a life that is separate from sinners!

Hebrews 7:26 says this of Jesus:

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

We are not to live isolated from sinners but we are to live separate from their ways, worldliness, and weird ideas! We are to seek to befriend sinners and win them to the Lord but we are not to become like the sinners in relationship to the way they live and the things they do. We live in the world but we are not to become like the world!

There are 3 ways to separate from sinners —> Sub-point Transition

1. Don't stroll with them (first step of compromise)

“**walketh**” – to walk or stroll with the ungodly suggests a casual identification, flirtation, or casual compromise with ungodly people. This is almost an imperceptible process. It's the first step of compromise with sinners and their ways. A walk seems harmless enough, but it can bring us into a surface relationship with the ungodly, or unsaved person, which can adversely affect our lives.

When we make a casual compromise with the sinner we begin to follow their “**counsel**” (advice). When we follow their advice our thinking is reshaped. Casual compromise with the ungodly affects us! If we stroll with the ungodly our spiritual thinking can become infected. We can begin to cater to their way of thinking and philosophy in life.

Don't follow the advice of the ungodly. Don't let them instruct you. Don't let them advise you how to live, what your priorities or goals should be, and how to dress or look. Don't listen to them if they say it's okay to drink a little, flirt a little, and indulge a little. Let's stop listening and following the advice of the devil's crowd!

Their counsel is not God's counsel. *The ungodly should not tell us how to run the church (seeker friendly churches). They are in no position to give us advice.

illust. – Some advice from the ungodly is good advice – how to plant grass seed, how to fix something that is broken in your home, obeying your teacher by doing your homework. But the kind of advice the Psalmist is talking about is advice on how to live and conduct ourselves.

2. Don't stand with them (second step of compromise)

We find ourselves moving from strolling to standing in the way of sinners. First we make the casual compromise and our thinking is reshaped (we follow their counsel). But in this next step our living is redirected! We first receive their counsel and now our conduct is reshaped.

The term “**way**” means we now want to travel with them and go in the same direction as they are going. The term “**standeth**” speaks of a more settled compromising position with the lost sinners of this world, where we begin to follow their lead and direction, and do what they like to do, instead of what God wants us to do in life.

When we “**stand**” with sinners our conduct is definitely starting to be reshaped by them. We become open to their ways and living and allow the ungodly to start changing the course of our lives.

Here is the downward spiral. When we stroll along with the ungodly (receiving their counsel) we eventually end up standing with them (moving in the same course or direction) as the ungodly. When this happens we will find ourselves practicing some of the same patterns and habits of living.

Examples: We begin to look like them, dress like them, listen to the same things they do, and watch the same things they do on TV.

Please note again the progression of evil. We retrogress from strolling (casual compromise) to standing in their way of sinners (a more compromised position). *Compromise is as slippery slope. When we start to move downhill we can quickly find ourselves becoming more deeply rooted in the sinful ways of the ungodly of this world.

illust. - Sledding on a hill – could not stop! Once the momentum got moving we were on a collision course for disaster! We had a terrible wreck!

Who should I have for my companion and closest friends in life? Who am I to be united with in heart and soul?

Turn to Psalm 119:63 (cross referencing) – “I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts.” Here the word “companion” speaks of someone who I am united with in close relationships. The person who has godly fear and who practices living out the truth of God’s Word is to be my closest friends (this would include school friends, close friends in life, a lifelong mate).

1 Cor. 15:33 (cross referencing) – “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” If you hang around with creeps, you will become one of them! They won’t become like us but we will become like them! When will we learn this lesson? **Proverbs 1** also talks about the same truth about standing in the way of sinners or compromising with the unsaved sinners of this world (Cross-referencing or comparing Scripture) - **see Proverbs 1:10-11, 15.**

This is almost word for word with Psalm 1. If you travel in the same way of the ungodly, then you are going to be swept into their lifestyle. Our light will not rub off on them - their darkness will rub off on us.

Peter lingered with the ungodly for a time in his life when he stood with the enemy and sat with the ungodly (**Luke 22:55** – “Peter sat down among them”) and in doing so denied the Lord (“I know him not”) in order to keep himself acceptable with the crowd. Abraham lingered with the ungodly when he went down to Egypt. Lot lingered with sinners or stood in the way of sinners when he went into Sodom.

Who are your closest friends? Are they truly born again and saved? Are they living for the Lord? Who do you spend much of your time with?

2. Don’t sit with them (third step of compromise)

This is the third and final step of compromise in this downward spiral. The word “**sitteth**” speaks of a fully compromised position with the ungodly sinners of this world. We have now come into full-blown compromise and cooperation with sinners and are seen always glorying in the same things they glory in and always doing the same things they are doing. *This is when sinners take us away from godly living completely and from the path that God wants us to walk.* This is when sinners capture our hearts and we find ourselves laughing at the same things they are laughing at, even when they are scorning or mocking righteousness and godly things. This is the lowest level.

Again, note the progression. First it’s strolling (casual compromise – they reshape our thinking). Second, it’s standing in the way of sinners (a further compromising position where they begin to redirect our living and change our conduct). Third, we then find ourselves sitting with the scorners (a fully compromised position - we possess a totally compromising and cooperating position with sinners).

This final step and stop on the downward spiral is when we allow sinners to totally restrict our spiritual growth. This last position with sinners is when we “join their club” and laugh with them, as they mock truth, righteousness, goodness and godly things, and allow them to totally absorb us in their sinful patterns of living.

2 Corinthians 6:17 commands: “Wherefore come out from among them (from having close companionships with the unsaved), and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing* (their evil practices and ungodly ways); and I will receive you (fellowship with you).” Separation is the forgotten word in the Christian vocabulary.

Separation does not mean isolation. We need to contact and befriend the lost to reach them (Luke 15:1-2). We don’t want to be isolated from the unsaved but separate from them, which means that we do not sit down with them, develop close companionships with them, and compromise with their ways. We are to never compromise God’s holiness with sinners. Never!

“**scorners**” – this refers to people who mock God and the things of God. They ridicule the Bible and what is right and always seek to move in a pattern of evil. Our secular humanistic colleges are full of scorners today. Many of them are atheistic professors who don’t care one iota about the Bible. They are left-winged godless radicals. Our congress is full of scorners today! The left-winged liberals want to destroy the Ten Commandments, manger scenes, and everything that represents Christ, Christianity, and righteousness. They are haters of God! We are now told that it’s more politically correct to say, “Happy holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas.” America is slowly being swept into this warped practice. Christendom today is full of scorners. This means that many church leaders are full of scorners. There are scorners in Christendom today who are rejecting the key doctrines of Scripture – the blood of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the virgin birth of Christ. A man may be religious and wear religious garb and goggles but still be a scorners!

2 Peter 2:1 – “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

Our communication system is full of scorners! Scorners of God today are seen on TV and in the Media. How shameful when we allow scorners and mockers of everything that is decent to come into our houses and homes through the TV and DVD’s.

We should not be entertained by scorners! There are also scorners in our companionships of life. Young people, when you are seated with the scornful (close companions with them) you begin to laugh at their godless jokes, talk their godless talk, and think about their godless things! It rubs off on you. When you

laugh at holy things and openly disobey God's holy laws, you have reached a low level in life.

It's called the "**seat**" (vs. 1) of the scornful so only the scornful can sit in it. If you sit in this seat you join their club! You become comfortable with them and they are comfortable with you. You become like them. This happens too often with Christians who are pressured and pulled into the crowd.

Here is the summary of this evil progression once again: Don't stroll with them (listening to their counsel). Don't stand with them (become open to their ways and lifestyle allowing them to start reshaping your living and conduct. Don't sit in with them or become like them, join their ecumenical club, and become one with what they are doing and saying, allowing them to restrict your growth.

Don't let the world squeeze into its mold (Rom. 12:2).

Key Point: If you follow the wrong *counsel*, then you will eventually stand with the wrong *companions*, and finally sit with the wrong *crowd*.

Repeat verse one - Oh how happy and blessed is the man who separated from the ungodly sinners of this world. A truly blessed man is known by the things he does not do and the company he does not keep!

*Note the repetition of first main point:

A. The saint is a separated man (vs. 1b)

B. The saint is a Bible man (vs. 2) —> Sub-point

This is demonstrated in two ways: —> Sub-point Transition

1. The saint enjoys God's Word.

The key word is "**delight**" which means the Bible is the joy and rejoicing of his heart. When we read God's word we are to enjoy or delight in it. The emphasis shifts from the advice of the ungodly to the delight of the Word of God. Biblical separation is always two-fold – separation from the ungodly and separation unto God and truth. The whole link to the previous verse is obvious. Delight in God's Word instead of the counsel, way, or seat of sinners. Find a man of God and you will find a man of the Book or a godly woman who loves the Word of God and lives by truth.

The term "**law**" (instruction) means he delights in the Lord's instruction as found in His written word (God's instruction book – **quote 2 Tim. 3:16** – "instruction in righteousness"). The saint is a Bible-directed man! Self-directed living is an enormous waste of time, money, and energy! So we must learn to be directed by the counsel of God's truth. Don't let the wicked counsel you or instruct you – let

God's word instruct you and find delight in knowing and following the counsel of God's Word. Bible reading should be a delight and not a mere duty or burden.

Psalm 119:97, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." **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."

Illustration – A man approached me one day after a service and said, "I eat this book!" What he meant is that he assimilated the Bible into his own life and heart. The Bible should not be drudgery to us but a delight! Here are some questions to ask yourself? Is the Bible a delight to me? Do you look forward to reading your Bible every day? Is it an enjoyable exercise? Do you look forward to sharing with others what God has taught you? Is it a joy or a chore? Do you look forward to the messages on Wednesday or Sunday? What we desire we will delight in (1 Pet. 2:2 – "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word")

2. The saint absorbs God's Word.

The key word is "**meditate**" which means he applies or assimilates truth to his life. This is not TM where we disengage our mind and open it up to the universe. This sets our self up for demonic suggestion. We are instructed to meditate on the Scriptures. As we do we will begin to ask ourselves these questions: Is there a sin to avoid? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a command to obey? Is there a blessing to enjoy?

What happens when you read God's word? Do you just read over it, or do you consider it, chew on it, as the word "meditate" suggests, and apply it to your life?

illust. - Whenever I see a cow standing out in the field chewing its cud I think of this word meditation. We need to chew on the Bible and allow the Bible to be inwardly absorbed or digested on the inside of us and speak to us in a clear and definite way. If we don't chew on it, it won't change us! Too often we approach the Bible as we would a Burger King or fast food restaurant. We want to get in and get out as fast as we can because we are too busy and on the run. This is not the way we spend time with God in His Word.

"day and night" – This speaks of a person that is continually open to God's truth, reflecting upon the truth, and applying it to his life daily.

Joshua 1:8 – "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Someone remarked: “Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a divine center, a speaking voice, to which we may continuously return.” This inner sanctuary is God’s voice which can only be recognized as we meditate on God’s Word.

When we delight in something we will meditate on it and fill our mind with it. Jesus said that where your treasure is there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:21) The lost art of the 21st century is meditation. Meditation is disciplined thought, focused on a single object of Scripture for a period of time.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said:

“I would rather lay my soul asoak in half a dozen verses [of the Bible] all day than rinse my hand in several chapters.”

We cannot be the man or woman God wants us to be without times of quietness and meditation on God’s Word. Stillness is an essential part of growing deeper.

As Vance Havner used to say, "If we don't come apart, we'll come apart!"

*Again – repeat first two points before stating the next point.

A. The saint is a separated man (vs. 1b)

B. The saint is a Bible man (vs. 2)

C. The saint is a fruitful man (vs. 3) —→ Sub-point

The writer is now using a simile (“**And he shall be like**”) teaching that the saint is a man who is fruitful in living. The saint is pictured as being like a well-planted tree that is bearing fruit – a tree that is prosperous. This refers to how this person was prospering from a spiritual perspective. His fruitfulness is illustrated in the world of nature with the key words “**water**,” “**fruit**,” and “**prospering**.” These words indicate productivity or life. The logical order can be seen. The saint who is a separated man and Bible man prospers spiritually. This saint produces fruit.

The connecting word “**and**” looks back to what was just previously said and links this man’s Bible-centered life to yielding fruitfulness. The result of living according to God’s law or instruction will be fruit.

Consider: —→ **Short One Word Transition**

1. **The reasons for his fruit**

Note: At this point in your homiletical outline you can refrain from saying, “There are two points to consider.” Remember that too much break-down can become confusing and clutter your sermon. The people will understand what you are conveying. As you move deeper into your sermon simplicity is important.

a. He has spiritual stability (roots).

“**planted**” – this speaks of spiritual stability because of a good root system.

illust. – I was digging up and pulling out some bushes in the front of my home. The roots on these bushes went way down into the soil. I thought I was going to dig clear down to the center of the earth before I got to the bottom of the roots! How can a believer develop deep roots and be spiritually strong and stable in life? The answer is by sticking with the Bible and living by faith in relationship to what God says. Faith is responding in the right way to what God has said in His Word. When you take a promise and claim it for yourself, or read a command and you obey it, it's then your roots are going down deep. You become “**planted**” from a spiritual perspective.

When you obey what God says, then your root system will grow deep, and it's only then that you will experience stability in life. You won't be moved by “**every wind of doctrine**” (**Eph. 4:14**) or be overcome with worry by every change that you must face in life. When you fail to apply God's Word to your life, forget its promises, and disobey its commands, then your roots are not very deep. You will live a very shallow life and miss out on the blessed life of spiritual happiness and enjoyment. Shallow roots = a shallow living. Don't ignore your root system!

b. He has spiritual refreshment (water).

“**by the rivers of water**” – this expression refers to the irrigation canals and would suggest a continuous supply of refreshing, nourishing, and life-sustaining water. This points to how the saint finds spiritual refreshment through a continual flow of God's Word into his life.

illust. – I recall when it rained very hard and my window wells in the basement were filling up with water. Eventually the water came into the basement! The saint is a fruitful man because he has the continual flow of God's Word into his life. His roots go down deep and he finds a constant supply of water and nourishment from God's Word.

If you are meditating on God's word “day and night” (vs. 2) you will have the continual supply that you need to become established and fruit bearing in your Christian life. This is because our source of nourishment and supply is the Word of God. If you are not meditating on God's truth then you are going to dry up!

Alexander Maclaren once said:

“Religion lacks depth and volume because it is not fed by hidden springs.”

Consider: (repeat)

1. The reasons for his fruit.
2. **The results of his fruit**

Again, you can refrain from saying, “There are three results of living a fruitful life” since the audience will know that you are going to give the results of fruitful living. Don’t get too wordy or overload with alliteration as you move deeper into a text. At this point, it’s proper to begin stating the results of fruit. If you want, a brief statement can be made.

Notice three results: —> Short Transition

a. Productivity (vs. 3)

“**bringeth forth his fruit in his season**” – Of course, the good result that comes from a good root system and water is fruit. Jesus said in **John 15:8**, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” God wants us to bear much fruit, and if the saint is a separated man and a Bible man he will bring forth spiritual fruit.

What kind of fruit do we bear in our Christian lives? Here it’s referring to the fruit of righteous behavior and the fruit of holy living. **Philip. 1:11** talks about “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness” and **Romans 6:22** talks about “your fruit unto holiness.” Fruitful living refers to righteous and holy living. The fruit here is evidently speaking about a change in character and conduct.

b. Permanence (vs. 3)

“**leaf shall not wither**” (dry up and die) – This is because the saint who has a deep root system and is established in the Word of God will not wither up and become spiritually unproductive in life. He will not become a spiritual failure by compromising with the world. Why do Christians dry up (wither away) from a spiritual perspective and go off the deep end? It’s because they are not being fed by the springs of God’s truth and standards. God’s truth is not refreshing them and replenishing their lives!

(Cross-referencing or comparing Scripture) **Jeremiah 17:8** observed the same thing, “For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.”

D. L. Moody used to say: “All the Lord’s trees are evergreens.”

God’s saints should have a permanent mark of life and spirituality to their lives. We don’t have to shrivel up and die. The saint has a constant source of inner nourishment and enrichment from God’s Word so that he can be renewed in the inner man (**Eph. 3:16**).

***There is another side to this.** Every saint who is a true child of God will always bear some fruit and be somewhat productive in his life. However, the fruit may vary, but one thing is certain, the leaf will not die – the tree will not fail to produce. Jesus said something in **John 15:6** that parallels to this: “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.”

Some professing believers appear to have roots, fruit and life, but in the end this is not the case. Jesus said in **Matthew 13:20-22**, “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

Note: Repeat previous points of “productivity” and “permanence.”

c. Prosperity (vs. 3)

“whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” – this goes on to speak about the tree analogy. It means that whatever the saint does he will spiritually prosper or succeed in it. This statement parallels with **James 1:25**, “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” Why? It’s because he is living a righteous and holy life, he is in fellowship with God, and doing God’s will for his life. When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His Word, God blesses our lives, as we accomplish His will. What a wonderful promise!

(Cross-referencing or comparing Scripture) **Joshua 1:8** again says: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

We are not talking about financial prosperity here but spiritual prosperity, which becomes God’s true blessing, as we seek to live for the Lord and do what is right! When we live in the will of God we will have God’s true blessing in whatever we do! I’m thankful for this today! This is a marvelous promise!

Oh bless me now my Savior; I come to Thee! I want the blessing of this Psalm! **Blessed is the man!** I want to be blessed by God in this life, as I seek to follow His will, and do what is right.

“There shall be showers of blessing,
If we but trust and obey;

There shall be seasons refreshing,
When we let Him have His way.”

Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper!

Repeat Main Transition: There are two types of people being described.

- I. The saint (vv. 1-3)
- II. **The sinner (vv. 4-6) → Main Point**

The sinner is described in three ways (vv. 4-6) → Main Point Transition

*This is an important transitional statement since it opens up the next section of your text and point in your sermon outline.

1. The sinner is the ungodly man (vv. 4a and 5a – Read both verses)

Note the word “**ungodly**” in these verses – he is ungodly (unlike God) in his overall actions and living. **vs. 4 – “ungodly are not so”** – this means that the ungodly man is in direct contrast to the saint. The ungodly man does not have deep roots. He is not prosperous from a spiritual perspective. This is because he does not live according to God’s will.

The sinner is not like the saint in his lifestyle and practice. This is because he is unsaved, unrenewed, or unregenerate (does not have God’s life indwelling him). Therefore, he is ungodly in his living and lifestyle. The ungodly man is just the opposite of the saint. He does not live a separated life, a Bible-centered life, or a fruitful life. There is no spiritual life operating in the sinner. Therefore, he cannot exhibit any true and lasting qualities of holy living, as the saint does, who has the life of God indwelling him.

Someone said:

“If you are not a saint, then you are an aint!” One Christian responded with rather bad English, “I aint an aint.”

2. The sinner is a useless man (vs. 4b)

“**like the chaff which the wind driveth away**” - This speaks of uselessness and unproductiveness in life. The sinner is useless from a spiritually perspective in life. He is like the chaff or the useless part of the grain that is left behind.

The **illustration** is given of what is called winnowing. The process of winnowing frees the grain of chaff by fanning the grain with wind or a forced current of air. The wind would carry away the chaff that was light and worthless while the heavier part (the grain) would fall down on the pile. Sometimes a fan was used (a fanning process) to separate the grain from the chaff. This is the idea given here.

The chaff is the worthless part of the grain that is blown away by the wind in the process. *Chaff might be comparable to the worthless or useless shells that surround the peanuts. When I eat peanuts, I leave the shells behind, or the chaff, which has no value. It might be comparable to the husks on the corn, which are not valuable for human consumption. So it is with the ungodly sinner or unsaved man. He is useless in the sense that he has no spiritual value or productivity in life that can be used by God. Like the chaff, he is dead and useless to God, in his spiritually state.

Ephesians 2:1 says:

“And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

Before we were saved and given God’s life, we were just like chaff. We were useless and our life had no spiritual value to God. We were living for ourselves, going our own direction in life, and actually running from God. The wonders of wonders is that God would have interest in chaff, in someone who wanted nothing to do with Him, and who had nothing to offer God but sin and a wrecked human life!

“I was nothing until You found me,
You have given life to me!
Heartaches, broken pieces,
Ruined lives are why you died on Calvary.
Your touch is what I needed;
You have given life to me.”

3. The sinner is the unfortunate man (vv. 5-6).

“**Therefore**” is looking back to verse 4 and introduces the result of living the ungodly life. The sense is this. Since the sinner is without God’s life, ungodly, and unlike the renewed (born again) saint, he will be judged for his ungodly way of living.

The sinner will suffer the final retribution of God since he has rejected Jesus Christ as His Savior. The lost sinner has a most unfortunate ending. This means his final lot in life is unfavorable, lamentable, and sad. The ending of the sinner’s life is the exact opposite from the blessing that the saint’s life brings. The saint is superbly blessed (**vs. 1**) but the sinner without salvation and God’s life is blighted, since he will experience the judgment or payment for his own sins in hell for all eternity. He will experience hopelessness and utter despair under the judgment of God.

One unsaved man said to me, “I just want a peaceful death. This is all I can hope for.” But **Isaiah 57:21** says: “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

There is a three-fold description of the sinner’s judgment: —> Sub-point Transition

a. Their excuses will be silenced (vs. 5a).

“ungodly shall not stand in the judgment” – this speaks of the final judgment when all ungodly sinners stand before God and are examined for their wickedness and judged according to their sins. **Rev. 20:12**, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

“shall not stand in the judgment” - What does this mean? It means they will have no adequate defense or excuse – they will not have a leg to stand on in the final court of God’s tribunal. All of their excuses will be silenced in the presence of God’s matchless holiness and righteous wrath! They will have nothing to say in their defense when they stand before the holiness of the Lamb on Judgment Day.

Psalm 130:3 says,

“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”

If God would take our sins and count them against us, then no person would have any stand or defense before God. If we would all be responsible for our sins before God, and had to pay for them in full, who would be able to stand? **Revelation 6:17** supports this same concept when stating: “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Sinners will not stand in the judgment!”

You might think that you are going to somehow slip past the Judge. But I assure you that you will not be overlooked. God can’t look at sin. **Habakkuk 1:13**, “*Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” This is why sinners can’t stand in the presence of a holy God. No unsaved person will be able stand in their own defense before God on Judgment Day. This is because every sinners has offended God’s holiness for the Bible says, “**all have sinned and come short of the glory of God**” (**Rom. 3:23**).

If you want to be accepted in God’s presence you must stand in the grace and forgiveness that Jesus Christ offer to you. **Romans 5:2** speaks about “**the grace wherein we stand.**” The believing sinner who places their faith in Jesus Christ stands in the infinite value of Christ’s work and no charge can be brought against him!

b. Their exclusion from God’s people (vs. 5b)

“nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” – This means that the unsaved and ungodly sinners will have no part with God’s people throughout eternity. **Rev. 21:7-8 says**, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the

abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Sinners will not dwell in the congregation of the righteous! You can mark that down! They will be excluded from God’s people and have no part of their blessing and eternal joy and rest.

Revelation 14:13 declares: “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

The ungodly will have no part of the eternal blessing of the saved! They will only experience the blight of God’s judgment.

c. Their experience of God’s wrath (vs. 6)

In this verse, we see a contrast once again between the two people. God first **“knoweth the way of the righteous.”** God knows His own children intimately. He has a personal relationship with them. He also knows what their final destiny will be. He knows everything about His own children and reaches out to them with His loving mercy and care. God is not some kind of cosmic force floating around the universe; He is the personal and the only Supreme Being called the Father, who cares for the lives of His children.

The contrasting point is this. God also knows the way of the ungodly sinner will end in judgment (**“but the way of the ungodly shall perish”**). **Matthew 7:23 illustrates this point:** “And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” What will God say to the ungodly? “I never knew you” This means the unsaved have never possessed a personal, intimate, and saving relationship with Christ.

There are only two ways! Jesus said in **Matthew 7:13-14:** “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

The Bible says **“the way of the ungodly will perish” (Psalm 1:6)**. God knows what the end of the unsaved and unregenerate sinner will be! They will perish forever from the presence of God! The word “perish” does not mean annihilation (when a person ceases to exist). It means to experience spiritual ruin and miss God’s intended purpose for one’s life. It points to the time when the soul of a person is separated from God in eternal judgment. When a person perishes they lose out on God’s original purpose for their life and suffer God’s judgment instead.

It's interesting that the unsaved or ungodly man is compared to chaff that is blown away (**verse 4b**). John the Baptizer in **Matthew 3:12** said – “Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

This is the final destiny of the ungodly! A fearsome judgment awaits the ungodly. Think what it means to be lost forever! Think what it means to experience the judgment of God. I say on the authority of God's Word, that if you die without having your sins forgiven through Jesus Christ, you will perish in God's judgment forever. **Rev. 20:15**, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

It's only through belief in the death and resurrection of Christ that you can be forgiven of all your sins and receive the promise of eternal life with God in Heaven (**quote John 6:47**). You can have a place within the congregation of the righteous instead of being consigned to hell.

Conclusion and restatement of proposition: There are only two types of people in the world – saved and unsaved. It's time for you to answer this question. **Are you a saint or sinner?** Where will you spend eternity? According to this Psalm, there are only two people and two ways. You can leave here today knowing that you are a saint, if you place your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. He will put your life on a different path and you will begin to experience a life of blessing (the blessed man). Is this what you need and want today? If so, come to faith in Jesus Christ right now and be delivered from your life of emptiness, sin, and judgment.

Developing a Book Study

When you are ready to begin and develop a book study you need to discover the general purpose for writing the book, develop a theme, and support the theme with some key verses. You should read the book through several times and see if you can pick out a general theme. There are many excellent introductory volumes that suggest the writer's general theme and key verses for the Bible book (Paul Benware – “Survey of Old and New Testament”; “Thru the Bible Commentary” - J. Vernon McGee, “Bible Knowledge Commentary”; “Believer's Bible Commentary” – William MacDonald; “The Bible Exposition Commentary” – Warren Wiersbe). Many of the Bible survey books will be helpful at stating the purpose for writing a book.

Below are some general rules to follow when starting a book study.

- A. Give the background of the book (to whom it is written, where it was written from, when was it written, who wrote it - authorship). Support these findings with some basic verses and conclusions.

B. State the purpose for writing the book and support it with key verses.

Once you know the purpose for writing, and support it with some key verses, you can build a theme around the purpose. Let's find the purpose and key verses of one Bible book and then build a theme around this purpose.

Background: The purpose for writing Galatians is not difficult to discover. When reading through the epistle Paul is speaking to these saints about their Christian freedom from the Mosaic Law, as a means or way of salvation (legalism). The false teachers (Judaizers) were teaching salvation by works instead of salvation by grace. Paul is reminding the saints that following the Mosaic Law for salvation (a works oriented salvation) is opposed to grace (salvation without works). He warns them to only look to grace for their salvation and not works or law.

Some verses to support this purpose would be as follows:

Galatians 1:6

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

Galatians 2:21

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Galatians 3:3

"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

Galatians 3:11

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

Galatians 5:1

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Our theme for the entire book can then be developed from what we have discovered. We will call it: "The Magna Charta of spiritual Liberty." This is a catchy theme that will stick with the people as you study the Book of Galatians.

Purpose for Writing: To warn the saints regarding the false teaching of salvation by works (legalism) and restate the truth of salvation by grace.

General Theme for Book: "The Magna Charta of Spiritual Liberty."

Although chapter divisions are not inspired, normally we follow the chapter divisions, as we outline our study. But not always! We must follow grammar and syntax before chapter divisions.

At this point we must begin to build our homiletical outline from the stated purpose and theme. Every chapter should in some way support the basic purpose and theme of the book. This gives continuity to your book study and supports the general purpose that you have found. You can sometimes group two chapters together if they cover similar material.

So let's give some general headings and summaries for the chapters in Galatians which will in return support the purpose and theme of the book. Also, we can derive a proposition for each chapter while preaching and develop and build the points from the proposition.

I. Chapter 1 = The Defense of Liberty

In this chapter Paul defends his apostleship and the message of freedom (the Gospel of God's grace).

*Proposition: Believers should defend their liberty.

II. Chapter 2 = The Lessons of Liberty

In this chapter Paul chides Peter for riding the fence and explains the truth about liberty and the secret of living the Christian life without law (Gal. 2:20).

*Proposition: Believers should pass the liberty test.

III. Chapters 3-4 = The Doctrine of Liberty

In this chapter Paul explains the doctrinal teaching of grace and liberty as it relates to Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant. He then confirms the Mosaic Law was not for salvation but preparation for Christ's coming. The Law does not save the sinner but prepares the sinner for salvation.

*Proposition: Believers have a Biblical basis for their liberty.

IV. Chapters 5-6 = The Practice of Liberty

After talking about the doctrine of grace and liberty, Paul now moves to the practical aspects of liberty in the life of the Christian. Christians should not be brought back under bondage to law (works) as a way of final salvation before God. Christian freedom from the Mosaic Law does not lead to license, but to liberty from sin, through the Holy Spirit's power (Gal. 5:18). The doctrine of God's

grace changes the way we live in society and before others. Grace changes everything!

*Proposition: Believers should practice their liberty on a daily basis.

Now that we have stated the heading for each chapter, you proceed to develop the outline of each chapter according to correct grammatical exegesis (the proper breakdown of sentence structure). The outline should also, in some general ways, highlight or confirm the heading and proposition for the chapter. Again, this gives continuity to your study. Of course, not every detail will be exactly reflective of the chapter heading, but as you move through the text of chapter one, remind the people of the specifics that Paul was driving home to his readers in the particular section of your study.

Important Note: You must read all the verses in a text and entire chapter before creating an outline from the text or chapter that you are covering in your sermon. Observe where the breaks occur and where the writer moves into a different line of thought. This process will allow you to place verses, whole chapters, and larger sections of Scripture together under one heading. It will allow you to know where to start and stop in the outlining process. You develop your *broad* outline (major points) from the grammatical breaks and your more *detailed* outline (points and sub-points) from the words and phrases that modify the main subject and statement in the sentence structure. Following grammatical breaks and modifiers is how you generate an exegetical outline based upon the rules of syntax or grammar. Observation of sentence structure and clear breaks from one thought to the next is vitally important when creating a proper outline that corresponds to the actual text.

I will outline chapter one of Galatians to illustrate this. Remember that this is the bare-bones outline. The outline must be given meat. Words must be explained and comments must be made about what Paul was teaching. Personal application, quotes, and illustrations must also be given regarding present-day trends away from the Gospel and your message must also be directed toward the personal lives of both lost and saved people.

Chapter 1 = The Defense of Liberty

*Proposition: Believers should defend their liberty.

This is demonstrated in three ways.

I. In a greeting that gladdens the soul (vv. 1-5)

The greeting deals with two matters.

A. Commission (vs. 1-2a) – “apostle”

- B. Community (vs. 2b) – “churches of Galatia”
- C. Caring (vv. 3-5)

God’s care is presented in two ways:

1. As a source of grace and peace (vs. 3)
2. As a Savior who delivers us (vv. 4-5)
 - aa. From sin’s penalty (“gave himself for our sins”)
 - bb. From sin’s power (“present evil world”).

Some further observations:

- This deliverance was according to God’s will (vs. 4b)
- This deliverance was for God’s glory (vs. 5)

II. In a glaring fact that saddens the soul (vv. 6-10)

Paul explains this glaring fact as a departure from the Gospel.

This departure is explained in two ways:

1. It involved departure from grace (vs. 6-7a)
2. It involved devilish men who are false (vv. 7b-9)

These men are described as:

- a. Troubling (“trouble you”) – vs. 7a
- b. Perverting (“pervert”) – vs. 7b
- c. Damning (“accursed”) – vv. 8-9

III. In a good outlook of a committed soul (vv. 10-24)

Commitment is seen in four ways:

- A. Pleasing God (vs. 10)
- B. Receiving from God (vv. 11-14)

Consider:

1. The way it was received (vv. 11-12)
 2. The reason it was received (vv. 13-14)
- C. Separating unto God (vv. 15-16)

1. It was a separation related to birth (15a)
2. It was a separation related to grace (15b)
3. It was a separation related to ministry (vs.16)

D. Obeying God (vv. 17-23)

There are two reminders about obedience:

1. We must follow the ordained path (vv. 17-19)

Notice:

- a. God's direction (vs. 17)
- b. God's delays (vs. 18-19)

2. We must follow our calling (vv. 20-24)

- a. The record is accurate – “lie not” (vs. 20)
- b. The real story is retraced (vv. 21-23)

This story is retraced by:

1. The places he went - vs. 21
2. The people he missed – vs. 22
3. The past which was known – vv. 23-24
 - a. It began with persecution (“which persecuted us in times past” – 23a)
 - b. It changed to preaching (“preacheth the faith” – 23b)
 - c. It ended with praise (“And they glorified God in me” - 24).

John MacArthur stated a worthy desire and goal in his preaching ministry, when he writes: “It continues to be a rewarding divine communion for me to preach expositively through the New Testament. My goal is always to have deep fellowship with the Lord in the understanding of His Word, and out of that experience to explain to His people what a passage means. In the words of Nehemiah 8:8, I strive ‘to give the sense’ of it so they may truly hear God speak and, in so doing, may respond to Him.”

Men, if a sermon is worth preaching; it's worth preaching right. It's time to finish this manual on preaching. Let me share with you what one of my instructors said while attending the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music. **"Preach the Word and love the people!"** Gentlemen, you won't go wrong with this combination. Now let's get on with it!

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