**LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

# AN EXAMINATION OF THE PREACHING AND TEACHING STYLE OF JESUS IN RELATION TO CURRENT EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS

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**In partial fulfillment of the requirements**
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**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE PREACHING AND TEACHING STYLE OF JESUS IN RELATION TO CURRENT EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS**

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004

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Much of current evangelical pulpit ministry has veered away from the style and content demonstrated by Jesus in His preaching and teaching. The purpose of this project is to encourage pastoral preachers and teachers to prepare and practice their preaching and teaching according to the model provided by Jesus as revealed in the Gospels. Based on an examination of available literature concerning Jesus' ministry as a communicator, and interviews with leading evangelical pastors, the project offers personal perspectives and practical advice concerning greater effectiveness in pastoral preaching and teaching by using Jesus as a model.

Abstract length: 95 words.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

Jesus is regarded by the majority of Christians as the paramount model for excellence in teaching and preaching. Few, if any, among evangelical clergy who have studied and practiced homiletics, the art of preaching, would argue against the fact that Jesus is without peer among the master communicators of the message of the Scriptures. This being the case, it should follow that the methods and message of the "Master Communicator" would command the attention of present-day preaching and teaching and be applied purposely to current homiletical efforts.

## The Need for This Study

To the careful observer of the contemporary church scene who is cognizant of the need to be motivated by the example of Jesus' life and ministry, it becomes apparent that the output from many pulpits has veered away from a method and message similar to those of Jesus. Instead, much of today's sermonizing has conformed to types of content and delivery that are weak in adequate biblical exegesis, creative rhetorical style, relevant application of the Word of God to the issues of daily personal concerns, and a bold and dynamic engagement with the audience in a manner of delivery that is Holy Spirit anointed and expressed with the needed blend of love and authority.

This assessment does not necessarily mean that there is an absence of skillful public speaking performance. In the religious vein, the motivational pep-talk along with

the “steps to success” and “how-to” approaches have increasingly appeared in the pulpits of America. These popularized styles that have found their place in the sales industry and executive leadership training venues are of proven merit in their aim to stimulate their listeners to more effective sales and leadership. In and of themselves, the high-energy speeches that are designed to inform, instruct and inspire are appropriate for their proper use, even in certain aspects of religious education and motivation. However, when it comes to the primary objective of communicating the substance and essence of the Christian faith, it is the content and application of the Bible that must receive prime attention and this can be most effectively accomplished through preaching and teaching.[1] This being the case, the author further suggests that for current preaching and teaching to be at its best, primary attention and practice should be given to the ways in which Jesus preached and taught.

## The Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this project is to examine the preaching and teaching style of Jesus, determine its evaluation by leading evangelical pastors of today, and encourage current pastors to give it primary attention in their preaching and teaching. To accomplish this purpose the author will present key components in the preaching and teaching style

[1]The writer of the proposal will use the phrase “preaching and teaching” to convey the joint emphasis of preaching and teaching in the ministry of Jesus and current pastoral ministry. This approach is suggested and used by some scholars; see David L. Larsen in *The Evangelism Mandate: Recovering the Centrality of Gospel Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992), 49. Cf. Klaas Runia, “What Is Preaching According to the New Testament?” Tyndale Bulletin, 29 (1978), 15; Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), 123-125.

of Jesus. He will then draw upon related responses from personal interviews with leading evangelical pastors, and correlate these two elements, concluding with the contention that preaching and teaching of today, in practice as well as theory, should prioritize the example of the manner and message of Jesus.

## The Limitations of This Study

The project will be presented with the following limitations. First, the author does not attempt to present an exhaustive treatment of all available references from the Scriptures or related literature to corroborate or illustrate point, but uses representative references for that purpose. For example, when dealing with the parables of Jesus as one of the sources of evidence for His manner and message, only selected parables are cited.

Second, the model of Jesus' style of preaching and teaching given by the author is not meant to serve as an exclusive representation. It is intended to present an analysis that the author has structured on clearly identifiable components of Jesus' ministry as recorded in the Gospels.

Third, the use of the comments of the interviewed pastors is determined according to the discretion of the author. All that each of the interviewees said does not appear in the main text of the dissertation, even though the full transcripts of the interviews appear in Appendices I through VII. In the judgment of the author, the statements that best relate to the subject being discussed will be used.

Fourth, the interviewees respond to the questions that refer to Jesus as a model for preaching and teaching from their own personal perspective of that model. They were not exposed to the author's profile of the manner and message of Jesus prior to the interviews.

## The Methodology of This Study

The author examines the preaching and teaching style of Jesus. He then presents discussion on its evaluation by leading evangelical pastors of today, identifies ways in which the interviewees relate their preaching and teaching to Jesus' model, and encourages current pastors to give it priority in their own pulpit ministries. The first chapter of this project describes the approach that is taken in this study. The remainder of the presentation of the project is distributed through four additional chapters.

Chapter II examines the manner and message of Jesus, which is the first major element in representing the model of Jesus' preaching and teaching as a primary goal for present-day pulpit communicators. The most obvious line of direction by which this may be accomplished is to comment on the two components of this element. The manner of Jesus' preaching and teaching begins the discussion, followed by consideration of the content of the message.

In dealing with the manner of Jesus' communicative activities two essential questions are answered: How did Jesus relate His mission in life to the manner of communicating His message, and how did He relate the manner by which He preached and taught to the people with whom He came in contact?

Chapter III gives attention to personal interviews conducted by the author with seven leading evangelical pastor-preachers. The interviewees' responses to the questions come from their own personal perspective of the model of Jesus' preaching and teaching, as well as their comments as to why the aspects of that model should be used as a directing factor for 21st century homiletics. The criteria by which the pastors were selected to be interviewed are discussed, as well as brief biographical sketches of the

interviewees. The questions that were asked in the interviews are presented, followed by an explanation of the objective of each question and statements taken from the pastors' responses to the questions.

The responses of the interviewees to the questions presented, or portions of their responses within the proper context, may be rightly drawn upon as a means of affirmation of the author's presentation of Jesus' model for preaching and teaching. Even though the interviewed pastors were speaking from their concept of a "Jesus model", the author does not consider it necessary for the interviewees to have studied the author's analysis in order for their comments on the model to be regarded as relevant for comparison. Had the interviewees been instructed in the author's analysis of the model, it could be asserted that their opinions had been "tainted", therefore, not as effective a testimony for reinforcement of the author's view of the model. Considering the similarity of evangelical theological background of the interviewees, their concept of the style and message of Jesus would not differ essentially from that which the author presents.

Chapter IV will show pastoral preaching and teaching comments as they correlate with key aspects of the preaching and teaching of Jesus. Based upon his examination of Jesus as a preacher and teacher and the interviews with leading evangelical pastors, the author analyzes and correlates the elements of Jesus' style of preaching and teaching and relates commentary of the interviewed pastors in order to support his contention that current pastors should give primary attention to the manner and message of Jesus in their preaching and teaching ministries.

Chapter V brings the presentation of the project to its conclusion. The author opens the chapter with personal experiences from his pastoral ministry that are relevant to

the concluding focus. He refers briefly to the examination of the preaching and teaching ministry of Jesus, and responses from interviews with leading evangelical pastors. Based on these subjects the author offers conclusive principles, suggests application of the principles, and expresses a challenge to fellow pastors.

## The Literature Pertinent to This Study

Some of the current literature from which major research for this project has been drawn will now be discussed. The information will present the publications and make comment on their relationship to principal components treated in the project.

### Published Works

Two publications by Dr. Brad Young, a professor of Biblical Studies in the Graduate School of Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, have proven valuable in the author's research in the areas of Jesus' manner and message of preaching and teaching. The works are: *Jesus, the Jewish Theologian* and *The Parables.*[2] In reference to the rhetorical forms used by Jesus, all of the six chapters in the book's Part Three: "The Jewish Theology in Jesus' Parables" have yielded much helpful material. Since over a third of the preaching and teaching of Jesus is in parables, Young's *The Parables* has been a valuable source for this project. For example, he explains ways in which Jesus' use of the parable form was out-of-the-ordinary from the rabbinic method and, although basically similar, more skillfully and effectively used as a rhetorical tool.

[2]Brad H. Young, *Jesus, the Jewish Theologian* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999) and *The Parables* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

In a similar vein, Joachim Jeremias' *The Parables of Jesus*[3] is a classic in presenting information that helps one to grasp the substance and essence of the parable form and Jesus' use of it. Of particular value in research for this project are Chapter 10, "The Setting", and Section III that give direction regarding correct principles of interpretation for the parable form.

*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*[4] employs the expertise of 95 Biblical scholars to provide introductory discussions and comprehensive surveys of topics on Jesus and the Gospels that are not handled adequately in most Bible dictionaries. This volume gives greater depth of coverage and concentration to subjects such as authority, commandment, Son of Man, and others that were essential in the author's research.

A wealth of helpful knowledge has been drawn by the author from another reference volume of essays on significant background issues vital for study of the Gospels, *Dictionary of New Testament Backgrounds.*[5] This 1,300 page volume is a treasure trove of information on scholarly data regarding every conceivable New Testament subject from "Adam and Eve: Literature Concerning" to "Writing and Literature: Jewish." The author has used this compendium of contemporary Biblical scholarship extensively in research for this project. A part of the value of this work goes beyond its actual text. The direction it has given the author to explore other works referenced in the articles has been of significant worth.

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[3]Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 1963).

[4]Joel B. Green and Scott McKnight, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992).

[5]Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Backgrounds* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

Geza Vermes, Professor of Jewish Studies at Oxford University, Oxford, England, is recognized as one of the leading Jewish scholars on Jesus and provides well-researched information and insight from the perspective of the "Jewishness" of Jesus. His knowledge of first-century Jewish thought and culture and his skill in presenting it in connection with analysis of Jesus' manner and message are represented in a trilogy, two of which have been used by the author. *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* and *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*[6] deal directly or indirectly with most of the issues in the life and ministry of Jesus on which this project focuses. Even though Vermes does not endorse Jesus as divine or as Messiah, the enlightenment that he gives as an expert in Jesus' historic setting as it affects His personhood is a mine of useful instruction.

Robert H. Stein's *The Method and Message of Jesus-Revised Edition*[7] has been beneficial to the author of this project in providing ideas on how to structure the presentation of the ways and means by which Jesus preached and taught. Dr. Stein presents various forms of rhetoric used by Jesus and gives valuable comment on Jesus' personal authority, the Kingdom of God, and ethical teachings—subjects which are treated by the author in this project.

A most helpful and practical New Testament survey work for the author's research has been Robert H. Gundry's *A Survey of the New Testament.*[8] As a reference for the overview on Jesus' public life and teachings it has provided valuable guidance on

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[6]Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) and *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis*:* Fortress Press, 1993).

[7]Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus-Revised Edition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

[8]Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament,* 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

connecting preaching and teaching events to the particular instance or situation that prompted or accompanied it.

The books *Jesus* and *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*[9] are works by the late Dr. David Flusser who was a noted scholar at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As an expert in Judaism and early Christianity and a scholar on the life and ministry of Jesus, Dr. Flusser contributes some very incisive information. In *Jesus* he addresses subjects dealt with in the "content of Jesus' message" section of this thesis project.[10] In *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, the chapter entitled "A Rabbinic Parallel to the Sermon on the Mount," Flusser illustrates how information from ancient Jewish sources serves as a key to understanding Jesus' self-awareness and His message.[11]

A unique kind of commentary that calls attention to information from historic, theological, and linguistic sources that shed clearer light on New Testament passages, is David H. Stern's *Jewish New Testament Commentary*[12] including the Gospel texts. Verse by verse, and at times, phrase by phrase, Stern has presented commentary drawn from Judaic sources that clarifies the understanding of Jesus' discourses and briefer remarks. Several of the applicable observations from this work will appear in those parts of the thesis presentation where the manner and message of Jesus is discussed.

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[9]David Flusser, *Jesus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998) and *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988).

[10]See Chapter II of this dissertation, p. 33.

[11]Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, pp. 494-508.

[12]David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1996).

*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*[13] remains one of the best of its kind as a work on the life of Christ. The author has used this work of Alfred Edersheim as a source for details on teaching passages and appreciates the thoroughness of the information. Even though the original volumes were published in 1883 and much has been discovered in the field since that time, the content and scholarship of this classic work is still valuable and usable, especially with recent updating of its information.

John H. Wenham's *Christ and the Bible*[14] has a chapter that deals with the problem of whether Jesus' teaching is worthy of the authority He claimed and that the church claims for it today. The content of this chapter speaks effectively to the issue of Jesus' authority as addressed in this project. *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ,*[15] a well-worn favorite in the author's library, contains a valuable chapter on "The Teaching Method of Jesus"[16] in which the late, great Scottish scholar, James S. Stewart, gives some valuable information on ways in which Jesus' most profound teaching was elicited by incidents and events that He confronted, and the ways He adapted to His audience.

## Periodical Literature

Among several articles in periodicals, two in particular call for mention due to the perspective they added to the author's understanding of the subjects they treated. "Jesus

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[13]Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,* Fifth Printing (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

[14]John H. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973).

[15]James S. Stewart, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: The Committee on Publications, Church of Scotland, 1954).

[16]Ibid. pp. 71-78.

the Only Teacher"[17] by Samuel Byrskog includes helpful insight into the method of Jesus' communication skills that the author has not seen in other writings. Roger Congdon's article, "Did Jesus Sustain the Law in Matthew 5?"[18] provides valuable information regarding the meaning of Jesus' statements on the commandments he addressed in this "Sermon on the Mount" passage.

## Internet Sources

The author has found and utilized a valuable source of comment on the relationship of current preaching and teaching to Jesus' style and content from interviews by Rick Warren, John Maxwell, Jack Graham, and Haddon Robinson published on the *Preaching* website.[19]

## Miscellaneous Sources

Material for this project also comes from several works that will be quoted or referred to that are not included in this review. Standard tools of study such as versions of the Bible,[20] Greek and Hebrew reference works, and concordances have also been used extensively but are not reviewed here.

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[17]Samuel Byrskorg, "Jesus the Only Teacher," *Tyndale Bulletin* 45.2 (1994): 413-414.

[18]Roger D. Congdon, "Did Jesus Sustain the Law in Matthew 5?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135: 538 (1978): 117-125.

[19]Michael Duduit, ed., "Purpose Driven Preaching: An Interview with Rick Warren," *Preaching*, September-October, 2001 [article on line] and "Expository Preaching in a Narrative World: An Interview with Haddon Robinson," *Preaching*, July-August, 2001 [article on line]; available from http://www.preaching.com/preaching/pastissues; Internet; accessed 10 October 2003.

[20] All Biblical quotations in this work are taken from *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (New York: International Bible Society, 1978).

# CHAPTER II

# JESUS AS A MODEL FOR PREACHING AND TEACHING

An examination of the manner and message of Jesus is the first major element in presenting a model of Jesus' preaching and teaching as a primary goal for present-day pulpit communicators. The most obvious line of direction by which this may be accomplished is to discuss the two components of this element. The manner of Jesus' preaching and teaching begins the discussion, followed by consideration of the content of His message.

## Jesus' Manner of Preaching and Teaching

In dealing with the manner of Jesus' communicative activities, two questions become essential: How did Jesus relate His mission in life to the manner of communicating His message, and how did He relate the manner by which He preached and taught to the people with whom He came into contact?

### Jesus' Manner As It Related to Prayer and Worship

In order to come anywhere near grasping a general concept of the manner in which Jesus conducted His preaching and teaching ministry, it is essential to focus attention on the way in which He placed a priority on prayer and communion with the Father in worship. It is not the author's purpose in this section to focus only on Jesus' teachings on prayer, a category which, in itself, is vast. The objective here is to emphasize His personal prayer life.

There are three significant facts that claim one's attention when considering the prayer life of Jesus. First, prayer was the habitual atmosphere of Jesus' daily experience. Second, Jesus was found praying at all the great crises of His career. Third, our Lord's prayers contained several different elements: petition as well as communion with the Father, and intercession as well as thanksgiving. In all of these respects, His style of proclaiming and instructing the people was deeply affected.

Evidence of Jesus' daily habit of prayer can be seen throughout the Gospels. We see Jesus rising up early in the morning to pray "while all the world was still asleep."[1] After a day of incessant activity that might understandably have worn Him out, He kept His watch with the Father all through the night (Mark 6: 46). When the crowds surged around Him and invaded His privacy, clamoring greedily for His help, Jesus turned His thoughts and feelings toward heaven to draw strength (Mark 7: 34).

We may assume that Jesus was brought up to say the *Shema* and the Eighteen Benedictions twice a day.[2] The fact that He regarded the Temple pre-eminently as a "house of prayer" (Mark 11:17; cf. Isaiah 56:7) suggests that prayer was central for Jesus within the much larger ritual and sacrificial procedures in the Temple.[3] And it was evidently His regular practice to worship in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Although His praying covered the usual times of prayer, morning and evening, His need of prayer went far beyond the formal expectations. Each of the occasions recorded by

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[1]James S. Stewart, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ, Vol. 2* (Edinburgh: The Committee on Publications of the Church of Scotland, 1954), 108.

[2]Both of these forms of prayer were standard daily prayers which all devout Jewish families recited during Jesus' lifetime and in continuing Judaic practice to the present time.

[3]Joel B. Green and Scott McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 618.

Mark seem to have been at a time of decision and temptation regarding Jesus' character and emphases of His vocation.[4] Luke, along with Matthew and Mark, records the Gethsemane prayer, but in addition Luke refers to eight further occasions when Jesus prayed, following His baptism (3:21), after His early success (5:16), prior to His choosing the Twelve (6:12-13), prior to Peter's confession (9:18), on the mount of Transfiguration (9:28-29), prior to His teaching the Model Prayer (11:1), and twice on the cross (23: 34 and 46).[5] It is also significant to note that the frequency and intensity with which Jesus prayed reflects the emphasis that He taught regarding headstrong persistence in prayer. Especially in the parables of the Importunate Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8) and the Unjust Judge (Luke 18: 1-8), Jesus makes it clear that true faith enacted in prayer is committing all one knows about himself or herself to all he or she knows about God.[6]

The evidence is clear and consistent in the Gospels: Jesus was a man of prayer. His personal and exemplary commitment to the indispensable need for regular communion with the Father is a clear feature of the portrait of His style and manner.

## Jesus' Manner As It Related to His Mission

An indispensable ingredient in understanding Jesus' modus operandi as a communicator is to realize the way in which He related preaching and teaching to His very mission on earth. From the obvious overall impression that is portrayed in the Gospels, Jesus viewed Himself as one who, simply stated, was on a mission to be the Savior of a sin-condemned humanity. The compelling force of such a mission is the

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[4]Ibid., 618.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Brad H. Young, *Jesus the Jewish Theologian* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 171-172.

dynamic from which one's strategy would emerge. This was the case with Jesus—*Yeshua*—whose very name speaks of salvation. He tied His mission to the activity of preaching and teaching as revealed in a landmark statement that is found in Luke 4:18. He read from the opening verses of Isaiah, chapter 61,

> The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's return.

Luke, the Gospel writer, makes a point of including in his description of this event the words, "The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him" (Luke 4:20). In this dramatic moment, Jesus made a landmark statement. "Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). There are two implications in Jesus' remark, each of which reveals significant information. First, the statement can be taken as a clear affirmation that the Isaiah 61:1, 2 reference relates directly to Him.[7] Second, the scripture speaks of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon the one to whom it refers for the purpose of anointing, which rings with messianic-type association.

As Jesus relates the reference directly to Himself he does not start out by reminding the audience of the golden days, now gone forever, when Jehovah stretched out His mighty arm and performed miracles on earth. Neither does He entertain His listeners with bright promises pertaining to the future. He does not refer to the past nor to the future, but speaks about the here and now. He assures the people of Nazareth with whom He had grown up that the prophetic promise has actually arrived. "Today", He

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[7] William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary, Vol. 4, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 252.

says, “while you are listening to Me, the passage I read to you has been and is being realized.”[8]

The anointing spoken of in the passage implied that the Savior had been set apart and qualified for a task. This is made clearer by the fact that at His baptism “the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form, as a dove” (Luke 3:22). The claim of Jesus that “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me” strengthens the assertion that He is directed by God to minister and preach.[9]

Rick Warren points out, “When Jesus preached His first sermon at Nazareth, He read from Isaiah to announce what the preaching agenda of His ministry would be.”[10] Jesus indicated from the beginning that what He was to do and say would be compelled by His calling to tell the good news to the poor, tell the captives that they are free, to tell the blind that they can see again, to free those who have been treated unfairly, and to announce the time when the Lord will show His kindness.[11]

## Jesus’ Manner As It Related to the People

Having defined the attitude with which Jesus related His mission in life to the manner of communicating His message, the second question focuses on the way in which Jesus activated His attitude: How did He relate the manner by which He preached and taught to the people with whom He came in contact?

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Darrell L. Bock, *Luke* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 88.

[10]Rick Warren, “A Primer on Preaching Like Jesus,” *Rick Warren’s Ministry Toolbox* 47 (10-April 2002) [article on line] ; available from http://www.pastors.com/RWMT/printerfriendly.asp?issue=47&artID=1595; Internet; accessed 12 October 2003.

[11]Ibid.

***Jesus' Connection with the Needs of the People***

The testimony that is drawn from the Gospels reveals that Jesus connected His message with the apparent needs of the people, many of whom were marginal in society. Jesus' whole life and teaching took place within the context of the social world of first-century Judaism in which a person was embedded in what may be rightly called a social matrix. Most of Jesus' teaching and preaching must be understood within this context.

Jesus' connection with physical and emotional needs

Jesus also related the manner by which He preached and taught to the people with whom He came into contact by connecting several of His messages to the physical and emotional hurts and needs of the people. A study of the pericopes of Jesus' preaching and teaching shows them to be associated with meeting the peoples' needs such as healing, encouragement, and dysfunctional spiritual issues.[12] Some of the episodes are recorded in only one of the Gospels or the Book of Acts. Still others appear in two or three of the Gospels, Acts, or I Corinthians, while a few others show up in all four of the Gospels. From this research, significant to the biblical focus of the project, several notable observations may be derived that emphasize the direct, immediate correlation of Jesus' preaching and teaching with His ministry of healing, casting out demons, and dealing with the hurts and variety of questions He confronted in the lives of the people.

[12]See Appendix X, Daniel Light, "The Preaching and Teaching Passages of Jesus: Their Relevance to the Lives of the People," pp. 178-185.

Jesus' connection with physical needs through healing

Physical healings demonstrated Jesus' compassion and His concern to break down any barriers between Himself and the people.[13] Three major kinds of healings occur in the Gospels, which may be designated as exorcisms, physical healings, and resurrections. Some of the healings were administered in response to faith while others were performed to instill faith.[14]

In regard to exorcisms (a technical term for the expulsion of demons): while teaching by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus engaged in healing and exorcism.[15] Again, Jesus deals with the demonic, described as "unclean spirits", then teaches His standard of righteousness compared with conventional religion.[16] In yet another instance, Jesus casts a demon out of a man, and responds to some from the crowd who ask for a sign from heaven by instructing them about the "sign of Jonah" given by God.[17]

In the Gospels, eleven incidents were found by the author in which preaching or teaching was prompted by a ministry of physical healing. Three of those occasions suffice to illustrate the point. One remarkable account tells of a paralytic man being lowered through the roof of a house by His friends. Jesus heals the man but has His authority to forgive sins challenged by some of the onlookers, and responds to the

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[13]Craig L. Blomberg, "Healing," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Joel B. Green and Scott McKnight, eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 299.

[14]Ibid.

[15]See Light, Appendix X, Table, Item 9, p.178.

[16]Ibid., Item 10, p. 179.

[17]Ibid., Item 31, p. 180.

criticism with instruction.[18] Another man with a withered hand is healed by Jesus on the Sabbath and again is criticized, this time for a supposed violation of the regulations concerning activity on the Sabbath, and His response to the criticism enlightens the group on the correct attitude about healing on the Sabbath.[19] Ten men afflicted with leprosy are healed by Jesus and when only one returns to thank him He is asked about the time of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and answers with a teaching.[20]

The ultimate performances of healing, Jesus' acts of resurrecting the dead, are portrayed in His bringing the daughter of Jairus back to life (Luke 8:49-56), and the dramatic raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44). In the case of the resurrection of Lazarus, even though there was no teaching given aside from Jesus' statement that He was the "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), there is a definite link to His preaching and teaching. In reaction to the miracle, the members of the religious ruling council, the Sanhedrin, concluded, "If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him" (John 11:48). Obviously, the evidence of such miraculous power in Jesus, or anyone for that matter, would have substantially increased the attention of His audience and the likelihood that they would believe His teaching. Healings, resuscitations and exorcisms were an invasion and preliminary overthrow by God's kingdom of Satan's kingdom as represented by disease, death and demonism.[21]

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[18]Ibid., Item 4, p. 178.

[19]Ibid., Item 8, p. 178.

[20]Ibid., Item 42, p. 180.

[21]Robert H, *A Survey of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 134.

Jesus' connection with physical needs through food

On at least two occasions Jesus provided food for the hungry crowds who followed him. Both instances involved a miracle of multiplication of a meager amount of food to feed thousands. One instance involved a crowd of five thousand (Matthew 14:21) and another four thousand (Matthew 15:8). The concern that Jesus demonstrates for the hungry crowd who were in a remote location, and His dialogue with the disciples regarding insistence that the people be fed, clearly indicates that as important as it was to preach and teach, he was not the least detached from consideration for their need to eat, and did not follow the suggestion of the disciples that the crowd be dismissed to find food on their own.[22]

Jesus' connection with spiritual needs

In addition to the association of several of Jesus' messages to the physical and emotional hurts and needs of the people, He responded to their spiritual needs as well. The spiritual needs with which Jesus dealt in His preaching and teaching to individuals, groups, and large crowds may be separated into two categories for the purpose of better understanding His manner of approach.

*Spiritual needs that people recognized and admitted.* Some of those needs were ones the people recognized, as with Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, steeped in the atmosphere of Judaism as he practiced it, seeking out Jesus, whom he addressed as "rabbi." "No one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him," he stated (John 3:2). Jesus, realizing that Nicodemus' statement revealed a spiritual

[22]See Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 324.

hunger, replied with the formula that brings about a spiritual rebirth. It is probable that Nicodemus, even though he was regarded as a religious leader and a member of a strictly observant sect, the Pharisees, was dissatisfied with his own spiritual condition and intrigued by what he had felt and heard when listening to Jesus and witnessing his miracles. Nicodemus clearly indicates that he regards Jesus as a "Rabbi…a teacher who has come from God" (John 3:2). He received what Jesus had to say to him about the need to be "born again" and, as later indicated, came to be a follower of Jesus (John 19:38).

Zacchaeus—a man whose name means "pure" in Hebrew—was by no means considered pure in the eyes of his fellow Jews. As a despised tax collector for the Roman-appointed officials, he could have been aware of his dysfunctional spiritual condition and, when Jesus came through the village of Jericho, Zacchaeus climbed a tree to get a clear view of Him. No doubt Jesus recognized a spiritual hunger in this unpopular man and singled him out with a self-announced invitation to be a guest in his home. The joyful response of Zacchaeus indicates a definite recognition of his own need. He responds to the ministry of Jesus in repentance and a pledge to restoration, in reply to which Jesus assures him that he has received salvation (Luke 19:1-10).

*Spiritual needs that people failed to recognize and admit.* Others did not so readily face up to their spiritual need, but Jesus called their deficiency to their attention with masterful skill, as in the case of the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-42). In her dialogue with Jesus, the woman was reluctant to discuss her spiritual situation, attempting to distract attention to her personal spiritual condition by introducing a doctrinal argument into the conversation. Jesus masterfully got the discussion back on track and led the woman from reluctance to belief. Her testimony immediately became a key to Jesus

remaining in the Samaritan village for two days to teach them and win many of them to belief in Him as Messiah (John 4:39).

Also, on several occasions, Jesus called attention to the dysfunctional spiritual condition of those who identified themselves as the religious elite, while He hardly criticized at all the spiritual condition of the general populace (Mark 12:38-40). He repeatedly responded to criticism by some of the sect of the Pharisees who denounced Him and His disciples' failure to comply with their traditions. Their criticisms became a platform for Jesus to explain that spiritual defilement has its source in the heart of the individual (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23; John 7:1). At times, He made it a point to speak out sharply against the sham and pretense of certain of the Pharisees whose external religiosity served only as a cover-up for their lack of spiritual authenticity, thus defiling true inner faith. They had a desperate need and failed to recognize and deal with it (Matthew 23:1-39).

We know that many Pharisees served God faithfully in genuine devotion (John 19:38-39, Acts 5:34 and Acts 23:6-8). Therefore, when Jesus charges the Pharisees with hypocrisy, it must not be viewed as a summary dismissal of a whole movement. What He was targeting was the failure of some of these professed spiritual leaders to live what they professed.[23]

### *Jesus' Use of a Clearly Understandable Style of Speaking*

Not only did Jesus connect His message to the needs of the people, but He also employed a style of speaking that could be clearly understood by those to whom He

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[23]See Ron Mosely, *Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church* (Baltimore: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 1996), 96. Mosely, a specialist in the study of the Pharisees, includes several pages of enlightening information on the sect in this volume.

spoke. The rhetorical approaches chosen by Jesus were used to make his message understandable. Although the forms we discuss are also a part of the content of the message—which is later to be treated—the author chooses to deal with them under the heading of the manner of communication.

The rhetorical forms Jesus used

At least ten rhetorical forms are recognizable in Jesus' communication style. These are frequently overlooked as factors that made Jesus a great teacher. Rhetorical forms are an important part of the *how*, or the exciting manner in which He taught. An investigation of these forms and techniques that Jesus used is helpful to our understanding of His effectiveness to communicate.

*Jesus made use of questions.* Jesus frequently used questions when He addressed an audience. He would ask a question in order to draw out the correct answer He sought rather than simply stating the answer outright, thus impressing His point more convincingly on people's minds. The turning point of His entire ministry centered around an incident in Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus asked His disciples:

> "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered Him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Messiah." And He sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about Him (Mark 8:27-31).

Other examples of the use of questions by Jesus are His inquiry of the disciples as to whether they could "drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the same baptism I am baptized with" (Mark 10:38), as a challenge to their desire for a place of influence, or His asking, "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" (Matthew 21:31) to get a response to His parable about the son who said he would work but did not, and the son

who refused to agree to work, but changed his mind and came to work. Jesus' climactic ending of the parable of the Good Samaritan presents a question to his hearers. "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" (Luke 10:36).

Jesus most frequently used the question as a rhetorical device, not so much to draw a verbal response as to produce an effect, such as getting a sense of agreement from His listeners to what he was saying. For instance, when He asked, "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will you give him a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake?" (Matthew 7:9-10). Or the query, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?" (Mark 4:30).

A more polemical use of this method of teaching was Jesus' use of the counter question.[24] The counter question is a method of argumentation, and may be defined here as a question raised by Jesus in response to a question that is either stated or implied, or a situation in which He is expected to reply. In contrast to His use of rhetorical questions, however, Jesus always expected a verbal or mental response to His counter question. For example:

> Again they came to Jerusalem. As He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?" Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me." They argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But shall we say 'Of human origin?'"—they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things" (Luke 19:1-6).

[24]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings,* 23.

Jesus also answered a question with a question when He healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But, on hearing the question, the Pharisees credited the healing to Beelzebub, the prince of demons. In this account, Jesus knew their thoughts and countered with the question,

> "If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself, How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? . . . Or again how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man?" (Matthew 12:26-29).

What may appear to the reader of the Gospels as apparent attempts on the part of Jesus to duck the questions, actually became occasions for Him to ask questions that pierced to the hearts of issues. Jesus skillfully dissected the theology and practice of learned men with questions like "What did Moses command about divorce?" (Matthew 19:7) and "Which of these became a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" (Luke 10:36).[25]

*Jesus often taught with parables.* The most famous form used by Jesus in His teaching is the parable. Scholars have frequently pointed out that this is the most characteristic element of Jesus' teaching, since about 35 percent of his instruction in the Synoptic Gospels is found in parabolic form.[26]

In church as a child, the author, like many Sunday School attenders, was taught that a parable is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." The parable has also been

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[25]Conrad Gempf, *Jesus Asked: What He Wanted to Know* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 136.

[26]This observation is clearly confirmed in: Craig Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 19; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 1963), 11-12; Brad H. Young, *The Parables* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 7.

defined as "a short fictitious story that teaches a moral or religious principle."[27] The Greek word *parabole,* from which the English term is taken, refers essentially to "what is cast alongside", and the Hebrew word for parable, *mashal*, though having a wide range of meanings—proverb, riddle, anecdote, fable, of allegory—serves to define the unknown by using what is known.[28]

Since this study is primarily concerned with Jesus' use of the parable, it is appropriate to deal, initially, with the question of why Jesus taught in parables. Three reasons will be given here. First, there is reason to believe that Jesus used parables to conceal His teaching from those "outside."[29] Jesus' opponents continually attempted to find fault with Him and His message, as well as to discredit Him in the eyes of the Roman authorities. His use of parables made it more difficult to bring evidence against Him. A second possible reason Jesus made use of parables may seem to contradict the first. He used parables to illustrate and clarify His message to His followers.[30] Certainly, the parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates "who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29) in a very graphic way, and the story known as the Prodigal Son dramatically illustrates the love of God for sinners and His warm welcome of those who repent (Luke 15:11-32).

Jesus' third possible use of the parabolic form may have been to disarm His listeners. Jeremias points out that,

> The parables were preponderantly concerned with a situation of conflict. They correct, reprove, attack. For the greater part, though not exclusively, the

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[27]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings*, 33.

[28]Young, *The Parables*, 3.

[29]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings*, 41.

[30]Young, *The Parables*, 8.

> parables are weapons of warfare. Every one of them calls for an immediate response.[31]

People sometimes listened to Jesus without throwing up a defensive screen, only to discover that His parable was directed to them. An example of this is the occasion when certain religious leaders realized that Jesus had "told a parable against them" and wanted to arrest Him, but did not do so because they feared the crowd (Mark 12:1-11).

Whatever the reason for using parables at any given time in His ministry one thing is certain: Jesus incorporated real-life, down-to-earth content in His parables. They were not characterized by the Greek mode of fables and fairy tale type object lessons. The material for Jesus' stories came from His own observations and experiences in the Jewish culture of His rural environment of Galilee. A shepherd who has a flock of a hundred sheep leaves the ninety-nine in the fold to go out and find the one that is lost (Luke 15:4-7). A sower scatters his seed over unplowed ground where it reacts to different kinds of soil (Luke 8:5-15). A man plants a vineyard, puts a fence around it, digs a pit for a wine press, and builds a watchtower, then leases it to tenants and goes to another country (Mark 12:1-11).

Both Jesus and the rabbis of His time loved to tell parables in order to capture and hold the attention of their listeners and drive home the meaning of their teachings about God and people.[32]

*Jesus used hyperbole.* Hyperbole is an extreme overstatement; an exaggeration that makes a literal fulfillment of the statement impossible. For example, a reference is

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[31]Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus,* 21.

[32]Young, *The Parables,* 297.

made by Jesus about "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel" (Matthew 23:23-24). In this statement we have a hyperbole. Another example is found in Matthew 7:3-5:

> Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

Even though the meaning of Jesus' words is clear and the forceful meaning comes across, it is evident that such a thing could never happen. No one has an eye large enough to contain a log. The shock effect in the extreme statement of the hyperbole paints a picture in the mind that is so ridiculously absurd, it is not likely to be forgotten.

*Jesus used the pun.* The pun, a kind of double entendre, is a play on words which suggests two or more different meanings to the same-sounding word. The purpose of such a device is to maintain the attention of the audience and enhance the chances of remembering what is spoken.[33] Jesus use of puns is frequently not evident in English or any other translation of the Bible, including the NT Greek, but can be deduced from the Aramaic rendering. For example, why would Jesus use the figures of a gnat and a camel to illustrate the point that the Pharisees ignore the "weightier matters" of justice, mercy and faith, while giving detailed attention to secondary regulations. The answer lies in the Aramaic words for gnat and camel, since both words have a similar sight and sound. Gnat is *galma* and camel is *gamla.* In this use of a pun, Jesus employs a play on words and says, "You blind guides, you strain out a *galma* but turn around and swallow a *gamla.*"[34]

When Jesus is talking to Nicodemus about the apparent mystery of the new birth He says, "You don't know where it (the wind) comes from or where it goes. So it is with

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[33]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings*, 12.

[34]Ibid.

everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:8). In Aramaic the word for both wind and spirit is *ruha.* The cleverness of the pun no doubt served Jesus as a vehicle to stir people's imagination and give them a hook on which to hang their retention of His preaching and teaching.

*Jesus used similes.* A simile is an explicit comparison between two things that are essentially unlike each other, but are presented by a connective such as "like", or a verb such as "seems."[35] The simile is an aid to making a statement more clearly understood. A sample of a simile is found where Jesus tells His disciples that He is sending them out "like sheep into the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Another simile occurs when Jesus likens His burial and resurrection to the experience of Jonah and says, "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). In His denunciation of a group of scribes and Pharisees Jesus tells them, "You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean" (Matthew 23:27).

Similarity and dissimilarity are clear in the examples above. Jesus tells His followers they are like sheep so they need to exercise wisdom like serpents and doves in their innocence in relationship to unbelievers who are like wolves. Jesus' resurrection is likened to Jonah's temporary lodging in the fish's belly, and the outward appearance of the inwardly corrupt Pharisees is similar to tombs that are neat and clean on the outside but contain deadness and filth.

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[35]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings,* 14.

*Jesus used metaphors.* He was fond of using metaphors as a means of enhancing His statements. A metaphor, like a simile, is also a comparison between two unlike things, but a metaphor makes an implicit rather than explicit comparison. For example, rather than say, "The eye is like a lamp for the body"—a simile—the metaphor says, "The eye *is* the lamp for the body" (Matthew 10:12). The following are samples of metaphor as Jesus used the form in preaching and teaching:

> You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).
>
> At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to Him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work'" (Luke 13:31-32).
>
> You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? (Matthew 5:13; cf. Mark 9:49-50).

The comparison is obvious in the above examples, but there are no connectives such as "like", "and" or "than." The comparison is direct.

*Jesus used the proverb form.* On a number of teaching occasions spoke a saying that made a memorable statement in a striking manner. Generally speaking, a proverb is characterized by succinctness and consists of one sentence. Examples of Jesus' proverbs are:

> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:21).
>
> Prophets are not without honour, except in their own hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house (Mark 6:4).
>
> No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62).

All who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matthew 26:52).

*Jesus used the paradox.* The rhetorical element of paradox often appears in Jesus' messages. Certain statements may appear contradictory but when understood in the light of the beliefs and values among Jesus' contemporaries, no contradiction would be apparent. Jesus used paradox to illustrate the contrast between God-like attitudes and actions and those of normal human thinking.

Following are two examples of Jesus' use of paradox:

> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness (Matthew 23:27-28).

> He sat down at the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then He called His disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury, For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on" (Mark 12:41-44).

In these statements the contradictions are apparent. The external display of the religious leaders was in contrast to their inward corruption. The penny was a greater gift in the sight of God than the larger amount given by the wealthier contributors.

*Jesus employed irony.* Irony is subtle contrast that was effectively utilized by Jesus. Irony as He applied it consisted of stating something as an off-hand suggestion rather than an outright statement.[36] It can even border on sarcasm. Irony, as Jesus used it, drove home a point with great effectiveness. An example of the use of irony in the Gospels is where Jesus tells His hearers that even though they know how to predict the weather by interpreting the appearance of the sky, they cannot interpret the "signs of the

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[36]Ibid., 21.

times" (Matthew 16:2-3). Another instance in which Jesus used a form of irony is seen in a parable:

> Then He told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'" (Luke 12:16-20).

There is an unexpected conclusion that is shockingly ironic in the story above that drastically alters the plans of the rich man. He didn't figure the plans of God into his equation. It is ironic also, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, that a reversal of roles is used by Jesus to make His point. The Levite and priest, the supposed paragons of piety, turn out to be the villains, and the despised, mixed-race Samaritan becomes the hero (Luke 10:29-37).

*Jesus used the a fortiori, or "qal v' chomer."* What is known as *a fortiori* or its component in the Hebrew writings, *qal v'chomer***,** is not so much a figure of speech as it is a type of argument in which the conclusion follows with even greater logical necessity than the already accepted fact previously given. For example, the *qal v'chomer* (light and heavy) argument is exemplified in Jesus' assertion that to have anger in one's heart for another person is a violation to be regarded as serious as murder (Matthew 5:21-22), and to have lust in one's heart for a woman is tantamount to committing the act of adultery (Matthew 5:28). In commenting on the *qal v' chomer,* a noted Hebraic scholar points out:

> The commandment to love one's neighbor is here surely seen as a light commandment, although it is described in rabbinism and by Jesus (Matthew 22:38-40) as "a great summary of the Law". . . In any case, here the entire argument is not structured on a twofold—but rather a threefold gradation: the first

> trespass is the lack of love which leads to the second offense—hatred which will ultimately lead to the third grave sin—bloodshed.[37]

The classic Hebraic phrase "how much more," *alachat kama vechama*, also carries over into expressions that Jesus used frequently in His statements. For example:

> Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:9-11, italics added).

Here Jesus goes from the recognized fact that those in the audience who are evil, in contrast to the holiness of God, do not hesitate to do good for their children, which is all the more reason to conclude that God, who is totally good and is their heavenly Father will even more generously do what is good for His children.

Another example is spoken by Jesus in His "Sermon on the Mount":

> Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not *much more* clothe you—you of little faith? (Matthew 6:28-30, italics added).

## The Content of Jesus' Message

Information that specifically addresses concepts from the content of the message of Jesus, drawn from research in the Scriptures and other literature related to His ministry is essential to the consideration of Jesus' message. The categories of Jesus' person, kingdom, and commandments upon which He focused His preaching and teaching, can serve as guidelines for the content of 21st Century preaching and teaching. The various themes contained in the corpus of Jesus' message fit within the scope of these three categories.

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[37]David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, 1988), 502-503.

## Jesus' Message in Relation to His Person

The first of the three main categories under which the content of Jesus' message may be delineated is the issue of His own Personhood. In regard to standard theological terminology, this category primarily addresses the theological area of Christology**.** Jesus made it clear that personal commitment to Him was a major requisite of being right with God the Father.

### ***Jesus' Assumption of Authority***

It is important, then, to begin an examination of the Christological content of His message by pointing out that Jesus' words reveal His assumption of authority not held by any other person. For example, His authority was frequently expressed by the statement, "But I say unto you."

#### Jesus claim of authority over the Mosaic Law

It should be recognized that in no other area does Jesus' claim of authority stand out more clearly than in His assumed freedom to confirm, intensify, and revise, certain of the hundreds of commandments contained in the *Torah.* For example, in Matthew 5:38-39 Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say unto you, do not resist an evildoer."

To appreciate Jesus' authority regarding the *Torah* instructions accurately, it is essential to understand that He did not set them aside. He spoke of the permanent validity of the law:

> Do not think I have come to abolish the law of the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks the

> least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:17-20).

In an examination of the series of passages in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which have often been used to claim a pre-crucifixion abrogation of the law for the Jewish people, it becomes clear that (1) Jesus only abrogated some unscriptural traditions, not any of the written *Torah*, (2) that He corrected some wrong interpretations, but (3) He did not do away with the Old Testament legal injunctions. He confirmed them for the Jewish people living before Calvary.[38]

It is clear, however, that Jesus also felt free on His own authority, to rescind certain aspects of the law such as the clean and unclean restrictions concerning foods (Mark 7:1-23; especially v.19) and divorce (Mark 10:2-12).[39] Jesus makes no attempt to argue or justify His claim for such authority. There is simply a "But I say!" Jesus claimed to speak with an even greater authority than Moses, who received the stone tablets from the hand of God.[40]

Jesus' statement of His own personal authority

Jesus also testified concerning His authority by stating His own personal supremacy; a station that has come to be referred to in Christian circles as "Lordship." On the lips of anyone else these claims of Jesus would appear to be evidence of total

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[38]See Roger D. Congdon, "Did Jesus Sustain the Law in Matthew 5?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135: 538 (1978), 117-125.

[39]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings*, 120.

[40]Ibid.

arrogance because He gives the impression that the world revolves around Him and everyone's destiny pivots on their acceptance or rejection of Him.

Jesus claims that He, Himself, is the pivotal point of history and salvation. To obey Him is to be wise and escape judgment, but to reject His words is to be foolish and perish, because His words are the only solid foundation upon which to build (Matthew 7:24-27). He states that denial or acknowledgement of Him before men will affect their denial or acknowledgement before the Heavenly Father (Matthew 10:32-33). Commitment and obedience to Him must take priority over all other relationships, even those of family (Matthew 10:35-37; Luke 14:26).

What may be referred to as the "I sayings" of Jesus also contain a clear concept of His personal authority. For example:

> Come unto me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).
>
> I have come to call not the righteous but sinners (Mark 2:17; Luke 19:10).
>
> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

The personal claims of Jesus leave only three possible ways to regard His seemingly totalitarian claims. One must either conclude that Jesus was "a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord."[41] The author is intrigued with a statement made by a well-known liberal scholar concerning the all-encompassing claim of Jesus.[42]

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[41]See C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: William Collins & Co., 1956), 52-53.

[42]Even Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951-1955), 1:43, states concerning Jesus, "In His lifetime He had demanded decision for His person as the bearer of the Word; the church has now made this decision. Jesus' call to decision implies a Christology."

Jesus' expression of superiority over preceding leaders

In the Gospels of Matthew and John, Jesus compares Himself to several great men of the Old Testament era and expresses His superiority over them. By commenting on the commands of Moses, Jesus claimed that He was greater than Moses when he is understood as saying, "Moses said, but I say." Jesus was asserting His superiority over Moses when he testified that his teaching concerning divorce superseded that of Moses (Matthew 19:7-8).[43] He stated in a response to the scribes and Pharisees that He was greater than Jonah and Solomon (Matthew 12:41-42). In the Gospel of John, when He is challenged by the Samaritan woman as to being greater than "our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well?" Jesus conveys His superiority over Jacob in the reply, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water that I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life" (John 4:13-14).

Jesus made a similar comparison in a discussion about the Sabbath and its significance, referring to His authority as Lord of the Sabbath over the ministry of the priests, past and present, when He said, "I tell you, something greater than the temple is here" (Matthew 12:6).[44]

Jesus' reference to well-known titular designations

Jesus' preaching and teaching also dealt with the issue of His personhood through His references and responses to well-known religious-political titular designations

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[43]See Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, 1994), 379-380.

[44]Ibid., 224.

prominent in the lore of 1st century Judaism. Three such titular designations are relevant: Messiah, Son of God, and Son of Man.

*His identity with the Messiah.* The Hebrew term **"**Messiah"—*mashiach*, is translated by the Greek word christos (from which "Christ" is transliterated) in both the Septuagint and the New Testament. The terms literally mean "anointed." Jesus' acceptance of this title in His statements in the Gospels, even though in a discreet manner, testifies to His realization and affirmation that He fulfills the role of the promised "Savior" who would enact God's deliverance of the people.

Although the Jewish populace of Jesus' day was looking for an eschatological hero in the person of the Messiah–Anointed King—to overthrow the enemies of Israel and set up a reign of righteousness, it must be emphasized that in Jewish texts, the expectations and speculations about such a person were anything but clear cut. The Jewish hope for a Messiah was never the center of religious concern for its own sake. It functioned as a part of the attempt to project God's eschatological triumph which carried more of a social and political weight than a spiritual one.[45]

Numerous scholars have denied, however, that Jesus could have used or accepted a title with such political, nationalistic, and militaristic connotations to describe His mission.[46] There are, however, several passages in the Gospels in which Jesus accepts this title as a self-designation, but the acceptance comes with certain reservations.[47] A graphic example is in Mark 8:27-30:

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[45]Green and McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 106.

[46]Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 149.

[47]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus Teachings*, 125.

> Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered Him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Messiah [Christ]." And He sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about Him.

Jesus was well aware of the difference between His own conception of His mission as the Messiah and the popular conceptions of that mission in His day.[48] Nevertheless, even though He remained careful during most of His career about stirring up needless controversy by taking a high profile messianic position, the time came when He openly confirmed that he was the true Messiah. Jesus' dramatic confrontation after His arrest with Caiaphas, the high priest, answers the question as to His claim to be the Messiah, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power,' and 'coming in the clouds of heaven.'" Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses?" (Mark 14:61-63).

Jesus' sense of "anointing" at His baptism, the subsequent sermon at Nazareth in which He emphasizes His "anointing" (Luke 4:18), and His literal anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3-9), may all be interpreted in the light of Jesus' claim to be the Messiah.

A noted New Testament scholar, N. T. Wright, comments:

> Jesus, then, believed Himself to be the focal point of the people of YHWH, the returned-from-exile people, the people of the renewed covenant, the people whose sins were now to be forgiven. He embodied what He announced. He was the true interpreter of the *Torah*; the true builder of the Temple; the true spokesperson for Wisdom. . . Jesus' redefined notion of Messiahship pointed to a fulfillment of Israel's destiny which no one had imagined or suspected.[49]

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[48]Ibid., 127.

[49]N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 2: Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 538-539.

*His self-designation as the Son of God.* The term "Son of God" was used on a number of occasions by Jesus, thus the focus of this section will deal with the way in which He related to the title in His preaching and teaching. One of the most important passages in which "Son of God" is used as a self designation is during one of His teachings on His eschatological return, when He states, "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32). In this saying, Jesus points out His uniqueness by distinguishing between the angels, the rest of humanity (no one), and Himself as the "Son". His connection with God is unique.

Another revealing statement comes from the lips of Jesus on one of the occasions when He addresses God in prayer:

> At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him (Matthew 11:25-27).

Several important Christological claims are found in this passage. First of all, Jesus refers to Himself as the "Son." There is a uniqueness and exclusiveness in this self-designation. Second, Jesus states that His knowledge of the Father is unsurpassed by anyone else. Third, He makes it plain that He is the mediator. To know the Father one must know the Son.

One of the parables of Jesus in which a "beloved son" is murdered by the evil tenants of his father's vineyard, presents a clear allegory to Jesus' relationship with God as His father (Mark 12:1-9). Even if some of the allegorical detail in the story is secondary, the thematic point emphasizes that there is a distinct difference between the

tenants and the son, and that judgment from the Father looms ahead for those who rejected and murdered his son.[50]

It is evident that in the important passages to which reference has been made, Jesus testified to a unique and exclusive relationship to God as "the Son." The Gospels record that Jesus' sonship differed from that of His followers, not merely quantitatively but qualitatively, not merely in degree but kind.[51] As He taught and conversed He communicated the truth that He was the "Son of God."

*His predominant use of the Son of Man title.* The title "Son of Man"**,** *huios tou anthropou* in NT Greek, and *bar enasha* in Aramaic, or *ben adam* in Hebrew, is the designation which Jesus most often used to refer to himself. It is found sixty-nine times in the Synoptic Gospels and thirteen times in the Gospel of John, and is present in all of the Gospel strata. In every one of these instances, with the exception of two, Jesus personally used the title in His preaching and teaching. Of all the Christological titles this is the one that has been most carefully investigated, and on which volumes have been written. Some scholars have argued that the term was not used by Jesus as a messianic-type designation but merely as reference to Himself as a human being.[52] Other scholars strongly affirm the authenticity of the title as Jesus used it to signify His sense of self-recognition concerning a present and eschatological figure known as "The Son of Man."[53] This

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[50]See Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 660-661.

[51]See Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings*, 135.

[52]See Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, chap.7 passim.

[53]See Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 270-294.

author agrees with the scholars who argue that Jesus had a definite messianic concept in mind when He referred to Himself as “Son of Man.”

When Jesus speaks of Himself, He sometimes uses the first person, but much of the time He referred to himself by using the third person, and when this was the case He employed the “Son of Man” title. At times He used both the first and third person: “Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). “And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8; cf. Mark 14:62;  Matthew 19:28).

During Jesus’ ministry he discreetly avoided the public use of known messianic titles. While He acknowledged to His disciples that He was the Messiah, He warned against the public declaration of this to the people (Mark 8:29-30). In the socio-political minefield environment of first-century, Roman-ruled Palestine this made excellent sense. To avoid a confrontation with Rome Jesus kept His messiahship very low profile. The enigmatic term *bar enasha* served Him admirably in this respect. He understood Himself as the “Son of Man” as prophetically portrayed in Daniel 7:13 and used the Aramaic expression for the sake of ones who are spoken of as “those outside” (Mark 4:11).

## Jesus’ Message in Relation to His Kingdom

The examination of the content of Jesus’ preaching and teaching now moves to the category of Jesus’ reign and domain**,** expressed in the words of Jesus as the “Kingdom”, “Kingdom of God”, and “Kingdom of Heaven.” The author believes that this theme is prominent among the three main categories of His emphasis, along with His

Personhood and His commandments. The kingdom phrases can be located in sixty-one separate sayings in the Synoptic Gospels, and if one includes parallels, the terms occur eighty-five times.

***The Relationship of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven***

It is helpful to examine the use of the kingdom concept in Jesus' preaching and teaching first of all by addressing the relationship of the three terms used in the Gospels to express the idea of the kingdom of God: *he basileia tou Theou* ("the kingdom of God"), *he basileia tou ouranon* ("the kingdom of [the] heaven[s]"), and the absolute *he basileia* ("the kingdom").[54] The equivalence of the first two is indicated by their content, and interchangeability in the Gospels.[55] The primary meaning of the Hebrew term from which the kingdom concept in the Gospels comes, *malkhut*, and the similar Aramaic *malku*—taken up in the Greek word *basileia*, convey a dynamic type meaning of "sovereignty" or "royal rule."[56]

Proponents of "realized eschatology" believe that the kingdom has been fulfilled with no application to eschatological concerns, and others, on the contrary, believe it is a future phenomenon.[57] Both of these views will be discussed very briefly, along with the third. Jesus used all three terms, "kingdom of God" (Mark 4:26), "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 13:24) and "kingdom" (Luke 12:32), for example, and in the opinion of most biblical scholars, essentially used them interchangeably, intending the same meaning.

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[54]Gerhard Kittel, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, G. W. Bromiley. 6 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 581-582.

[55]Green and McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 417.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid., 420-421.

When the word "heaven" was used with "kingdom" it was in pious avoidance of the sacred name "God" which, to this day, among Jews, *malkhut-haShammayim* in Hebrew ("Kingdom of Heaven"), substitutes in literature for "Kingdom of God"[58]

***The Kingdom as Present or Future***

When investigations of the biblical data about the kingdom phenomenon have been conducted, scholarly opinions have differed on the "now" or "future" emphasis. At times the Gospel material seems to indicate one or the other in different pericopes. There are several passages in the Synoptic Gospels that give the definite impression that with the "first" coming of Jesus the kingdom of God has already come. As an example, characteristic of such references, in Luke 11:14-20 when Jesus cast a demon out of a man, he was criticized and accused of performing the exorcism by the power of Satan. Jesus answered the illogical charge by pointing out that "Any kingdom divided against itself will fall." He then said, "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then *the kingdom of God has come to you*" (italics added). Jesus was also asked by the Pharisees on one occasion when the kingdom of God was coming. He answered, "The kingdom of God is *among* (Greek, *entos*) you" (Luke 17:20-21, italics added).[59] The specific sayings that teach that the kingdom is present reality in the ministry of Jesus are not as numerous as those that imply an eschatological emphasis, but they are nevertheless sufficient to show that Jesus regarded the kingdom of God as already existing in His ministry.[60]

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[58]Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 16.

[59]The phrase is frequently translated "within" you, but this rendering misses the basic meaning of the Greek preposition *entos* which is correctly "among" or "in the midst of."

[60]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teaching*, 73.

Gospel references that represent the kingdom may appear to be in conflict with the references to the "here and now" view. In teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus instructed them to say, "Hallowed be your name. *Your kingdom come*" (Luke 11:2, italics added). The petition specifies that the kingdom come "on earth" and has a definite eschatological implication. The kingdom's coming is also associated with the final judgment:

> Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", *will enter the kingdom of heaven*, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me *on that day*, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers! (Matthew 7:21-23, italics added).

The kingdom of God is also portrayed as a future reality in some of Jesus' parables. The parable of the wheat and weeds (Matthew 13:24-30) compares the kingdom of God to getting rid of the weeds at harvest time.[61] The parable of the marriage feast (Matthew 22:1-10) contains an addendum (vv.11-14) in which the uninvited guest is cast into outer darkness.[62]

All of the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper refer to Jesus telling His disciples that He will not drink of the fourth cup of the Passover seder until the day when He drinks it in the kingdom of God, as recorded in Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25 and Luke 22:18. In the account of the Last Supper given by Paul his reference to the future aspect of the Communion indicates that the kingdom of God is in some way a future reality and is associated with the future return of the King of the kingdom (I Corinthians 11:26).

In view of the differences that have arisen in determining whether the kingdom has been realized or yet a future reality, the author joins with those who see the most

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[61]See Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 298.

[62]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings*, 75.

apparent sense in the third alternative—a combination of both emphases. Understood in the context of both present and future characteristics of the kingdom as seen in the preaching and teaching of Jesus, there does not appear to be any conflict in embracing a 'kingdom now" realization as Jesus taught it, and a "kingdom coming" hope through belief in the triumphant victory that He proclaimed. Just as Jesus answered the disciples of John the Baptist by telling them that the presence of the kingdom could be witnessed to by the blind seeing, the lame walking and the dead being raised, there was still the issue of incompleteness to consider, and those who had been raised from the dead, such as Jairus' daughter and Lazarus, would still have to face death again. The kingdom of God had come and Jesus preached and taught its reality, but the consummation was, and is, still in the future. Jesus presented His message as ruler of a kingdom that has come and is coming.

## Jesus' Message as Expressed in Commandments

The author has opted to make use of the term "commandments" rather than terminology such as "ethical principles", "moral standards" or other epithets that have a more palatable, non-authoritarian appearance, because the ethical principles and moral standards that took up much of the corpus of Jesus' preaching and teaching were, in essence, what is referred to in the NT Greek as *entole*, meaning "order", "commission", or "command."[63] The instructions that He gave were intended to be more than "suggestions" or mere "guidelines." Although communicated in an attitude of divine love, his teachings were to be regarded as imperative rather than optional. Although Jesus demanded a higher ethic than His contemporaries (Matthew 5:20), He nevertheless

[63]Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:545.

regarded His requirements as a "yoke that is easy and a burden that is light" (Matthew 11:29).

Generally, the commandments of Jesus, primarily focused on ethical teachings, are found scattered throughout the Gospels in (1) individual pericopes and sayings, or (2) in "blocks" of pericopes and sayings, or in discourses such as the Sermon on the Mount.

### *Jesus' Requirements for Entering His Kingdom*

Upon studying the Gospels, one becomes aware that most of Jesus' ethical teachings presume and build upon a new relationship between the individual and God. At times Jesus addressed the crowds, as well as His "opposition", with a most fundamental demand for radical, unqualified decision to embrace Himself and the kingdom of God. In this way one would be able to receive the divine enabling to live the ethic Jesus presented.

The urgency for decision is consistently presented by Jesus in several forms. Sometimes it is expressed as a call to repentance;[64] at other times it is stressed as a call to "faith";[65] and it is further given as a challenge to "deny one's self,"[66] "take up the cross,"[67] to "lose one's self,"[68] or even to face such difficult requirements as to "hate

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[64]Mark 1:16-20; 2:14-15; 8:34; Matthew 8:1-22; 10:38; Luke 5:11; cf. John 1:43; 12:26.

[65]Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52; Matthew 8:10; Luke 7:50; 8:12; 17:19 and John 3: 12, 15, 18, 36.

[66]Mark 8:34.

[67]Mark 8:34; Matthew 10:38.

[68]Mark 8:35; Matthew 10:39.

one's family,"[69] or to "sell all one owns."[70] These demands should not be regarded as different requirements that Jesus called for on various occasions. They should be understood as different aspects of the same unconditional commitment to Him.[71]

***Jesus' Ethical Demands Characterized by "The Law of Love"***

The "law of love", as Jesus' commandments to place the motive of love at the center of relationships has been called, characterizes His ethical imperatives. When asked by a teacher of the law which of the commandments is greatest, Jesus replies:

> The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:29-31).

This recitation of the traditional Hebraic *shemah*, learned by every observant Jew from childhood from Deuteronomy 6:4-6, and the *l'ahvtah* from Leviticus 19:18, was, to Jesus, a summary of the divine demand. By placing these two commandments side by side, Jesus emphasized that the love of God and the love of one's neighbor are an inseparable unity.[72]

Regarding the command to love one's neighbor as one's self it should be remembered, based on Jesus' teaching, that He broadened the meaning of "neighbor" to include everyone. The Jewish society of Jesus' day regarded such people as Gentiles and

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[69]Luke 14:26.

[70]Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33; cf. Matthew 6:19-21.

[71]Jesus never called for an "installment plan" commitment in which people could come and follow Him at "conversion" as a "Savior," then later enter into a "deeper" stage and surrender their wills to Him as "Lord." Some of the present-day teaching that implies a two-stage or "half-covenant" Christianity cannot find justification for itself in any of the "invitations" in Jesus' messages.

[72]Note in Mark 12:31 that Jesus uses the singular: "There is no other *commandment* greater than these" (italics added). This may be regarded as two sides of one command.

especially Samaritan "half-breeds" as unworthy of friendship. Jesus cured that misconception by making it clear that Samaritans (Luke 10:25-37) and tax-collectors (Luke 15:1-32) were to be included in the embrace of unconditional love as God defined it.

Jesus also made it very clear in His instructions that love was to be understood as actions rather than emotional feelings or empathy. His preview of an eschatological evaluation of behavior toward Him, was translated into terms of how one treated his fellow man in Jesus parable about the king who determines who "makes it in" by telling those who gave food, water, and clothing that what they had done for the needy they had done as to him (Matthew 25:34-40).

The most difficult of all the teachings about love that Jesus tried to communicate was the command to love one's enemies (Luke 6:27-36). To love one's enemies may or may not involve a feeling of love toward them, but the command of Jesus, just as any of his instructions, is aimed at the will, not the emotions. He made it clear that to love one's enemies means to perform acts of love; to bless them and pray for them (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28).

### *Jesus' Commandments and the Mosaic Law*

The place of the *mitzvot,* as known in Hebrew, the "law" or "instructions," appear at times in the commandments of Jesus to contain the basic norms of the will of God and are of permanent validity.[73] He made it clear, by means of careful explanation in the opening paragraphs of the Sermon on the Mount, that He did not come to abrogate the law or the prophets but, on the contrary, to complete, fulfill or "fill it full" (Matthew

[73]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings,* 105.

5:17-20).[74] Jesus' own behavior in relation to the law was far from being antinomian. He kept the law not only with respect to the moral statutes but the civil and ceremonial as well. He attended the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mark 1:21); joined the pilgrims on the feast days in Jerusalem (John 10:22); celebrated the Passover (Mark 14:12-25); and even accepted the validity of the sacrificial system and the authority of the priests to validate the cleansing of the lepers whom He healed (Luke 17:14). Jesus paid the Temple tax (Matthew 17:24-27) and engaged in fasting (Matthew 6:16-18).

It appears, however, that Jesus rejected parts of the law, as well. He rejected the idea of a certificate of divorce, and adjusted the conditions (Matthew 5:31-32); changed the "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" regulation to "Do not resist an evildoer" (Matthew 5:38-39); and removed the distinction between clean and unclean found in the law (Mark 2:27-28; Luke 13:10-17). This appears to be a contradiction, unless one realizes two important points. First of all, Jesus did not regard the legalism of certain of the oral traditions to be on the same level with the written Torah regulations. He referred to them as the "traditions of men" (Mark 7:8). Second, Jesus was more concerned about the condition of the individual heart and emphasized the keeping of the moral law, even to the downplay of the importance of the civil and ceremonial law when it came to magnifying the latter over the former (Matthew 5:21-48). Jesus brought into fruition a *b'rit hadashah*, in Hebrew; a "new covenant" which meant, among other things, that certain aspects of the old or earlier covenant are modified or eliminated.

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[74]Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 25.

***Jesus' Promise of Reward for Obeying His Commandments***

In the Synoptic Gospels there are certain teachings of Jesus that imply that adherence to His commandments will bring reward.[75] One of the passages of instruction deals with giving alms to the poor and sounding trumpets in the street to call attention to one's good deed. Jesus emphasizes that to do charitable deeds in secret will bring a greater reward (Matthew 6:2-4). He also points out that to give a banquet and invite one's friends carries with it the expectation of being reciprocated with a return invitation, while feeding the poor, crippled and lame without expectation of recompense will "be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14: 12-14).

Jesus also taught, as recorded in other Gospel passages, that rewards would be received from faithful service rendered. For some the reward would be substantial (Matthew 5:12), and for others it would be less (Matthew 5:19). For others it will mean sitting at the right or the left hand of Jesus in the kingdom of God (Mark 10:40).

There are also passages in the Gospels, however, in which Jesus discourages the notion that right standing with God is on the basis of merit. Even after serving God, one can only say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done" (Luke 17:10b). What believers receive from God for faithful service, therefore, is not earned wages, but the grace of the heavenly Father given to encourage the believer to "keep on keeping on."

## Summary of Jesus' Method and Message

Through His actions in regard to His prayer and communion with the Father, His sense of mission, the way He related to the people in His concern for their needs and His

[75]Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings,* 108

desire to communicate with them clearly, Jesus exemplifies a style and manner in His ability to connect and communicate. It is worthy to be followed as a model for today's pastors. The sections of the chapter that examine the content of Jesus' preaching and teaching have endeavored to give a clear glimpse of what He essentially thought was important to convey to the people; concepts upon which hang the very substance and essence of the way of salvation and service as genuine followers in this era or any era. The manner and message as Jesus lived and spoke stands unrivaled in its truth and in sharp distinction against the background of the contradictory chronicle of human efforts. His preaching and teaching style, as portrayed in the Gospel record, is worthy of primary consideration as the model for those who dare to answer the call of God and take to the platform of today's churches to preach or teach in His name.

# CHAPTER III

# INTERVIEWS WITH LEADING EVANGELICAL PASTORS

Personal interviews were conducted by the author with seven leading evangelical pastor-preachers. The purpose of the interviews was to determine their use of Jesus as a model for their preaching and teaching, as well as their comments as to why a model of Jesus manner and message should be used as a directing factor for 21st century homiletics.

The selection of the pastors was based on suggestions of names and procedure to the author from Dr. Elmer Towns, Dean of the School of Religion, Liberty University, as well as suggestions and appointment arrangements through Dr. Tom Mullins, Senior Pastor of Christ Fellowship, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

## Criteria for Pastors Interviewed

In order to establish the credibility of the interviewees as experts in current evangelical preaching-teaching, the following standards apply to their selection.

### Pastors who Regularly Preach to Their Congregations

The selected pastors preach to their congregations on a regular basis. One of the concerns of this dissertation is to draw on the expertise of local church pastors who face the requirement of delivering a new sermon every week. The responses are from pastors who concern themselves with determining the needs of their own congregations and

preparing and delivering messages that deal with those needs, as well as affect the direction those pastors desire to take with their people.

## Pastors of Growing Megachurches

The churches of which these men are pastors rank as growing megachurches, some of which are among the largest in America. All or most of the growth of each of the churches has taken place during the tenures of these pastors. In the interest of gaining meaningful responses from men who have demonstrated skill in the category of pastoral preaching, the fact that these interviewees have led evangelical churches in reaching and maintaining an attendance of thousands of persons testifies to their expertise in communicating truth in an effective way.

## Pastors Reaching a Wider Audience

The subjects are regarded as effective speakers by a significantly wider audience than their own congregations. All of the men are recognized for their preaching and teaching at nationwide conferences attended by fellow clergymen. All are authors whose works include books that are sermon-based or directed to the themes of church growth or pastoral preaching. Some of them conduct television ministries that bring them into the homes of thousands of people who do not attend the church of which they are pastor.

Directors of conferences and training events on a national level make the effort to staff their program with guest speakers of outstanding ability. Many of them have called on the pastors interviewed in this project to share their expertise with those who have

come to learn and be inspired.[1] Their reputation as featured speakers reinforces the validity of their opinions on current preaching and teaching.

### Pastors of Varied Affiliation

Three of the pastors represent the nation's largest evangelical denomination and the rest are from non-denominational evangelical churches. One represents an African-American church. Their geographical locations include various sections of the nation. This criterion is in the interest of a broader evangelical perspective.

## The Interviewees

This portion of the chapter offers a brief sketch of the name, pastorate, and accomplishments of each of the interviewees in order to augment an understanding of their expertise in the mode of current evangelical preaching and teaching.

### Dr. Jack Graham

Dr. Graham is Pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, one of America's largest churches with a membership of more than 24,000. In June 2002 he was elected President of the Southern Baptist Convention and currently serves in that capacity. He is a frequent guest speaker at nationwide functions for pastors and laymen.

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[1]The program booklet, *Building the Premium Community of Successful Pastors* (Orlando, Florida: Global Pastor's Network "Beyond All Limits II" Conference, January 20-23, 2004) contains the names of all of the interviewed pastors as speakers and contributing program personnel. This booklet is an example of their utilization in a nation-wide speaking function.

Dr. James Henry

Dr. Henry has been Pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Florida since 1977. His church has over 10,000 members, with an average weekly attendance of approximately 4,000. Pastor Henry has held many positions of leadership, including President of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1994-1996. He is a much sought after speaker for pastors' training conferences.

Dr. Joel Hunter

Since 1985, Dr. Hunter has been Senior Pastor of Northland: A Church Distributed, formerly the Northland Community Church in the Orlando, Florida area. The current attendance of the church is approximately 6,500. Dr. Hunter has served for several years as Professor of Practical Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, and is a frequent speaker at various national church conferences.

Dr. Tom Mullins

Dr. Mullins is Senior Pastor of Christ Fellowship of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Christ Fellowship is a non-denominational, multi-cultural church with an active membership of more than 12,000. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Pastor's Global Network and is often a featured speaker and leader at nationally based pastors' conferences.

Dr. Adrian Rogers

Dr. Rogers is Pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in the Memphis, Tennessee area. Under his pastoral leadership the church has grown from 9,000 members to more than 27,000 today. He has served three times as president of the 16 million member Southern

Baptist Convention, and is regarded as one of the nation's most skillful and respected preachers.

Dr. Stan Toler

Dr. Toler is Senior Pastor of Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He preaches weekly to a congregation of more than 1,000 people. Dr. Toler is nationally recognized as an author and trainer of pastors and church leaders, speaking and teaching at various Christian leadership events throughout the nation.

Dr. Kenneth Ulmer

Dr. Ulmer serves as Pastor of Faithful Central Bible Church in Inglewood, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. Since his arrival more than fifteen years ago, the congregation has grown to more than 10,000. He is in demand as a speaker at church conferences and has taught Pastoral Ministry and Homiletics and African-American preaching at two theological graduate schools. He currently serves as Presiding Bishop over the Macedonia International Bible Fellowship.

## The Interview Questions: Objectives and Responses

The questions directed to the interviewees were designed to elicit information about aspects of their own preaching and teaching and the way in which they relate certain homiletical concerns to the Jesus model.

It is important to note here that the questions were asked with two primary issues in the intention of the author. The first was to tap into the minds of pastors who have demonstrated their skill at preaching and teaching the Word of God, have led their congregations to become leading churches in America, and may be considered to have

expertise for comment on the subject of preaching and teaching. Second, being students of the Bible with impressive academic training from evangelical Christian institutions, their knowledge and concept of the style and message of Jesus qualifies them to address the issue of Jesus as a model for current preaching and teaching.[2]

This section includes a brief explanation of the objective of each question asked of the interviewees as well as responses selected from the interviews that are relevant to those objectives.[3]

## Question One: Describe Specific Ways in which You Relate to Jesus as a Model for Your Preaching and Teaching.

### *The Objective of the Question*

The intent of this question is to determine how Jesus is regarded by the interviewee as an example of effective preaching and teaching skills. The various perspectives yield valuable reflection on the attitudes and actions of these pastors as they relate their own pulpit ministries to Jesus' model as they understand such a model.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Jack Graham calls attention to two emphases that he sees in Jesus' approach to preaching and teaching that he has been impressed to make a part of his own pulpit ministry. He states:

> Jesus so often spoke of His own life and purpose, His mission on earth and, so, the ultimate goal of preaching is to exalt Christ, the person of Christ, the purpose of His life, death, burial, and resurrection. He said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all

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[2]The academic credentials of each of the interviewees may be found in more extensive biographical sketches in Appendix VIII of this work, pp. 170-175.

[3]Complete transcripts of the interviews appear in Appendices I through VII, pp. 115-169. A reproduction of the question instrument appears in Appendix IX, pp. 176-177.

> men unto myself." To me, the ultimate goal, the purpose of biblical preaching, is to exalt Christ and to proclaim His person and work. So, that would be first. He is the topic, the subject of preaching as He was in His own life and ministry. His preaching and teaching centered in who He is and what He came to do. So that should be our goal as well, obviously.[4]

Dr. Graham goes on to say,

> Jesus was a storyteller. He used the parables, heavenly stories with earthly meanings to describe with humor and with common interest, whether it was a fishing story or a business connection. He'd tell stories in order to relate a spiritual truth. That, obviously, is an important part of the package of preaching that Jesus used and we should use. Illustrations, parables, and metaphors should be like windows in a house to let the light in.[5]

Dr. Jim Henry suggests the identity that Jesus had with the needs in the lives of the people to whom He ministered by focusing on the shepherding role. He states:

> I think one of the best ways I seek to relate to Jesus is shepherding. I feel that as a pastor, the mere word and name implies shepherding. Jesus had a shepherd's heart and called himself a shepherd, the chief shepherd, the great shepherd. . . I feel like in preaching, if I can relate to the heart of Jesus in shepherding, then I'm relating to the sheep.[6]

Dr. Joel Hunter directed his initial comments to Jesus' practice of storytelling, and then mentions the personal contact element:

> I tell a lot of stories. Jesus told a lot of stories. Stories are universal in their impact. Secondly, I keep it as personal as I can. I keep it as simple as I can. I also cannot really preach with out seeing the congregation; without seeing the reaction. think one of the things Jesus did in His model of preaching was that it was all about people and about responding to the particular needs that were there . . . The pastors really have an advantage here, even at large congregations, because we are still very aware of what our people have been through during the week. Being able to shape how you put things so that the impact is as significant as it can be and as least hurtful as it can be. You know you have to say some tough things but

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[4]Dr. Jack Graham, Pastor, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas; telephone interview with author, January 29, 2004. Appendix I, p.115.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Dr. Jim Henry, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Florida; live interview with author, January 22, 2004. Appendix II, p. 123.

> it's always for the sake of love. Anyhow, those are just some of the ways that I follow His example.[7]

Dr. Tom Mullins also relates to storytelling as a way in which he relates to Jesus' model:

> Jesus was a master contemporary story teller. He could take and weave within the circumstances of whatever current event or situation He found Himself in and He would tell a story, and in that, bring revelation of a great spiritual truth to mind. His illustrations were so relevant and penetrating and I think that's how I relate to Him as a model for our preaching and teaching today.[8]

Dr. Adrian Rogers refers to Jesus' sensitivity to the needs of the people and makes the following comment about attention to the "needs" element:

> Well, the obvious thing is relevancy. Our Lord used what some denigrate, and that is felt needs. But, it went beyond felt needs to needs people don't feel. "And He, knowing human nature into all men, need not to testify what was in a man."[9] So, not only did he answer questions they were asking, He answered questions they failed to ask. And so I would say, yes, speaking to the needs of mankind past the ephemeral needs to the real deep, lasting eternal needs.[10]

Dr. Stan Toler comments in agreement with some of the other interviewees who concentrate on the storytelling aspect of Jesus:

> In my estimation, Jesus is the master storyteller and I am convinced that men, especially today, identify with stories and that seems to be the toughest audience to connect with for preachers. I would say, first and foremost, storytelling and the parables of Jesus (are what) I follow.[11]

Dr. Kenneth Ulmer calls attention to the importance of the Jesus model by referring to his own need to maintain it in his preaching and teaching:

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[7]Dr. Joel Hunter, Pastor, Northland, A Church Distributed, Orlando, Florida; live interview with the author, January 22, 2004. Appendix III, p. 132.

[8]Dr. Tom Mullins, Pastor, Christ Fellowship, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida; live interview, December 20, 2003. Appendix IV, p. 139.

[9]See John 2:25.

[10]Dr. Adrian Rogers, Pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee; interview with the author, January 22, 2004. Appendix V, p. 147.

[11]Dr. Stan Toler, Pastor, Trinity Church of the Nazarene, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; interview with the author, January 22, 2004. Appendix VI, p. 157.

> For me it is a challenge to relate to Jesus as a model in preaching and it is a challenge because I find myself, all too often, drifting away from that model. . . . I think he was always not only aware of his audience, but I think uniquely sensitive to the capacity to comprehend his audience, and, therefore, He communicated in the light of that reality. When the Bible says the common man understood Him, I ask myself, "Am I as plain as Jesus?"[12]

## Question Two: In What Ways Do You Believe the Modeling of the Method and Message of Jesus as a Communicator Would Improve the Effectiveness of Contemporary Preaching and Teaching?

### *The Objective of the Question*

This question calls for the respondents to broaden the scope of their consideration from their own personal preaching to the projection of their opinion regarding the improvement of the preaching of others, in general, as it relates to the Jesus model.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Graham suggested that Jesus often spoke of His life, purpose, and His mission on earth; therefore, the ultimate goal of preaching is to exalt Christ and His very purpose:

> To me the ultimate goal, the purpose of biblical preaching is to exalt Christ and proclaim His person and work. That would be first, He is the topic, the subject of preaching as He was in His own life and ministry. His preaching and teaching centered in who He is and what He came to do. So that should be our goal as well, obviously.[13]

Dr. Henry responds:

> I think you probably learn two things; one is the method. . . . What I'm trying to do, is watching how Jesus did it. But I think the other would be Jesus with a heart for God in the Father and His Father's will, and relating to the people. If I can grasp some of that as a part of the methodology . . . that goes with the style.[14]

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[12]Dr. Kenneth Ulmer, Pastor, Faithful Central Bible Church, Inglewood, California; interview with the author, January 22, 2004. Appendix VII, p. 163.

[13]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 115.

[14]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 123.

Dr. Hunter brings a different insight on sharpening effectiveness in contemporary preaching when he says:

> I think a lot of contemporary preaching goes into the library of some sort and reads a lot of commentaries, does research on the passage and really doesn't talk with people who are asking real significant questions and kind of arguing things back and forth. . . A significant weakness would be (that) they are not getting exposed to a lot of agnostic or searching questions every day; people whose lives really depend on what you're going to say. . . So I think Jesus' model, just being out among the people, and just facing whatever was coming across in daily life, I think that would help a lot of contemporary preachers.[15]

The response of Dr. Mullins includes a number of questions, the answers to which relate to applying the Jesus model of communication:

> Is it touching lives, is it changing lives? Are they able to retain, not just our facts and our statistics but really the concepts of God's word and life He has for us in this walk of faith. I think that's the key. I think it's the only true, effective manner at preaching that we have and Jesus modeled that for us.[16]

Dr. Rogers incisively comments that, in the sense of doing expositions and analyzing and organizing such as preachers do today, Jesus cannot be said to be the model. He states:

> I have to be very careful that I don't say, "I'm preaching as Jesus preached." That's one of the things that amaze me about the preaching of Jesus. He spoke with authority and not as the scribes. Jesus said, "I say unto you." I think *some* preachers may be pretty arrogant if they say, "I'm going to model my preaching after Jesus' preaching."[17]

Dr. Toler points out that he often addresses audiences made up of men, who are "the toughest audience for preachers to connect with", and who identify with stories "first and foremost." Toler further states that he regularly follows Jesus' example by being a storyteller.[18]

Dr. Ulmer includes an observation in his response that takes a different slant than

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[15]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 133.

[16]Mullins, interview with the author, Appendix IV, p. 140.

[17]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, pp. 147-148.

[18]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, p. 157.

the others as he deals with the "success" quotient of Jesus' style and message:

> I think, again, if you look behind (the) successful preaching and teaching of Jesus—how we define it—there will be a great disparity there. I think if we gauge and we assess our success by numbers, by the size of the crowd, if that be the case, Jesus had diminishing returns. I'm amazed at the preaching of Jesus from the standpoint that it seems as though Jesus said things intentionally to run people away. He'd move to the hard stuff and another crowd would fall away. Someone else would follow from afar, and some would follow no more. . . . I think it would force us to redefine success in preaching when we look at the success rate of Jesus.[19]

## Question Three: What Would You Single Out As the Number One Strength of Jesus' Style of Preaching and Teaching?

### *The Objective of the Question*

This question is designed to narrow the focus to a "close-up" on the pastors' concept of Jesus' preaching and teaching. It reveals the more particular element to which their attitudes and actions go in regarding Jesus as a model.

### *Responses to Question*

"Well, the common people heard Him gladly," quotes Dr. Graham, "and so whether He was talking one on one or with large crowds there was a sense of His presence, the power of His personality, and the content of subject matter that connected with people . . . Jesus was able to deliver the message that changed lives."[20] Responding to the question, Dr. Henry comments on following the example set by Jesus regarding simple application:

> One word may come to me right off the bat: application. Jesus knew how to take the truth and apply it so that children of the simple shepherd, and the intelligent,

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[19]Ulmer, interview, Appendix X, p. 164.

[20]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 117.

> could all relate to it. . . . Here's the truth, now go and do it, so they could understand it. For a preacher, that's critical.[21]

Dr. Hunter catches a sunbeam of truth when he responds by saying:

> His love . . . He certainly was a great storyteller and He was a great responder to need, but Jesus was effective because . . . He was the Word. He lived the Word. He was so authentic . . . I think that the whole reason He was down here, His great love for people and the fact that it came through in everything He said. That was the power. That was part of the power of His preaching.[22]

"Awareness", is the word chosen by Dr. Rogers to begin his response to the question:

> If I could say, awareness. Jesus went about doing good. He didn't go about to do good . . . Every place was an opportunity, every street corner was a pulpit . . . Jesus' preaching, had He lived in the twenty-first century would have been very, very, very different and very, very, very much the same. He would not be talking about agrarian things in downtown Chicago. He would be saying, "A taxi driver picked up a fare and the man didn't pay him. Now; to love him or not?" That's what he would be saying.[23]

Dr. Toler's answer included the following insight:

> I think the effectiveness of Jesus was that he modeled what he preached. And for the communicator, I remember an old friend of mine, Rusty Goodman who said, "It's not how high you jump when you're on the platform, it's how straight you walk when your feet hit the ground." I think Jesus was modeling everything. He was healing the sick (and) He was raising the dead.[24]

## Question Four: Comment on Ways in Which You Believe Jesus Made His Preaching and Teaching Clear, Relevant and Applicable

### *The Objective of the Question*

The author assumes that the pastor-preachers are aware of Jesus' expertise in making His preaching and teaching understandable. The request is designed to ascertain

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[21]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 124.

[22]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 133.

[23]Rogers, interview, Appendix IV, p. 148.

[24]Toler, interview, Appendix VIII, p. 157.

their views on Jesus' rhetorical techniques for establishing and maintaining a clear connection with His audience.

***Responses to the Question***

Although he places some factors of the question into a previous response, Dr. Graham mentions several further aspects of the subject of the question in his answer:

> He told stories, He used humor, (and) He asked questions. . . He would ask questions that would stimulate thought. In telling a story or developing a theme, He would invite people to answer those questions and respond to the truth. He was able to speak of current events. In His own time, for instance, when He spoke for example of the tower that fell,[25] He was speaking, no doubt, of a current event that people were quite aware of.[26]

Dr. Henry points out Jesus' reference to familiar Scripture:

> He was able to capture old things from the Old Testament, those things His audience related with, bring it up to the day, and either refute it as not being applicable or (say) this was something good then, and it's good now. So I think Jesus had that ability, which we should certainly pull from, to look around, see what was happening, see where people were; see the past and pull it into the present.[27]

Dr. Rogers refers to the fact that Jesus didn't always make His statements clear; that sometimes He hid them:

> So, there are certain things He held back and there are certain things that He would tell to one group and not to another. He didn't cast pearls before swine. And, people (would) ask Him a question and many times He didn't answer that question, He answered the questioner. With Jesus, an honest question always got an honest answer, but a trick question got another question.[28]

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[25]See Luke 13:4

[26]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 117.

[27]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 124.

[28]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, p. 149.

Question Five: Comment on the Example of the Personal and Devotional Life of Jesus and His Attention to Personal Prayer as a Factor in Your Own Life, and Particularly As it Relates to Your Preparation for Preaching and Teaching.

### *The Objective of the Question*

The purpose of this question is to emphasize Jesus' dependence on prayer and communion with the Father as a vital energizing link to what he said and the way He said it, as well as the attitude and action of the pastor as he prepares for pulpit ministry.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Graham states:

> He took advantage and seized opportunities to withdraw and pray and prepare Himself for the spiritual challenges in ministry and the cross itself, ultimately. . . . We get so busy in ministry, in doing the work of Christ, that we forget the ultimate work is to be with Him. . . . So, you're never wasting your time when you stop to sharpen the axe, and you are inspired by the fact . . . that Jesus took time out. He didn't heal everyone, He didn't touch everyone. He didn't preach to everyone. He spoke and lived in communion with the Father and then was on the Father's agenda for His life, work, and ministry. So that becomes my model for ministry, and it is only when we get ourselves in the presence of Christ that we grow and then can live and give out of the overflow of our life in Him.[29]

Dr. Henry makes this very personal comment:

> I'd like to say I'm a great prayer warrior. I'm not. I'm still learning how to pray. But I also realize that it is the heart of being able to preach and teach and minister by His Spirit to the people. So, I've become and sought to be more disciplined in my praying, creating, and calling out. I've found an amazing thing; two things, in recent months, really, although I've prayed a lot through the years and sought to have a quiet time, is taking the Word of God in devotional and then writing it down in my own words. What's Jesus saying to me from the Scripture? Then try to pray that Scripture and then have more prayer time after I've read the Word. The other thing is that my preaching seems to be more anointed from what people tell me, and I didn't know it.[30]

Dr. Hunter contributes this observation:

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[29]Graham, interview, Appendix I, pp. 117-118.

[30]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 125.

> After thirty years, I still get almost physically ill every week because I am so humbled by the fact that I am allowed to attempt to bring the Word of God to people. That's such an astounding responsibility; the absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit. It certainly matters how much preparation you put into it because you've wrestled with the angels so to speak, and you've said to God, "I've got to have this for your people. Bless me for the sake of your people. They need this." But when it comes right down to it, you can put fifty hours into one sermon and if the Holy Spirit isn't present, it doesn't go anywhere.[31]

Dr. Mullins responds:

> Well, of course Jesus, we know, made it His habit to pray; to set aside this time to get alone with God. It is always convicting of me because I think if you‘re at the very center of this, if God has to discipline Himself in this time factor on His life here on earth, how much more important is it for us, not being divine, to have this time with God? . . . We must enter into every type of preparation for the Word, which is a sacred trust we have . . . The only way to get into it is through prayer; getting our hearts right with God; getting in tune with God because our desires will bring a relevant Word from God, not just another message which we think is best.[32]

Dr. Ulmer connects his own preaching and the preaching of Jesus with prayer:

> I don't see Jesus preparing to preach. I see Him as a prepared preacher. I think His prayer life, the times He pulled away from the crowd, He didn't pull away from the crowds to study the next five points or three points and the poem He was going to use in His message. He pulled away to commune with the Father and so His preaching was an overflow of His personal devotional prayer life with the Father. . . It is not so much a prepared preachment as it is a consistently prepared preacher. . . . Most of the people I know, including myself, spend much more time preparing the preachment than being a prepared preacher.[33]

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[31]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 133.

[32]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, pp. 139-140.

[33]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VII, p. 164.

## Question Six: Comment on the Way You Use Stories and the Narrative Element in Your Own Preaching

### *The Objective of the Question*

Since Jesus obviously used stories and narrative style in His preaching and teaching, this question is meant to reveal ways in which the pastors employ those same forms in their own communicative approach.[34]

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Graham speaks about the way in which he employs stories and narrative style in his messages:

> I'm constantly scouring the newspapers, articles, magazines, human interest stories and media. The stories in personal experiences, the greatest stories you can tell, are those things that have happened to you or illustrations that are authentic in the sense that they have happened to you. . . . What I try to do is use current events and contemporary contextualized themes to preach Biblical truth. . . . You don't have to sacrifice Biblical content and accuracy to be culturally relational. But I think you do that with the use of humor and stories, and the best stories, again, are the personal stories. . . . The narratives of the Bible were written in biography and the reason is because the Bible is a book to be lived, not just a book to be learned. So, we all have these personalities and individual stories; narratives of what happened in order to show how our faith is to be lived.[35]

Dr. Henry recalls:

> I could start telling the story, and I can tell immediately, the interest is picked up tremendously. I try not to use so many that you become frothy, but if I'm trying to apply truth, it puts the spotlight on that truth. I find that illustration goes right with expository preaching. The preaching shouldn't be boring, and I find that illustration helps it come alive and not take something away. If they can hang a truth onto an illustration, then I've succeeded in preaching.[36]

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[34]As the author remarks in the statement of the questions to some of the interviewees, they have already dealt with the issue of how they use stories and narrative in a previous question. Therefore, the author moves on with them to the next question.

[35]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 118.

[36]Henry, interview, Appendix III, p. 125.

## Question Seven: Comment on the Way in Which You Use the Function of Application in Your Preaching and Teaching

### *The Objective of the Question*

Just as it was important to Jesus, the purpose of applying spoken truth to the lives of their audience is vital to each of the pastors. Their contributions include various observations on how they transmit that application.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Hunter puts the function of application in terms of practical material placed in the hands of his congregation at the worship service:

> Every week, we want people to literally carry out an application piece. And every person as they walkout of the sanctuary, gets a section that not only has the passage in it, but has a place for notes, and then it has, "This is how we expect your mind will change, your heart will change, and your actions will change." It's printed. On that piece there are several other things: references to catechisms and other books . . . There is a five-day devotional study that people are expected to go through, both for adults and teenagers, and for kids. There are helps so they can get further into the Word. But the expected application is written right on a sheet that they take out with them.[37]

Dr. Ulmer relates his experience regarding application:

> Application becomes the contextual dynamic of preaching and teaching. I think the message of the Gospel, the message of the Word of God never ever changes. I think the interpretation often varies, and I think the application must vary. . . . I think the contextualization. . . is a commentary on application. I'll give you an example: The principle of evangelism never changes. We are all called to "go." For the disciple it was go into Jerusalem or Antioch or the journeys of Paul. For Paul that mandate was fulfilled by going, in most cases, to the synagogue first and then to the Gentile. The principle of evangelism is universal. The particular practice of going to the synagogue and then to the Gentile obviously is not applicable in many, many contexts. I'm from central Los Angeles. We don't have any synagogues but I must still go. So whereas, he might go to the synagogue

[37]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, 134.

> first, I may go to the pool hall first. . . . We both respond to the same principle. So, again, I think application is where contextualization comes in.[38]

In further comment, Ulmer contributes more insight:

> I was preaching at a church in South Africa and I used some illustration about baseball. But they didn't know anything about baseball. So the illustrations and stories that are used to clarify and to expand what you're preaching must be contextualized. I think again that's where social contextualization, even racial contextualization, and cultural contextualization comes in. I think that the danger comes in when one tries to culturalize your exegesis. . . . I think you run the risk of distorting the message if you try to make it a black message or a white message or a South American message or whatever. However, I think there is, again, a cultural and sociological application of the particular principles that must be relevant to the particular context.[39]

## Question Eight: As an Effective Preacher, What Helpful Advice Would You Give to Those Who Wish to Improve Their Preaching Skills, Especially As it Relates to Jesus as a Model?

### *The Objective of the Question*

The intent of the question is to identify lessons the pastors have derived from their own study and experience, and would be willing to share with others in the light of their sensitivity to Jesus as an example.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Graham advises:

> One is to be Biblically accurate. That would include being Christ-centered in the content of the message. As Spurgeon used to say "I take my text from anywhere and make a beeline to the cross." To be Biblically accurate, my preaching style is to take the Scripture, explain it, illustrate it, and apply it. I do believe that was the preaching style of Jesus. He would take the subject, a theme, a scripture, explain it, illustrate it, and apply it. That is the way that preaching is accomplished. Preaching has been described as truth through personality, and therefore, when

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[38]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VI, p. 165.

[39]Ibid.

> our personalities are becoming more Christ-like, then the truth of our personality, and our best personality is the fruit of the Spirit, is displayed . . . it was His integrity and His character that was so appealing.[40]

Graham goes on to say:

> Jesus came preaching the kingdom, and I take that to mean that His goal was to take as many people to heaven with Him as possible, and that becomes our holy ambition in preaching, in ministry, and all we do to fulfill the great commission. We don't have to wonder what we're to be talking about and what we're to be preaching about. He's given us His Word, He's given us His marching orders and, therefore, we can spend our life doing something that is a rare privilege and opportunity, and that's fulfilling our calling.[41]

Dr. Hunter, in reference to advice on preaching skills in connection with Jesus says:

> You just have to live it. It's got to be your life. It can't be something you do. It's got to be what you were sent here for. One of the things I have taught in the seminary for a dozen years now, and one of the things I sense is that there are people who go through seminary who want to be good at preaching because they want to be good at preaching; they want to do something well, instead of (wanting) to have the truth of Christ grab them by the chest and drag them around. If a pastor can't give up His life in order to be a vessel for the message, then he is not going to be a great preacher. And that's exactly what Jesus did. He gave up his own life in order to get the message and the effects of that message across. And that's what preaching requires. Preaching cannot be something that you apprehend. It's something that apprehends you.[42]

Dr. Mullins focuses once more on story telling, and advises preachers to do the same:

> I think we've got to first visualize ourselves there, getting the environment of the story. You've got to see it, you've got to feel it, you've got to kind of smell it. You've got to get the flavor of it because Jesus was such a master story teller. He used them and he kept the people on the edge of their seats, as we would say. . . . For some communicators, that's more intuitive than for others. But the more you think about the different little aspects of what you're communicating and the relevancy of that today where people are living, and the issues. I think that's a key principle.[43]

Dr. Rogers responded:

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[40]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 117.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 135.

[43]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, pp. 140-141.

> Oh, I would study the teaching of Jesus where applicable to my teaching and preaching. . . . He was very common. He didn't use a lot of polysyllabic terms. He used things where the Bible says, "The common people heard Him gladly."[44] And so, he talked about things that were at hand, in ways that people could understand in everyday life. But then He went from these generalities to and simplicities to profundities, and all at the same time. . . . Sometimes you hear the philosophers say, "Why don't you go learn from the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ." They give these convoluted arguments and all this, but who knew more about anything than Jesus? And, yet, listen to Him teach. So, just because a man is muddy doesn't mean He's deep.[45]

Dr. Stan Toler makes an interesting point in answering the question when he points out:

> I think first and foremost all of us need to work within the framework of our gift mix. It was my mission early to learn about great preachers and go hear them. Dr. Paul S. Reese who was Vice President at large for World Vision greatly influenced, according to what Gordon McDonald told me, his preaching and, not surprisingly, he influenced mine. He was a par excellence communicator and I think he also showed the love and attitude of Jesus. He always had time at a busy ministerial conference or whatever to take the young preacher boy, like myself, by the hand and pray with me. . . . When we reach out and touch we are not doing the touching but Jesus is doing the touching. So I have a view that my preaching will improve when I touch people. . . . So there's how Jesus put me to touching people. He broke through all the barriers and touched people.[46]

## Question Nine: What Are Some of the Best Things You See Emerging in Preaching and Teaching Among Evangelicals Today?

### *The Objective of the Question*

This question is posed to draw on the insight of the pastor-preachers regarding the positive signs they see in evangelical preaching and teaching. Although the question does not directly deal with the model of Jesus per se, it is the author's intent to show, in

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[44]See Mark 12:37.

[45]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, pp. 149-150.

[46]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, pp 158-159.

chapter four, how those positive signs coincide with Jesus' preaching and teaching, thus reinforcing the importance of His model.

***Responses to the Question***

Dr. Graham states:

> I personally believe that Biblical exposition and Biblical preaching is making a comeback in evangelical circles, not in the old style and the old sense but in the sense that the Bible truly is the text, and the application flows from the text, not vice versa. . . . I also believe that the focus of changing lives, at least in some quarters among evangelicals that the focus of evangelism and bringing people to Christ is at a high level. The guys I hear talking about preaching, and the people that I know that preach well, have a strong appeal of urging salvation to change lives. . . . Some of the things that we did talk about: I do think there is a greater effort to preach with a newspaper in one hand and a Bible in the other; the whole idea of connecting the dots between the culture of today and the culture of the Bible.[47]

Dr. Henry is complimentary of a newer generation of communicators and is positive in his comments:

> I feel like some of the younger guys and some of us older birds, too, are probably doing a better job. . . .They know how to use other things like drama, video, props so to speak, as a part of their thing. Because it's a visual age, they know how to use those things and they know how to get the point and they're usually pretty good in application. Some of our best ones coming on are also very, very Biblically sound. They're not frothy.[48]

Dr. Hunter refers to his notice of a lot more general cooperation in a full-orbed worship experience:

> A lot more preachers are starting to weave their messages into the rest of the service and not just have stand-alone messages. Worship teams are using art, the worship songs are going along with the message and so on and so forth. It used to be you'd get up and it was time for the message, and then you had a couple of hymns, and then you had a collective reading, and then you had the offering and such, and then the preacher, in other words, had to run the other ninety-seven

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[47]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 119.

[48]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 127.

> yards. In our church I've just got to lean over and tip over the goal line. People are so ready because of what's happened in the rest of the service. One thing preachers are doing is integrating their sermons better into the whole worship service. . . . The other thing is, it's a lot less head stuff and a lot more life stuff. I really think that's true because . . . this is an experienced culture, and unless they're experiencing the actual act of worship, you're not really going to be very effective. I think that preaching itself is getting better in that it realizes that this has to be life on life, rather than just a transfer of information.[49]

Commenting on the positive indications regarding the direction of today's preaching and teaching, Dr. Mullins states:

> I think it gets back to the whole relevancy of our message and the application of it. I think Rick Warren has had a great deal to do with this in influencing a lot of men with his theory of keeping it very simple, keeping it focused, and keeping it practical. Where does it meet the road here? Where does it apply in my life? . . . I mean, Jesus was right there when they were hurting. He was dealing with the issues that were relevant to them. I think I'm hearing more of that and I think men are doing a better job. So I'm encouraged that we're learning how to bring the Word of God down to where people are living, and help them understand there is hope and there is direction and that this is relevant in their every day lives.[50]

Dr. Rogers brings an incisive perspective into his response:

> I think in my denomination, Southern Baptist, one of the things I'm concerned about, we have been in a battle for the inerrancy of the Scripture since 1979 and so forth, and I was one of the first guys to lead in this battle. In a sense we've kind of won that battle in our denomination. I think what we're doing now is losing the battle, not for the inerrancy of the Scripture, but for the authority for the Scripture. Where I think we think we have to have a kind of a dog and pony show or everything else except the Word of God to each people. And it's like we're saying, Yeah, I believe it's the Word of God, it's just not sufficient to do the job.". . . I really believe in the authority of the Word of God and I believe in the power of the Word of God, as well as its inerrancy. So that's a concern I have about modern day preaching is that we have many people who give lip service to inerrancy but, in practicality, they're not really preaching the Word of God.[51]

Rogers continues expression of his concern about the need for preaching that draws its major truths out of the exposition of the Scriptures:

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[49]Hunter, interview, Appendix IV, p. 135.

[50]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, p. 143.

[51]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, p. 151.

> One of the things that bothers me so much is people say, "Isn't the Bible wonderful? Well, it could mean so many different things." I say, "That's bologna. It means what it means, nothing more, and nothing less. It means exactly, precisely what it means. That's it." It has one meaning and ten thousand applications. So, find the one meaning. Once you have found that one meaning, then say, "How am I going to apply this? What am I going to draw out of this passage?". . . Then, to me, that's what really meets the need and gets the job done today.[52]

Dr. Toler responds:

> Without a doubt, the whole concept of seeker sensitivity has moved preaching into a mode that connects. My only concern is that, at times, I'm worried about doctrinal issues and that we're sure we are communicating our beliefs. I sometimes worry about the subject of sin and whether we're as clear as we should be on that subject when we seek to be sensitive, and I think it is something we should look out for, the importance of repentance, turning around from our sins. So, in all sensitivity, while I applaud it, I want to be sure that, without a tear, I may be able to say, "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).[53]

Dr. Ulmer comments on today's clergy declaring the relevance of Scripture:

> I think Scripture is already relevant. I'm not sure we adequately communicate this relevance. But I see very concerted efforts to practicalize the Word of God and to declare its relevance in all aspects of life. The weakness that I see is first of all playing to the crowd and playing to the peanut gallery. I think there are many of us who, either consciously or subconsciously ask the question: "Will this work? Will they like this? Will someone say, "Amen? Will this hook them? Will this get them? Will this bring them back?". . . It frightens me, but the attempt is for popularity—the crowd. It's hard to sustain the spectacular. . . . And, of course, what happens in the attempt is that the Word of God is, at best, distorted in many cases and, unfortunately, in a few cases we have put our words in God's mouth. That breaks my heart.[54]

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[52]Ibid.

[53]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, p. 159.

[54]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VII, p. 166.

## Question Ten: What Are Some of the Weaknesses That You See in Evangelical Preaching Today?

### *The Objective of the Question*

As an obvious contrast to the preceding question, this issue continues to elicit the concerns of the interviewees on what they hear and see happening in evangelical pulpit ministries. The negative perspective is meant to reflect apprehension over issues that go counter to Jesus' manner and message.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Graham expresses his concern that preaching puts a priority on communicating the basic Gospel truth:

> I'm concerned when some preaching that is popular in evangelical circles is more topically driven, and driven by the topic rather than by the text. I get a little concerned when preaching becomes group therapy rather than truth therapy. . . . There is a lot of psycho-babble in pulpits in the name of preaching. . . . It would concern me when I do hear preaching that does not ultimately drive to an invitation. Now, I give a public invitation. I do it all the time. . . . I get concerned when preaching seems to have no evangelistic purpose; that there's no real invitation to Christ and the Gospel. I get concerned when I don't hear the Gospel in preaching. What is the Gospel? Paul said it was the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. My view, every sermon, every message should include the Gospel. I get concerned when I don't see it, and I do think it is a weakness among evangelicals when it's not there.[55]

Dr. Henry remarks:

> I think sometimes (a weakness is) giving too much milk and not enough meat. A lot of people don't know what the Bible says. I think they may think they're further along in that than they are, and they're not. . . . I think if I've observed anything that I was concerned about it would be a little soft, in some cases, some of them have had good opportunities of taking and really teaching the Bible, "So this is who God is and this is what God says.". . . You don't have to go deep. You can go deep and lose people. I know that, too. But I feel like a weakness we have

[55]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 120.

> to be careful about is that we don't open the Bible and serve it to the people. "This is what God is saying," without good exposition.[56]

Dr. Hunter responds:

> You can always go for the flash-in-the-pan emotion rather than the deeper truth that will stay with you when you walk out of the sanctuary. Many of the churches that are growing, and in many churches all over the country; they've got all that talent on the worship teams and they've got the preachers who really have done it. These preachers know how to praise things in order to evoke certain emotions. The temptation of that is that you don't want to do a Disneyesque, boy that was a great experience, and not have people walk out of there literally touched by the Word of God. You know, you don't want to give them an experience that is something other than being filled up with the Spirit and the Word, so that it's their relationship with God instead of their experience in worship.[57]

Dr. Mullins comments on the weaknesses he observes by stating:

> I think it's still awfully easy for us to maybe proclaim a message that could be just so correct and we could have our alliterations exact, and we could have all these parts, and we could have our doctrine as clear as a bell, we're defending and justifying our position ourselves; but it gets back to . . . after all is said and done, are lives being changed? Are lives being drawn to Christ? . . . Sometimes I hear guys share and I don't know who the audience is, who they are sharing to or for. . . . Most of the guys I listen to today are just great guys, they're connecting, they're preaching right where the rubber meets the road, they're in after it. That's why I listen because I want to learn from them.[58]

Dr. Toler says:

> I think sometimes for the sake of multi-sensory experience we miss sharing the truth and forget to bleed a little bit ourselves. I'm a power point person. I'm using videos and do that in my teaching and seminars and so forth, but I think heart—the heart of the leader—cannot be left out. It has to be felt. It can't be just five minutes and another video clip. There, somewhere, you have to bleed to bless.[59]

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[56]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 128.

[57]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 136.

[58]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, p. 143.

[59]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, p. 159.

## Question Eleven: What Do You See As the Greatest Challenges That Preachers Are Going to Face in the Next Ten to Twenty Years?

### *The Objective of the Question*

These interviewees are men whose insights are valuable in predicting both hurdles and springboards on the horizon for the church's future. This next-to-the-last interview question and its responses, even though significant in themselves, are a "set-up" for the final question as it relates to the Jesus model.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Graham states:

> I think the number one challenge will be the exclusivity of Christ, the message of the Gospel that Jesus Christ alone is Lord. What some people are calling pluralism is really syncretism of ideas, and of gods and religious pathways. I think that is going to be the greatest challenge spiritually, to overcome the culture's bent to accept that and therefore, the temptation to compromise the message at that point. We must never compromise the message of Christ and the cross and the message of John 14:6 that "Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by me." I think that's going to be the number one challenge of the next; I think it is the challenge today, and I think it will only increase. . . . I think on a positive note, one of the great challenges of preachers in our generation is: how are we going to use technology to communicate the Gospel? . . . More and more I'm using those screens to illustrate, to use with quotes. This is a visual generation and putting quotes and points and ideas and scriptures and, at times, even video illustrations. I think it is going to be quite a challenge and it's an opportunity to find the best way to use technology to communicate the gospel.[60]

Commenting on the challenges, Dr. Henry mentions three:

> One will be, I think in our culture, . . . getting and ear to our increasingly secular world. . . . If the guys cannot communicate and get to that audience, then our secular world doesn't get it. If they don't get there, that's going to be a danger, if we don't reach those people because they are hungry and they're running after a lot of wrong gods to satisfy that inner hunger. That would be one of the prime. The second is that I think sometimes the guys have to be careful about becoming or ignoring relationship with other brothers and sisters in Christ and becoming

[60]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 121.

> islands while they are part of the whole picture. . . . Some of them are good and they are building strong churches, but sometimes it's like we're the only voice here and they don't reach out a lot to others. I think, in time, that would mute their message. I think maybe a third thing would be to. . . help the pastor getting related to the secular guy and gal by spending time on time out there where they are, so that when I'm preaching, I've heard that guy. . . . We've been drawing off the last century of a rich deposit, but we've been mining it a long time, and that sense of the mind of God, the Word of God, is not in the culture as much. I find I can't take anything for granted from my audience, no matter what I think is simple, and it may not be simple at all because they never heard it before. . . . hopefully, I know, maybe, the questions he's asking. So I'm not answering questions nobody's asking.[61]

Dr. Hunter answers with these observations:

> I think the discipline it takes just week in and week out for a preacher to be spiritually formed by Christ; I think that relevance is not going to be an issue because, if you're not relevant, nobody's going to come. It's just that simple. You're really going to have to be impacting people. The challenge is that the preacher himself would want more than anything to be more like Christ so that the Word is not something he handles; the Word is something he becomes. So the greatest challenges for the preacher could be the example and the Chief Worshipper Himself, and the Chief One who is astounded by the Word of God. So I think the greatest challenge in the preaching lies in the preacher.[62]

Dr. Mullins points out:

> We're living in a very post-Christian era, and a lot of the things that we used to assume are even going to become more vague in concept in the future. We're going to be faced with almost like a missionary approach coming in to a pagan culture. It's getting more pagan every day. But the great truth of the matter is, as long as we are communicating in relevant ways, and using the relevant hooks of the day as Paul did when he was in Athens, and used the statue of the unknown god. Paul struck up the conversation there, so he knew how to use that avenue. I think Jesus taught us that.[63]

Dr. Rogers foresees the following challenges:

> I think one of the great, great challenges the preacher is going to face in the next ten to twenty years is to dumb the Bible down until it's politically correct. I think that has already begun and that we'll find that more and more. If we say there is a

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[61]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 128.

[62]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 137.

[63]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV. p. 144.

> fixed standard of right and wrong, if we preach against abortion, homosexuality, radical feminism, or preach the sanctity of the home, preach against divorce, preach about stewardship, absolute Lordship of Christ and holiness; this is a generation that is not going to take that. . . I think there's a temptation that all of us feel to be a little careful, and be wise and be seasoned with salt. But we need to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves, but bold as lions all at the same time. . . . We are a media saturated society until we're almost going to build up an immunity, and the preacher will be one more of those bees buzzing around our head. And they'll be everywhere and we'll just want to get in bed and pull the cover over our head. To find an audience, to be able to get to people, that's the reason, I believe, that we have to remember our distinctiveness, because down in the human heart there is a hunger for what we have and what we teach. And if we jettison that in order to reach them, ultimately we're going to be our own undoing (so) that we have to say, "Why should they come to us if we're just one more voice in a cacophony of voices out there." Because we're absolutely distinct and, of course, we know Jesus was, that's why they crucified Him.[64]

Dr. Ulmer contributes this thought:

> I think one would be ministering in a culture that has drifted from the Judaeo-Christian moral world view, if it ever was that much. We can no longer stand and preach and in the middle of talking about Noah say, "You know the story." They *don't* know the story (author's emphasis). We can no longer say, "Jesus went to Calvary, you know the story." They *don't* know the story (author's emphasis). The mindset of this generation and the coming generation is not what it was twenty to thirty years ago. These are not kids who were raised in Sunday School; raised in church, and these are not kids who saw their mothers on their knees in prayer. That generation is gone. The preacher and the church that is stuck back there has limited its effectiveness in going forward because they are trying to minister to a generation that is long gone. It's gone. They are trying to maintain a model that has disappeared. I think the challenge is . . . the challenge of the tribe of Issachar. The Bible says of Issachar, "They were men who had an understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do" (I Chronicles 12:32). I think the greatest challenge is to understand the times, to understand there is a time and season for everything under the sun and we run the risk of ministering to a season that is passed and gone.[65]

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[64]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, 153.

[65]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VII, 168.

## Question Twelve: How Do You Regard the Jesus Model for Preaching and Teaching Relevant to Those Challenges?

### *The Objective of the Question*

The question asks the pastor-preachers to place the clothing of Jesus' model on the body of their prediction of coming challenges, positive or negative. The key phrase is "relevant to those challenges", so as to determine how these men see Jesus' performance of preaching and teaching connecting with doing what it will take to meet the challenges of the first two decades of this century.

### *Responses to the Question*

Dr. Henry states his view on this final interview question by emphasizing the importance of following the example Jesus set:

> His model was effective two centuries ago and two millennia ago, it's effective then, and was effective afterwards by the great preachers and teachers. . . . I think that preaching was out of touch where now it's effective and Jesus' model is even better, and that's preaching with or speaking to them, not just at them. Jesus did that. That's why people got around Him. He didn't come down on them except the religious hypocrites . . . The people heard Him gladly because he was *with* them (author's emphasis). Jesus . . . took what the Father said. . . . If I can go back to this model, I'm more effective and my preaching is more effective.[66]

Dr. Hunter regards the Jesus model for preaching and teaching relevant to the challenges in the following way:

> Well the irony—and this still boggles my mind—is that nobody I know wanted to be closer to the Father than the Son. He never took it for granted. He always wanted to pour Himself out as an offering for the people on behalf of the Father, and wanted to represent the people to the Father. So He was at once a prophet and a priest, and His life was a sermon. To me, the model here is that the relevance comes from your life and I really think as we look at Jesus and we continue to research and think and abide, as in the John 15 passage[67], you know as we

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[66]Henry, interview, Appendix II, 130.

[67]See John 15:1-8.

> continue to abide in Him, then we're going to be relevant and we're going to be what He needs us to be.[68]

Dr. Rogers replies to the question by stating:

> Well, Jesus said, "What I hear, I speak. What I see, I do".[69] And so that's certainly a model for preachers, because He said, "As my Father has sent Me. So send I you."[70] And what I'm willing to be to Jesus, what Jesus was to the Father, Jesus is willing to be to me. . . . And so, you know, I want to be tuned in. I really want to get my priorities straight, and I feel guilty even saying what I'm saying because I am such a poor practitioner of it. Praying is more important than preaching, and preaching is more important than administration. So we've got to get our priorities straight and I think Jesus had His straight. He said, "I always do those things that please the Father."[71] Jesus was never ahead of time, never late. I'm both, often. And Jesus, at the end of his life, said, "I finish the things, Father, you gave me to do."[72] So I think it's a matter of focusing on Him. . . There's so much we could learn and should learn, and, of course, He's the mentor. He's the Chief Shepherd.[73]

Dr. Toler also points out a meaningful perspective:

> Well, the good news is, the ministry of Jesus is as current as today's newspaper. I love the Billy Graham model of the Bible in one hand and today's newspaper in the in the other hand, and I think that's the way Jesus communicated, in relevancy, authenticity, and inspiration. And I want to follow that as a patter, most of all, being able to contextualize what I'm sharing with the culture. Jesus did it magnificently, and, amazingly, it still inspires.[74]

Dr. Ulmer answers again with the reminder that Jesus always spoke with simplicity and clarity by saying, "Simplicity and clarity breeds relevance. . . . I think he had a word in

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[68]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 137.

[69]See John 16:13.

[70]See John 20:21.

[71]See John 8:29.

[72]See John 17:4.

[73]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, p. 155.

[74]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, p. 160.

season. The same word applies in this season; how we present it and those to whom we present it. And those to whom we present it never changes."[75]

## Summary of the Interview Results

This chapter has presented major portions of the responses of the leading pastors who were interviewed concerning the issue of regarding Jesus as a primary model for the conduct of preaching and teaching. Selected quotations from the interviews conducted by the author indicate that the pastors have viable opinions on the subject, and they seem to prefer to frame their responses in the concept of their own personal experience. Based on the validity of the opinions of these seven pastors, whose expertise should be confirmed by their qualifications,[76] their commentary will be referred in the ensuing chapters of this work. Their contributions will help to reinforce the contention of the author that the applicable elements of the manner and method demonstrated by Jesus as preacher and teacher should be subscribed to and energetically practiced as a primary model for current evangelical homiletics.

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[75]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VII, p. 168.

[76]See pages 4-6 of this work.

# CHAPTER IV

# ANALYSIS AND CORRELATION

The examination of the of manner and message of Jesus' ministry as a preacher and teacher,[1] and the analysis of testimony drawn from the interviews with leading evangelical pastors, show strong evidence of compatibility. This combination lends positive support to the contention that current pastors should give primary attention to the model of Jesus in their preaching and teaching ministries.

## The Correlation of Jesus' Manner of Preaching and Teaching and Pastoral Preaching and Teaching

The major components of Jesus' manner of preaching and teaching correlate with responses of the interviewed pastors that address those major components. Following the lines of Jesus' manner in relation to His prayer and worship, sense of mission, and relationship with the people among whom He ministered, the comparison is clearly seen.

### Jesus' Manner in Relation to Prayer and Worship

The way in which Jesus regarded His prayer and worship in connection with preaching and teaching, compares favorably with comments of the interviewed pastors on the relationship of prayer and worship in their own homiletical efforts.

For example, when commenting on Jesus' prayer life in connection with preaching, Dr. Kenneth Ulmer points out the fact that Jesus pulled away from the crowd

[1]See Chapter II of this work, pp. 12-52.

at times to commune with the Father so that His preaching could be an overflow of His personal devotional prayer life. According to Ulmer, the issue with Jesus, and what should be the issue with today's preachers, is to be a "prepared preacher rather than to have a prepared preachment."[2] He makes the observation that spending as much time in prayer, preparing the preacher, is at least as important as preparing the sermon.[3]

"The fact that Jesus used His prayer life to be absolutely intimate with the Father"[4] is a clear indication from Dr. Hunter that he recognizes the example of the personal prayer life of Jesus as an integral part of His ministry. In addition to that recognition, however, Hunter testifies that he, too, has the same attitude in regard to prayer in his life and ministry. He indicates that "it's not an additive to the message; it is an absolute."[5] Hunter speaks of getting on his face, many times, before God, just as Jesus did, and crying out in prayer, "Oh God, I need you."[6]

"Well. Of course Jesus, we know, made it His habit to pray; to set aside this time to get alone with God," says Tom Mullins.[7] He goes on to emphasize that he becomes personally convicted by the realization that, if Jesus, who was at the very center of God's will found it necessary to discipline Himself to give adequate time to communion with

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[2]Ulmer, Appendix VII, p. 165.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 135.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, p. 141.

God in prayer, then it is certainly much more important for today's preachers to make time to be alone with God in prayer.[8]

Alluding to his own dependence on the example of Jesus, Adrian Rogers explains that before he preaches, he gets on his knees and tells God what he is going to preach. According to Rogers, he tells the Lord what he is going to say to the people, then literally asks the Lord if He approves. "And so I'm saying," says Rogers, "I want to bounce every sermon on heaven and, so, that's what I would encourage preachers to do today."[9]

## Jesus Manner in Relation to His Sense of Mission

The association of Jesus' communicative approach with His sense of mission is a factor that is reflected in the comments of the pastors who were interviewed. When referring to characteristics of Jesus as a model for preaching and teaching, Dr. Jack Graham emphasizes that "Jesus often spoke of His own life and purpose, His mission on earth…His preaching and teaching centered in who He is and what He came to do. So that should be our goal as well, obviously."[10]

In response to the question regarding the number one strength of Jesus' preaching and teaching, Joel Hunter emphasizes the motivation of Jesus and refers to His view of the source of His authority for ministry. He says that the very reason Jesus came to earth and ministered was his love for the people.[11] Hunter's observation coincides with Jesus'

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, pp. 155-156.

[10]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 115.

[11]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 132.

expression of His own sense of mission and that He stated it at the beginning of His ministry.[12]

When asked about the relevance of the Jesus model as it relates to the challenges that face current pastoral preaching and teaching, and "getting priorities straight,"[13] Adrian Rogers comments on the sense of mission that affected Jesus' ministry. "That's certainly a model for preachers because He said, 'As my Father has sent me, so send I you."[14] He also points out that Jesus said, even at the climax of His ministry, "I finish the things you gave me to do."[15]

## Jesus Manner in Regard to His Relationship with the People

The way in which Jesus connected His preaching and teaching with the people among whom He lived and ministered is expressed by all of the interviewed pastors as one of their concerns. The subject is addressed according to the categories of the needs of the people and the use of a clearly understandable style of speaking.

### *The Needs of the People*

Jim Henry is sensitive to adhering to Jesus' example in this vein by relating his communication to his congregation by projecting to them, "Now what's this mean to you tomorrow when you walk out and go to work or go to your home?"[16] He goes on to press the point of communicating to our secular-minded society by reaching out to them

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[12]See pp. 14-16 of this work.

[13]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, p. 156.

[14]See John 20:21.

[15]See John 17:4

[16]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 127.

"because they are hungry and they're running after a lot of wrong gods to satisfy that inner hunger."[17]

The fact that Jesus focused His preaching and teaching on the needs of the people is pointed out by Joel Hunter when he states, "I think one of the things Jesus did in his model of preaching was that it was all about people, and it was responding to particular needs that were there."[18] Hunter continues by reminding pastors of the advantage that they have because of being aware of what the people have been going through all week. Therefore, the pastor can shape the way he communicates so that the impact is "as significant as it can be and as least hurtful as it can be."[19]

When addressing the subject of current preaching and teaching in connection with Jesus' approach, Tom Mullins states, "Christ dealt with the needs of the people. I mean, Jesus was right there when they were hurting. He was dealing with issues that were relevant to them."[20] At another point, Mullins suggests that the key to preachers and teachers being relevant is to reach out to people at their points of need and love them with the love of Christ, communicating with them while meeting their needs.[21]

Stan Toler, in reflection on the love and attitude toward people as evidenced by Jesus' love and concern, tells of his experience as a young preacher boy being prayed with and ministered to by the prominent Christian leader, Paul S. Rees. He comments on the importance of pastors reaching out and touching people in ministry to their needs, and

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[17]Ibid.

[18]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 132.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, p. 144.

[21]Ibid.

in doing so, becoming a representative of Christ, just as if He, himself, were there. "I have a view that my preaching will improve when I touch people," says Toler.[22]

### *The Use of a Clearly Understandable Style of Speaking*

Tuning in to the concept that Jesus purposely and skillfully used language and forms of rhetoric that placed Him on a level that the people could comprehend is a crucial component in preaching and teaching, and the pastors' interview responses reflect their appreciation for that component. Jack Graham calls attention to the fact that Jesus told stories, used humor, asked questions, and brought current events into the picture in order to make His preaching and teaching clear, relevant and applicable.[23]

Jim Henry testifies to his frequent use of stories. He states that he can tell immediately when he starts telling a story that the interest of the people picks up tremendously. "I find that illustration goes right with expository preaching", he says. "If they can hang a truth onto an illustration, then I've succeeded with preaching."[24]

Likewise, Joel Hunter refers to following Jesus' example by telling a lot of stories. "Jesus told a lot of stories. Stories are universal in their impact. . . . I keep it as personal as I can, and as simple as I can."[25]

"Jesus was a master contemporary story teller," says Tom Mullins. "He could take it and weave it within the circumstances of whatever current event or situation He found Himself in, and He would tell a story in that and bring the revelation of a great spiritual

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[22]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, p. 160.

[23]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 117.

[24]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 126.

[25]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 132.

truth to mind."[26] Mullins goes on to point out Jesus' ability to "paint for them a wonderful imagery of the truth, whether it be a city set on a hill, or that we are to be a light under a basket. His illustrations were so relevant and penetrating, and I think that's how I relate to Him as a model for our preaching today."[27]

The fact that Jesus took advantage of the opportunity for teaching in places that were conducive for teaching, using the circumstances to illustrate His truth, is explained by Adrian Rogers, speaking of the man in Jesus' parable who went forth to sow seed:[28]

> I can see Jesus walking down with His disciples, watching that man sow; and then giving those marvelous parables. They flowed out of Him. So I think that a preacher today can learn very, very much from that. . . . This physical, material is is but a reflection of a greater, deeper spiritual truth, and so that's the way Jesus taught, and in my estimation, that's the reason why the Bible says the common people listened to what He had to say.[29]

Speaking of the use of the function of illustration to clarify one's spoken word, Stan Toler says that every message needs at least three "home run stories"; one as an opener, another midway, and one at the conclusion.[30]

Dr. Kenneth Ulmer states that clarity and simplicity are the main strengths of Jesus' style of preaching and teaching. Being from south central Los Angeles, Ulmer points out the need to connect with one's environment, employing rhetoric that is understood within the cultural context of one's audience.[31]

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[26]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, p. 139.

[27]Ibid.

[28]See Matthew 13:3-23.

[29]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, p. 148.

[30]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, p. 159.

[31]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VII, pp. 166-167.

## The Correlation of Jesus' Message and Pastoral Preaching and Teaching

The component areas of the content of Jesus' message—His personhood, His kingdom, and His commandments—receive the attention and comment of the interviewed pastors. As they respond to the author's questions, their comments demonstrate an identity in their own preaching and teaching with the main aspects of the content of Jesus' message.

### Jesus' Message in Relation to His Person

Jesus' attention to the His own significance in His preaching and teaching is an indispensable component in the understanding and re-proclamation of His message today. Jack Graham drives home the point that Jesus often spoke of His own life and purpose. He refers to Jesus' statement, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men to myself."[32] According to Graham, the ultimate goal, the purpose of preaching and teaching is to exalt Christ and proclaim His person and work. "He is the topic, the subject of preaching as He was in His own life and ministry."[33]

Joel Hunter refers to the question that was asked of Jesus as to how He claimed so much more authority than other teachers. Hunter states, "Jesus was effective because, you know the old Marshall McLuhan statement, 'the medium is the message.' He *was* the Word. He *lived* the Word."[34]

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[32]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 114, quoting John 12:32.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Hunter, interview, Appendix III, p. 132. Hunter refers to Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 7. The statement, "The medium is the message" has became well known as a result of the popularity of McLuhan's theories about the power of electronic media being more of an influence than the message it carries. In the above quotation, Hunter uses the analogy to emphasize that Jesus, Himself, not *only* what He said, is the message—the Word.

In regard to the authority of Jesus, as an ingredient in His presentation of Himself through His preaching and teaching, Adrian Rogers comments, "That's one of the things that amaze me about the preaching of Jesus. He spoke with authority, not as the scribes. The scribes quoted. The scribes analyzed. The scribes organized. But Jesus said, 'I say unto you.'"[35]

## Jesus' Message in Relation to His Kingdom

Although Jesus' connection with the kingdom concept as expressed in His preaching and teaching is only addressed briefly by Jack Graham with the word "kingdom" used, some of the dynamics of Jesus' concept of the kingdom as its application is expressed in His message, are brought out in the responses of some of the interviewed pastors.

Jack Graham connects the kingdom theme in Jesus preaching and teaching to the current need for that emphasis when he says,

> Jesus came preaching the kingdom and I take that to mean that His goal was to take as many people to heaven with Him as possible. That becomes our holy ambition in preaching, in ministry, and in all that we do, fulfilling the great commission.[36]

In Graham's comment, he is referring to that aspect of the kingdom, as Jesus presented it, where a part of its implications involve an eschatological application in which those who believe in Him will spend eternity in the presence of God in heaven.[37]

When speaking of the importance of applying Christ's principles as He did, Tom Mullins states,

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[35]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, p. 148.

[36]Ibid.

[37]See pp. 44-45 in this work.

> We can preach about theory until we're blue in the face; we can preach about our concepts; we can preach about our doctrines . . . but it really gets down to where our people are living and what they are going to take away from this that's going to help them walk closer to Christ and fulfill their mission as a disciple of Christ.[38]

In the sense that Jesus implied in the model prayer that the request be made, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" that the kingdom of God was in operation when His will was being carried out,[39] Mullins' remark is appropriate in connection with the kingdom concept.

## Jesus' Message as Expressed in His Commandments

Since the author has chosen to designate the imperative instructions of Jesus, mostly dealing with active ministry and ethical behavior, with the term "commandments", the responses of the interviewed pastors connect with Jesus' expressions of His expressed Lordship in communicating authoritative instructions.

Jesus confronted controversial themes without hesitation, as Jack Graham points out. "He didn't back off from the subject of sin. He spoke of repentance and faith. . . . He was culturally relevant but Biblically accurate and He was able to take the Old Testament scriptures and give them New Testament meaning and fulfillment."[40]

Jim Henry presses the point that preachers need to be emphasizing what Jesus said, simply because Jesus said it. He makes the observation that Jesus stated "the Father

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[38]Mullins, interview, Appendix IV, p. 141.

[39]See Matthew 6:10 and commentary on the present implications of its meaning in Gundry, *Matthew*, 106-107, and N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 292-293, as well as p. 45 of this work.

[40]Graham, interview, Appendix I, p. 115.

told me this" and then stated it with authority. "If I can go back to His model, I'm more effective and my preaching and my teaching are more effective."[41]

Adrian Rogers, referring to the imperative instructions of Jesus, comments on the authoritative directions given by Jesus:

> A little formula I made up a long time ago is: "Hey; you, look; go." Hey is to get their attention if they're not listening. So many times Jesus began with "Behold." That's the same as "Hey, you"… "*I* say unto you". . . "I say unto *you.*" Make it personal; pointed. He explains it and then calls for action. "If your Lord and Master has washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. Go ye and do likewise."[42]

Dr. Rogers says further, "Preaching is not filling a bucket, it's lighting a torch. It comes to a conclusion and moves toward a goal, which Jesus always did."[43]

With regard to communicating the commands of Jesus in today's preaching and teaching, Stan Toler relates that "We're living in a 'whatever' world and if we're not clear this is going to come back and haunt us."[44] Toler goes on to state that we will also be haunted by people's disobedience of Jesus' instructions if we don't say, "Here are our values." and then articulate them. . . . Never delegate core values.[45]

Kenneth Ulmer also emphasizes the necessity of preaching and teaching in keeping with the principles that are based on Scripture, and to use this procedure just as Jesus did.

> What I see is a dangerous trend . . . a distortion and maybe at its worst apostatuting (sic) the Scripture in order to appeal to the masses; to the crowd

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[41]Henry, interview, Appendix II, p. 130.

[42]Rogers, interview, Appendix V, p. 149.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Toler, interview, Appendix VI, p. 160.

[45]Ibid.

> which I think is antipathetical to what we began with, the model of Jesus. Like I said, I think Jesus would get rid of the crowd sometimes.[46]

## Summary

The interviewed pastors recognize and adhere to the importance of knowing and practicing the main components of Jesus' manner and message. Their responses to the interview questions indicate that they have a familiarity with the categories upon which the author has built his examination of Jesus' preaching and teaching model. The pastors also testify to some of the ways in which they incorporate those categories into their own pulpit ministries. The fact that these leading evangelical pastor-preachers have a keen awareness of the model of Jesus as a preacher-teacher and use His example in their own successful pulpit ministries should serve as an encouragement for others to follow their lead and do the same.

[46]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VII, p. 167.

# CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSION

Based upon the author's observations from personal experience in pastoral ministry, the examination of the preaching and teaching ministry of Jesus, and responses from interviews with leading evangelical pastors, vital principles for a more effective pulpit ministry can be determined and practiced.

## Personal Observations and Practice of the Author

Having served as a pastor for over forty years in five churches, and as a full-time evangelist prior to his first pastorate, the author calculates that he has preached approximately 7,500 times. The author also taught courses on public speaking on the college level at the University of Charleston for a period of six years.[1] During this process the author developed opinions about preaching and teaching based on the disciplined insight that he has gained through academic training in homiletics,[2] as well as pastoral ministry and classroom teaching.

The author launched into the ministry of preaching and teaching at the age of seventeen immediately following his realization that, simply understood at the time, God was "calling him to preach." Initial experience in the endeavor was gained from teaching

[1]The author taught at the University of Charleston (Morris Harvey College at that time), Charleston, West Virginia, from the fall semester of 1967 to the spring semester of 1973.

[2]The author has received academic training in the field of homiletics in attainment of degrees at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; and Doctor of Ministry courses in homiletics at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Sunday School and speaking at such functions as high school Bible club meetings, youth rallies, and a sermon to the entire home church congregation during the annual Youth Week. Throughout that introductory period the confirmation of "the calling" was fixed in the author's mind, along with the awareness that being a messenger of the Word of God and maintaining the interest of the audience were priorities, and areas in which he was in acute need of further training. Such a realization led to pursuit of higher education in a university that was recommended for its under-graduate preaching courses and extra-curricular opportunities to preach in area churches.[3]

While continuing undergraduate education, the author received classroom instruction in the rudiments of the preparation and delivery of sermons, and furthered his development of preaching and teaching experience as a student pastor and itinerate evangelist.[4] Among the factors that were incipient influences on the author's appreciation for the style of Jesus as a communicator, was a memorable remark by Dr. Vester E. Wolber concerning Jesus' approach to conveying His message. Dr. Wolber stated that students preparing for the ministry need to understand when they think they have arrived at a level of scholarship that categorizes them as "theologians", their task is still that of preaching and teaching in a way that is simple and clear enough for the common people to understand, "just like Jesus."[5] Dr. Wolber's comment made a lasting, profound impression on the author that affected his approach to preaching and teaching as a

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[3]The institution is Ouachita Baptist University previously mentioned.

[4]While a university student the author was pastor of Memorial Baptist Church, Waldo, Arkansas; Piney Grove Baptist Church, Lewisville, Arkansas; and leader of the Voice of Victory Evangelistic Team, ministering in Southern Baptist and American Baptist churches in West Virginia, Arkansas, Kansas, and Indiana.

[5]Dr. Vester E. Wolber was chairman of the Department of Religion at Ouachita Baptist University from 1958 through 1985. The above unrecorded classroom statement is from the recollection of the author.

student, and remained as a prominent thread woven into the fabric of his further development as a communicator.

The author was attracted to eloquence and fluency in public speaking and admired elaborate rhetoric as a skill, but that fascination with eloquence was tempered by the reminder that the most practical, effective, and Christ-like approach to preaching and teaching the Gospel truth is to transmit one's ideas in a way that is understandable and applicable.

Following university graduation, the author continued his studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and carried on his involvement with pulpit ministries as a supply preacher during the seminary term periods and as an evangelist in various churches during the summer months. The knowledge and experience gained in hermeneutics and homiletics courses in seminary were crucial in the further development of the author's style and content of preaching. This was especially the case in emphasis made by the professors concerning the need to be relevant to the lives and experiences of the people to whom one preaches and teaches, and to do so in a way that generates high interest and clarity that is easily comprehended. The author recalls that this point was illustrated by referring to the example of Jesus as a communicator who used a style of speaking that purposely connected with the people.[6] Such affirmation further enhanced the author's recognition of Jesus as a communicator whose effectiveness was due largely to the way He linked His explanations and illustrations to concepts the audiences could understand.

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[6]See the author's notes from the course, Preaching 31, "The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons," taught by Dr. H. C. Brown, Jr., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, Spring Semester, 1962.

Upon graduation from seminary the author accepted a call to the pastorate of a church beside the campus of a university, knowing that he would be ministering to hundreds of students; a factor that affected his decision to take that pastorate.[7] While serving the church, the author also taught courses in the Speech and Sociology departments of a college in a nearby city as an adjunct faculty member.[8] The blending of the experience of communicating to a constituency largely made up of university students during the seething "sixties", and teaching several courses in Public Speaking and Sociology, reinforced the author's belief that in order to inform, convince, and persuade audiences, it is necessary to wrap one's preaching and teaching in rhetoric that connects, and to identify with one's hearers by cultivating an in-touch relationship.

A recurring and growing sensitivity to the importance of being mindful of Jesus' style of clear and close communication continued in the ensuing years of the author's ministry, and affects his performance in preaching and teaching to this very day. During the fall and winter of 2001-2002 the author prepared and taught a course entitled "The Real Life of Christ" at Christ Fellowship, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, where he serves on the pastoral staff. The course ran for eighteen weeks and drew a highly positive response from its participants. During the extensive research for the course, the author gained a renewed and deepened appreciation for the ways and means by which Jesus connected with the people to whom he ministered, with His preaching and teaching playing a starring role in that connection. Such a realization was a strong prompting

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[7]Twentieth Street Baptist Church, Huntington, West Virginia, was directly adjacent to Marshall University which, during that period from 1966-1970, had a student body that numbered approximately 10,000. During his tenure at the church, the author ministered to hundreds of students and was instrumental in starting the Campus Crusade for Christ organization at the university in 1967.

[8]What is presently the University of Charleston, Charleston, West Virginia, was at that time Morris Harvey College. The author taught there from 1967 through 1973.

factor in the choice of the subject for this project, and it is a compelling stimulant for the author to beat the drum and wave the banner to other pastoral communicators for applying the main elements of Jesus' manner and message style to their own ministries.

## Principles Drawn from the Project

Information resulting from the research and organization of this project can be formulated as principles for current preaching and teaching as they relate to the example provided by Jesus. The term "principle", in this presentation, is defined as a preferred guideline by which to achieve correct performance.

### Current Pastors Should Derive a Basic Model from the Preaching and Teaching of Jesus as Revealed in the Gospels

Examination of the manner and method of Jesus' preaching and teaching provides a model that is constructed around components that seem to stand out as His main concerns.[9] Comments have also been secured from leading evangelical pastors. In response to interviews relating to the manner and message of Jesus and current pastoral preaching and teaching, these masters of the pulpit testify to the primary importance of Jesus' example, based on their understanding of His supremacy as a communicator.[10]

Deriving a model from Jesus' basic style of communication does not imply that one may expect to replicate His actions in an exact form any more than one could reproduce His capacity to accomplish supernatural results. Recognizing His style can, however, become a "do-able" reality when the effort is made to identify specific ways

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[9]See Chapter II of this dissertation, pp. 12-52, where the subject of Jesus' manner and message of preaching and teaching is discussed in detail.

[10]See Chapters III and IV, pp. 53-94, for selected responses to the interviews, as well as transcriptions of the interviews that are presented in Appendices I -VII, pp. 114-168.

and means by which he preached and taught that are adaptable to the current context. For example, today's pastor cannot turn water into wine or multiply loaves and fish into a meal for a crowd of five-thousand, but he can show his care and compassion for the people of his congregation by counseling them in times of crisis, praying with them when illness strikes, and making himself available as a shepherd-servant rather than one who expects to be served. In doing so, he will find, as Jesus did, that people tend to connect with one who exerts the effort to connect with them. The pastor can also see in Jesus the best example of making the most of opportunities of closeness to one's constituency by making the truth of the Word of God applicable to their real life situations instead of preaching and teaching subjects that may be doctrinally sound but are irrelevant to the nitty-gritty of their daily life experience.

The preferred hypothesis upon which all pastors should base their preaching and teaching is the example for those ministries that was set by the One who stood out above all others in the time of His earthly ministry and continues to stand out today above other possible models.

### Current Pastors Should Practice Preaching and Teaching Based upon the Model of Jesus as Revealed in the Gospels

If one assumes that the example of the manner and message of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels is accepted as the main standard upon which today's preaching and teaching should be modeled, then it follows that mere "lip service" falls woefully short of the apparent objective—to practice in preparation and delivery of pulpit communication what one acknowledges as the standard. It is probably safe to assume that the majority of evangelical pastors have little or no argument with the assertion that Jesus' methods and

message content are the primary source from which we appropriate the example and inspiration for preaching and teaching. The main issue in regard to the modeling of Jesus' style of communicating with His audience is not only a matter of acceptance or endorsement as it is a matter of practical application. The author would not be surprised if he were accused of "preaching to the choir" by claiming and demonstrating that Jesus should be followed as the correct example of any worthy objective, including preaching and teaching. The point is, then, among evangelical pastors, action is what is called for; breathing life into acceptable theory by transforming it into consistent practice.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, California and best-selling author is widely recognized as a leading proponent and example of successful church growth and effective communication of Bible-based truth. On the subject of preaching like Jesus, Warren states, "There has never been a more appealing and interesting preacher than Jesus. Why not model Him?"[11] He goes on to say, "To capture the attention of unbelievers like Jesus did, we *must* communicate spiritual truth *the way* He did. I believe that Jesus—not anyone else—must be our model for preaching."[12] Warren articulates the heart of the issue very well: pastor-preachers *must* communicate spiritual truth as Jesus did; not just nod our approval of His method and message, or merely agree verbally with such a hypothesis, but purposely preach and teach according to its precedent.

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[11]Rick Warren, "A Primer on Preaching Like Jesus" *Rick Warren's Ministry Toolbox* 47 (10-April 2002) [article on line]; available from http://www.pastors.com/RWMT/printerfriendly.asp?issue=47&artID=1595; Internet; accessed 12 October 2003, p. 1.

[12]Ibid.

## Application of Jesus' Manner and Message

Pastors should apply the principles that have been discussed in the previous section. The applications which follow are designed to help pastoral preachers and teachers take a definite step in bringing their pulpit ministry into line with Jesus' style and content. These applications take the form of questions that should be asked and suggestions for employing specific characteristics in the delivery of sermons.

### Questions for the Pastor to Ask in the Process of Preparing to Preach and Teach

The following seven questions are designed as a practical "check list" to guide the course of one's preaching and teaching by the standard of Jesus' style and content.

#### *In Keeping with Jesus' Style, Is the Message Related to the Preacher's Sense of Mission?*

Jesus' preaching and teaching was motivated by His sense of mission.[13] If one intends to emulate Jesus' manner and message, he, too, should test his motivation by determining its connection to his own sense of mission. Developing and maintaining a constant realization of the direction in which one's preaching and teaching is headed should be guided by one's personal sense of purpose in life and ministry. Is the preacher-teacher confident that he is called to be a messenger of Christ, responsible for declaring His Word? Has he defined in his own view of pastoral ministry a personal mission statement that can help him establish and maintain perspective on where his "messaging" is taking himself and his congregation? Is that mission, expressed in the pursuit of its goals and objectives, reflected in the style and content of his preaching? In the light of

[13]See pp. 14-16 of this work.

what we know about Jesus' explanation of His own mission, these questions beg to be asked by those who intend to comply with Jesus' preaching-teaching model.

As a part of the preaching-teaching team at Christ Fellowship, the author confers regularly with Pastor Tom Mullins and the other members of the team in planning and evaluating the messages that are delivered to the church's congregation at week-end and mid-week services. A constant question confronted and dealt with by the team has to do with whether or not any given message is in line with the mission of the church. This question has very much to do with the place of the speaker's own personal orientation toward the church's stated mission, which is "to impact our world with the love and message of Jesus Christ."

### *In Accordance with Jesus' Manner, Does the Message Relate to the Needs of the People?*

Jesus consistently connected His preaching and teaching with emphasis on meeting needs, healing hurts and responding to questions and comments.[14] Pastors, especially, ought to gear their preaching to mesh with the routine issues that their "sheep" confront in the home, at work, at school, in their communities and in their social lives. Their messages should constantly come to grips with crises that affect the health, finances, moral behavior, and spiritual challenges their parishioners face.

"How does this sermon series, how does this message apply to the needs in the lives of our people?" This is a question that is consistently laid on the table when the Christ Fellowship preaching-teaching team works on sermon and lesson material. The members of the team are aware that information, in and of itself, regardless of its doctrinal correctness or sentimental familiarity, does not result in a life-connected, life-

[14]Ibid., 17-22.

changing result, and at Christ Fellowship, the aim of preaching and teaching is to change lives. John Maxwell, points out the importance of life-changing preaching by stating:

> Preaching, to me, is not an end in itself. I believe that for great communicators, their whole perspective of communicating is to change lives and move people from one point to the other with the assistance of God. People that are speakers, their goal is to look good. There is a world of difference between these two. A speaker, when he or she is done, their whole issue is: how did I sound, did people like me? A communicator preacher, their whole perspective is: did it change a life? Communicators are other focused, speakers are inner focused.[15]

Again, Rick Warren expresses keen insight when he says, "Today, 'preaching to felt needs' is scorned and criticized in some circles as a cheapening of the gospel and a sell-out to consumerism. I want to state this in the clearest way possible: Beginning a message with people's felt needs is not some modern approach invented by 20th century marketing! It's the way Jesus always preached."[16]

### *Considering Jesus' Example, Will the Message be Delivered in a Clearly Understandable Style of Speaking?*

It is practically impossible to read the Gospels and be exposed to the preaching and teaching passages without noticing that one of Jesus' main objectives was to get His message across to those He was addressing. He did it clearly and He did it simply, injecting His own divine genius into the use of what have been found to be the most effective forms of rhetoric.[17] One of the most obvious conclusions regarding Jesus' mode of expression is the fact that he pulled out all the stops and played all the keys to open the minds and hearts of the people; to capture their interest with vivid stories of real life

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[15]Michael Duduit, ed., "Leading through Preaching: An Interview with John Maxwell." *Preaching* (January-February, 1998) [article on line]; available from http://www.preaching.com/ preaching/past issues/ johnmaxwell.htm; Internet; accessed 10 October 2003.

[16]Warren, "A Primer on Preaching Like Jesus," 3.

[17]See pp. 23-33 of this work.

episodes and imaginative analogies. Although He was a consummate theologian,[18] His style of communication was designed and delivered to transmit His theology in elementary and uncomplicated words and phrases.

In light of that fact, every preacher and teacher of the Word of God should feel compelled to do his best to express oneself in a way that grabs and keeps the hearer's interest and can be understood and retained. To do this will take a conscientious effort from many of today's evangelical speakers because of the tempting tendency to exhibit one's acquired knowledge and draw admiration in the attempt. The goal of the Christian communicator who desires to follow the lead of Jesus, however, is not to "wow" the audience with his eloquence or intellect but to deliver an uncomplicated and unclouded report on who Christ is, what He has for them, and how people can obtain it through Him.

Members of the preaching-teaching team of Christ Fellowship share mutual positive critique of one another's efforts at being interesting and understandable in platform communication. Careful attention is given to line of thought and illustration so that messages come across with sharp clarity and on-target application.

***Does the Content of the Message Emphasize the Person of Jesus Christ as Savior?***

This question focuses the preacher's attention on the person of Jesus just as He, Himself, included His identity and the salvation that would come through Him in His preaching and teaching. It is a reminder of the importance of following this characteristic in current preaching and teaching. Haddon Robinson, one of the most influential persons in the homiletical world has struck an incisive note in this regard by saying in an interview:

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[18]Young, *Jesus the Jewish Theologian,* 274.

> To preach the uniqueness of Jesus in a multifaceted culture in which you insist that Jesus is the only way to God; the response of the people sitting in front of you is that you are a bigot. It is an emotional response. So people are willing to say yes to Jesus; certainly, even to say that He is the Savior. But the number of people in our churches who would say that He is the only Savior, the only way to God, is less and less.[19]

The author agrees with Robinson that the preaching of Jesus as being "the way, the truth and the life" and that "no man comes to the father but by (Him)"[20] is becoming less and less "politically correct" in our secular society and a less popular tenet in many of our churches. As a result, the temptation to go soft on the declaration that Jesus stands in a unique category as the way to salvation will be brought to bear upon evangelical pastors with an increased pressure. Rather than succumb to such pressure, evangelical pastors need to take stock of their convictions concerning Christology and affirm all the more their commission to proclaim the person of Jesus Christ in the classic evangelical sense. They must present Him as He presented Himself—divine Son of God, Savior of mankind from the curse of sin, the means to a right relationship with God.

### *Does the Message Consider the Lordship of Jesus Christ in Regard to Present and Future Events?*

This question deals with the relevance of the issue of Jesus' concept of the "kingdom" in his message and its implications regarding His authority as a determining factor in His followers' attitude and actions, both now and in the future. This consideration may be applied in the preparation and delivery of pastoral preaching and teaching as a means of conveying the concept that what takes place in current events is

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[19]Michael Duduit, ed. "Expository Preaching in a Narrative World: An Interview with Haddon Robinson." *Preaching* (July-August 2001) [article on line]; available from http://preaching.com/preaching/past issues/haddonrobinson.htm; Internet; accessed 10 October 2003, p. 6.

[20]See John 14:6.

not outside the notice—and, at times, intervention—of God. Events yet to come should be presented as subject to the eventual unfolding of the eschatological plan of God. It should be stressed that followers of Jesus Christ are to be instrumental in promoting and performing the will of God "on earth as it is in heaven,"[21] in keeping with fulfilling their role in the kingdom of God.

When Jesus applied the precepts of His preaching and teaching and used parables relating to daily life as well as current news and prediction of eschatological events to do so, He frequently introduced them with the phrase, "The kingdom of God is like."[22]

Jack Graham, referring to a current theme of Southern Baptists: "Empowering Kingdom Growth", states: "I'm going to be doing a sermon series on the Sermon on the Mount. I've just been living, thinking and breathing Christ's words about the Kingdom, and of course the Sermon on the Mount is the constitution of the kingdom."[23]

One of the most effective ways for today's preachers and teachers to convey the urgent importance of Christian service is to respond to the example set by Jesus by reminding one's audience that consistent commitment to Christ and active obedience to His teachings are linked to being a part of His kingdom and contingent upon those who claim to be included in it.

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[21]See Matthew 6:10; also information in this work, p. 45.

[22]See Matthew 13:24; 18:23, 20:1, 22:2, 25:1; Mark 4:26; and Luke 13:18-20.

[23]Duduit, Michael, ed. "An Interview with Jack Graham" *Preaching* (November-December, 2002) [article on line]; available from http://www.preaching.com/preaching/pastissues/jackgraham.htm; Internet; accessed 10 October 2003.

### *When Dealing with Ethical Issues in a Message, is the Standard Based on the Authority of Jesus Christ?*

Asking this question addresses the standard of determining ethical behavior as it relates to the commandments of Jesus.[24] The question is a stimulus for evaluating one's obligation to proclaim the truth regarding ethical issues with the confidence that Jesus' instructions are not negotiable. For the evangelical pastor, preaching and teaching in the category of moral and ethical issues has characteristically and primarily been based on the instructions of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Jesus-based values systems are being tested in the crucible of current post-modern permissiveness, all too often, falling prey to compromise and conformity. The shepherds of the flock must guard their sheep against moral and ethical behavior that runs counter to the standards set by Jesus.

When preaching-teaching situations call for taking sides on controversial moral and ethical issues, the pastor needs to come down firmly on the right side, and the determining factor for which side is right, is the position of Jesus on any or all such issues. And in circumstances where the pastor is called upon to support his stated position on a moral or ethical question, he can unapologetically justify his stand on what Jesus said as reason enough.

### *Are the Messenger and the Message Prepared through Prayer and Communion with God?*

This question emphasizes the importance of following the lead of Jesus in making contact with God the Father a regular, indispensable factor in one's life, and, consequently, a crucial ingredient in one's preaching and teaching ministry. Faithful adherence to this discipline demands a persistent determination to observe two

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[24]See pp. 46-51of this work.

guidelines: (1) Regard the readiness of the preacher to be as important as the preparation of the message. As Kenneth Ulmer puts it, "It is not so much a prepared preachment as it is a consistently prepared preacher. . . . Most of the people I know, including myself, spend much more time preparing the preachment than being a prepared preacher."[25] The pastor should also (2) resist the temptation to rationalize oneself out of personal prayer and devotional life. It is all too easy to place a priority on pastoral duties as acceptable substitutes for prayer, and miss the spiritually energizing communion with God that is essential to effective pastoral ministry.

In the author's own experience he has found that maintaining a balance between a demanding schedule as a member of the pastoral team of a fast-growing mega-church and one's personal devotional life is essential. Times for getting alone with God in the communion of prayer and the Word do not just happen, they have to be made to happen. The best time for the author to have uninterrupted prayer and Bible-focused meditation is between 5:30 and 7:00 a.m. every day. It is a time that is least likely to be "shot out of the saddle" by conflicting pastoral responsibilities. The author has spoken with other pastors who also find such a daybreak period their best opportunity for a regular, personal devotional experience with God.

As important as direct ministry to the people was in Jesus' activities, and as diligent as He was to instruct and exemplify the application of the Scriptures, He regularly and purposely carved out the opportunity to confine Himself in a private time and place just to be with His Father. It is also a part of His design for preachers and teachers of today to follow His lead and to give and receive in a consistent prayer life.

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[25]Ulmer, interview, Appendix VII, p. 164.

## Recommendations

Definite steps should be taken in order to begin to apply the principles of Jesus' style and message content to one's own preaching and teaching. In the light of this study, the author recommends the following actions that will heighten one's awareness of the operating dynamics of Jesus' ministry as a master communicator, and provide motivation for putting those dynamics into practice.

### *Engage in an In-depth Examination of Jesus' Preaching and Teaching Such as the One Presented by the Author*

Studies conducted on the Life of Christ are an integral part of the curriculum in evangelical university religious departments and occupy a place of prominence in theological seminary training. The reason for this is obvious. Jesus is the paramount figure around whom evangelical Christian ministry orbits. Attention to what He said, what He did, and the way He said and did it, affects practically every aspect of how pastors who profess to follow Him respond. Do they care enough to study the Gospels and related material and actually find out what He did and said? Do they believe in Him enough to accept His invitation to discipleship and commit their lives to Him? Will they conduct their lives according to the instructions He gave when He preached and taught during His brief but life-changing, history-changing appearance?

Most evangelical pastors would answer all of those questions in the affirmative and insist that all conscientious preachers and teachers study the life and ministry of Jesus and "be conformed to the likeness of His Son."[26] This being the case, it follows that if Jesus is acknowledged as the master communicator, then those who also desire to capably communicate Christian truth should naturally study His manner and message in

[26]See Romans 8:29.

particular. They should take the time in the development of their homiletical skills to zero in on the Gospel accounts of the way He preached and taught.

The author testifies to the experience of tuning in to the model of Jesus as a guideline for preaching and teaching, due, primarily, to a depth study of the Gospels in preparation for teaching a course on His life and ministry. In his assignments of preaching and teaching at Christ Fellowship, the author keeps Jesus' method and message in mind as he prepares and delivers sermons and lessons. He believes that once a serious practitioner of preaching and teaching digs into those Gospel passages that describe the way in which Jesus brought His message to the people,[27] and is struck with the awareness that the way Jesus functioned in that role is a workable model when applied in today's cultural context, he will utilize the components of that model with beneficial results. He will preach and teach with a closer connection to his audience. He will convey his message in a more interesting and understandable way. He will transmit essential, Christ-centered truth in a manner that applies that truth to the up-close issues of human concern.

### *Consult with Experienced Preachers who Evidence the Elements of Jesus' Style and Message in Their Pulpit Ministries*

One of the best sources for information and inspiration that will stimulate a pastor's attitude and action toward implementing Jesus' style and message is the expertise of skillful evangelical preachers and teachers who intentionally adhere to their understanding of the Jesus model.

One outstanding and previously mentioned example of a leading pastor who subscribes to the Jesus model is Rick Warren. Dr. Warren emphasizes that in his

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[27]See Appendix X, pp. 178-185, Table: "The Preaching and Teaching Passages of Jesus: Their Relevance to the Lives of the People."

regularly conducted, two day seminars on preaching which have been attended by thousands of pastors, he keeps coming back to, "Now let's see how Jesus did it. Now, look how Jesus did it. . . . My model is not anybody but Jesus."[28]

Another evangelical leader who is well-known as an outstanding preacher and teacher-of-preachers is Paige Patterson, currently President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Patterson is an advocate of expository Biblical preaching and also consistently emphasizes that "The model for a Bible-teaching preacher is Jesus Himself."[29]

The author recommends that preachers and teachers should take advantage of the opportunity to learn from such men by reading what they have written on the subject of following Jesus' preaching-teaching style, by listening to tapes, watching videos of their pulpit messages and conference presentations, and, whenever possible, discuss their Jesus-modeled communication with them personally.

## Concluding Challenge

There are several approaches to the preparation and practice of preaching and teaching, as well as various styles of delivery and versions of message content currently in use. Evangelical pastors should choose the best option by following Jesus as a primary model for their preaching and teaching ministries. It is not sufficient to give lip service to the example set by Jesus in this regard. The need in contemporary evangelical pastoral thinking is not so much to put an empathetic stamp of approval on "the way Jesus did it,"

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[28]Duduit, "Purpose Driven Preaching: Interview with Rick Warren," 3.

[29]Doy Cave, "Where are all the Bible-teaching preachers, Paige Patterson asks," *The Gatekeeper*, February 12, 2001, Vol.30, No. 22, p.1; see also Michael Foust, "Patterson: Follow Lead in Preaching Expositionally," *The Southern Baptist Seminary: News and Resources*, (Spring 2001) [article on line]; available from http://www.sbts.edu/news/archives/spring2001/NR093.php.

thus satisfying a kind of token respect and obligatory recognition. Neither is it the intent of the author to imply that any human instrument could ever assume to "preach and teach just like Jesus did."[30] The crying need is for pastors to do their best to put the principles of the Jesus model into actual practice. This calls for preparing and performing sermons and lessons that are bathed in prayer and personal communion with God. It is a summons to deliver messages that are based on the application of Biblical truth to the needs, hurts, and interests of the people. It invites pastors to energize and clarify their pulpit efforts with stories, analogies, and other forms of connecting communication. It is a challenge to do all of these things with a compelling sense of their mandate: to know Him and to make Him known.

[30]See Rogers, interview, Appendix V, 147.

# APPENDIX I

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. JACK GRAHAM, PASTOR
## PRESTONWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH, PLANO, TEXAS
## JANUARY 29, 2004

**DAN LIGHT: Would you describe specific ways in which you relate to Jesus as a model for your preaching and teaching?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** Okay. Well, first of all Jesus so often spoke of His own life and purpose, His mission on earth and, so, the ultimate goal of preaching is to exalt Christ, the person of Christ, the purpose of His life, death, burial, and resurrection. Just in the very sense, not only His----I know we're not talking about preaching style here but the essence of preaching. He said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto myself." To me, the ultimate goal, the purpose of Biblical preaching is to exalt Christ and to proclaim His person and work. So, that would be first. He is the topic, the subject of preaching as He was in His own life and ministry. His preaching and teaching centered in who He is and what He came to do. So that should be our goal as well obviously. Jesus was a storyteller. He used the parables, heavenly stories with earthly meanings to describe with humor, with common interest, whether it was a fishing story or a business connection, He'd tell stories in order to relate a spiritual truth. That, obviously, is an important part of the package of preaching that Jesus used and we should use---illustrations, parables, metaphors to be like windows in a house to let the light in.

**DAN LIGHT: In what ways do you believe the modeling of the method and message of Jesus as a communicator would improve the effectiveness of contemporary preaching and teaching?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** That's a big question. Jesus is the master communicator and, therefore, we would do ourselves a favor and our congregations a favor if we would model His preaching substance and style. Jesus covered the gamut, every subject. He did not hesitate to deal with controversial themes and subjects. He didn't back off from the subject of sin. He spoke of repentance and faith. Therefore, when preaching is reduced to the bare minimum of either telling a story or relating a truth, it really doesn't get to the heart of what Jesus did, if it stops there. In other words, Jesus always preached with an invitation. He always invited people to come to Himself. There's always the evangelistic thrust in the preaching of Jesus. That's another fact about His life and ministry. He certainly would be an example for us in being willing to confront contemporary issues as well as eternal issues and being willing to connect with people. He was culturally relevant but Biblically accurate and He was able to take Old Testament scriptures and give them New Testament meaning and fulfillment. He would always drive to the invitation. There was always a point in what He taught and what He said. There was always, therefore, the opportunity to respond to the teaching of Jesus. So much preaching today is pointless if it doesn't have the objective of teaching spiritual truth and applying it to life, and the final objective which is to introduce people to the kingdom of God in heaven.

**DAN LIGHT: What would you single out as the number one strength of Jesus' style of preaching?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** Okay, let me think about that for a moment. Well, the common people heard Him gladly and, so, whether He was talking one on one or with large crowds there was a sense of His presence, the power of His own personality, the content of subject matter that connected with people. Whether it was a rich young ruler or a rabbi or a fisherman, Jesus was able to deliver the message that changed lives.

**DAN LIGHT: You already commented in regard to the next question, four, on ways in which you believe Jesus made His preaching clear, relevant, and applicable. I know you mentioned that in a previous question.**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** He told stories, He used humor, He asked questions. That was one of the things Jesus often did. He would ask questions that would stimulate thought. In telling a story or developing a theme, He would invite people to answer those questions and respond to the truth. He was able to speak of current events. In His own time, when He spoke for example of the tower that fell, He was speaking, no doubt, of a current event that people were quite aware of, this tower that collapsed. So, I probably answered that earlier really.

**DAN LIGHT: If you would comment on the example of the personal devotional life of Jesus and His attention to personal prayer as a factor in your own life and, particularly, as it relates to your preparation for preaching and teaching.**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM**: Always amazing when you consider that the span of Jesus' public ministry was brief. It was less than three years in actuality. Yet, the high impact of His life, His influence and, yet, in spite of the fact that He had a short time to accomplish His mission in ministry, He took advantage and seized opportunities to withdraw and to pray and to prepare Himself for the spiritual challenges in the ministry

and the cross itself ultimately. So, that has inspired me. We get so busy in ministry, in the doing of the work of Christ, that we forget the ultimate work is to be with Him. Peter and John in the book of Acts, they were amazed that these unlearned and uneducated men were, in fact, making such an impact because they noted that they had been with Jesus. So, you're never wasting time when you stop to sharpen the axe and you are inspired by the fact, I'm personally inspired by the fact, that Jesus took time out. He didn't heal everyone. He didn't touch everyone. He didn't preach to everyone. He spoke and lived in communion with the Father and then was on the Father's agenda for His life, and work, and ministry. So, that becomes my model for ministry and it is only when we withdraw and get ourselves in the presence of Christ that we grow and then can live and give out of the overflow of our life in Him.

**DAN LIGHT: As an effective preacher, which I believe you are, what helpful advice would you give to those who wish to improve their preaching skills especially as it relates to Jesus as a model?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** One is to be Biblically accurate. That would include being Christ centered in content of the message. As Spurgeon used to say, "I take my text from anywhere and make a beeline to the cross." To be Biblically accurate, my preaching style is to take the scriptures, explain it, illustrate it and apply it. I do believe that was the preaching style of Jesus. He would take a subject, a theme, a scripture, explain it, illustrate it and apply it. That is the way that preaching is accomplished. Preaching has been described as truth through personality and, therefore, when our personalities are becoming more Christ like then the truth of our personality, and our best personality is the fruit of the Spirit, is displayed which is the character of Christ then becomes the

platform. Getting back to the whole idea of Jesus' presence in this, it was His integrity and His character that was so appealing. It wasn't just charisma. It was the weight and the content of who He is and that's a reminder to those of us who represent Christ that it is our integrity, our character, our authenticity. People respond much more to sincerity and authenticity than they do to cleverness. In our attempts sometimes to be clever and to connect we fail to communicate our own personalities and our own integrity. It would be that, it would be the whole call to herald the kingdom of God. Jesus came preaching the kingdom and I take that to mean that His goal was to take as many people to heaven with Him as possible and that becomes our holy ambition in preaching, in ministry, and all that we do is to fulfill the great commission. We don't have to wonder what we're to be talking about and what we're to be preaching about. He's given us His word, He's given us His marching orders and, therefore, we can spend our life doing something that is a rare privilege and opportunity and that's fulfilling our calling.

**DAN LIGHT: How do you use stories and the narrative element in your own preaching?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** I'm constantly scouring the newspapers, articles, magazines, human-interest stories and media. The stories in personal experiences, the greatest stories you can tell are those things that have happened to you or illustrations that are authentic in the sense that they're yours. Most of the time canned sermon illustrations are ineffective. What I try to do is to use current events and contemporary contextualized themes to preach Biblical truth. So, again I go back to saying that I want to be culturally relevant with the stories. I think it's your stories and your illustrations and your humor. We just had Greg Laurie here preaching this last weekend and did a big rally on Monday

night. Greg is a very effective communicator and one of his secrets is a very natural sense of humor that relates the text. You don't have to sacrifice Biblical content and accuracy to be culturally relational. But, I think you do that with the use of humor and stories and the best stories again are the personal stories. I think the second best are the Biblical or what you're calling narrative. The narratives of the Bible where so much of the Bible is written in biography and the reason is because the Bible is a book to be lived not just a book to be learned. So, we have all these personalities and individuals and stories, narratives of what happened in order to show us how our faith is to be lived. So, I think the best way we can do that is to help the Bible come alive through its great stories. I mean the stories of the Bible are exciting, the adventures, the experiences of the Bible are exciting and we can share that. Then, again, the personal experiences and expressions from simple things to small things connect the audience and help us to message. Then, I would say that current events would be my third area of drawing in order to do that. A last resource, or a last resort, would be sermon illustrations, files, and books.

**DAN LIGHT: I believe the next question was really contained within that with regard to the importance to the function of application in your preaching so we can move on to number nine. What are some of the best things that you see emerging in preaching among evangelicals today?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** I would say among the best things would be, I personally believe, that Biblical exposition and Biblical preaching is making a comeback in evangelical circles, not in the old style and the old sense but in the sense that the Bible truly is the text and the application flows from the text not vice versa. There is a lot of topical style preaching among evangelicals. The fact that we've had such dynamic

preachers on radio, the McArthurs, the Swindolls, others as a model, I think many younger preachers have adopted a more expositional style. I also believe that the focus of changing lives, at least in some quarters among evangelicals, that the focus of evangelism and bringing people to Christ is at a high level. The guys I hear talking about preaching and the people that I know that preach well they have a strong appeal or urging salvation to change lives. So, those would be a couple of things. Some of the things that we did talk about, I do think there is a greater effort to preach with a newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other. The whole idea of connecting the dots between the culture of today and the culture of the Bible.

**DAN LIGHT: As a follow up to that, specifically in regards to weaknesses, what do you see as some of the weaknesses in preaching and teaching among evangelicals?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** It would be the opposite of that. I'm concerned when some preaching that is popular in evangelical circles is more topically driven and driven by the topic rather than the text. I get a little concerned when preaching becomes group therapy rather than truth therapy. By that I mean, while certainly the pulpit is an appropriate place to give Biblical guidance, there is a lot of psycho-babble in pulpits in the name of preaching. That concerns me. It would concern me when I do hear a preaching that does not ultimately drive to an invitation. Now, I give a public invitation. I do it all the time. I do it every time I preach and I'm not saying there always has to be a public invitation. I get concerned when preaching seems to have no evangelistic purpose that there's no real invitation to Christ and the Gospel. I get concerned when I don't hear the Gospel in preaching. What is the Gospel? Paul said it was the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. My view, every sermon, every message should include the Gospel. I get

concerned when I don't see it and I do think it is a weakness among evangelicals when it's not there.

**DAN LIGHT: What are some of the greatest challenges in your opinion that preachers are going to face in the next ten to twenty years and how does the Jesus model for preaching and teaching speak to those challenges?**

**DR. JACK GRAHAM:** I think the number one challenge will be the exclusivity of Christ, the message of the Gospel that Jesus and Christ and Christ alone is Lord. What some people are calling pluralism is really syncretism and the syncretism of ideas, and of gods and religious pathways. I think that is going to be the greatest challenge spiritually is to overcome the culture's bent to accept that and, therefore then, the temptation to compromise the message at that point. We must never compromise the message of Christ and the cross and the message of John 14:6 that, "Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me." I think that's going to be the number one challenge of the next, I think it is the challenge today, I think it will only increase. I think, on a positive note, one of the great challenges of preachers in our generation is how are we going to use technology to communicate the Gospel. One thing I didn't say in talking about illustrations, and what I do, we have these large image mags and screens and more and more I'm using those screens to illustrate, to use with quotes. This is a visual generation and putting quotes and points and ideas and scriptures and, at times even video illustrations, and I think it is going to be quite a challenge and it's an opportunity within it to find the best way to use technology to communicate the Gospel. That's going to be a huge opportunity and, along with it, the challenge to do it in the right way.

## APPENDIX II

### INTERVIEW: WITH DR. JIM HENRY, PASTOR
### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ORLANDO, FLORIDA
### JANUARY 22, 2004

**DAN LIGHT: I appreciate you taking this time. If you would describe specific ways, pastor in which you relate to Jesus, as a model for your preaching and teaching.**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** I think one of the best ways I seek to relate to Jesus is his shepherding. I feel like that as a pastor, the mere word and the name implies shepherding. Jesus had a shepherd heart and called himself shepherd, the chief shepherd, the great shepherd, the good shepherd. That came through in his preaching; his shepherding heart. To me, that's one of the prime ways. I feel like in preaching, if I can relate to the heart of Jesus in shepherding, then I'm relating to the sheep. So, He as the Great Shepherd and I as an under-shepherd, that's the thing that jumps out at me primarily.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes. Thank you. Second, in what ways do you believe the modeling of the method and message of Jesus as a communicator, would improve the effectiveness of contemporary preaching and teaching?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** Well, when you're looking at the perfect model, there's no question that you're going to be better if you stay close to Him and seek His face. I think probably you learn two things; one is the method. Certainly in what you're seeking to do; what I'm trying to do, is watching how Jesus did it. But I think the other would be Jesus with

heart for God in the Father and His Father's will and relating to the people. If I can grasp some of that as a part of the methodology; because I think that goes with the style. And you put the two together, you're going to come out with some real ability to speak to people's heart. For the modern communicator, it would be to get the heart of Christ and then having His heart, I think His spirit can give you some of the methodology that He used, which of course He was the perfect model for.

**DAN LIGHT: Great. Pastor, what would you single out as the number one strength of Jesus' style of preaching?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** It's hard to pick a number one thing. I would say probably, it would be hard for me to say one. One word may come to me right off the bat, would be application. Jesus knew how to take the truth and apply so that children of the simple shepherd, and the intelligent, could all relate to it. He applied it so that anybody in their own walk of life, Jesus was able to help them make that application. Here's the truth, now go do it; so that they could understand it. For a preacher, that's critical.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes, yes. Would you please comment on ways in which you believe Jesus made His preaching clear, relevant and applicable?**

**DR. JIM HENRY**: I believe He did it by using every day things. He was looking at things that they did so every day things that people were looking at; the Creation, the water, the birds; there are a lot of times He used the birds in His illustrations, so as a child, He must have loved them and watched them a lot. But He used everyday things they were acquainted with. Secondly, He was able also to capture old things, from the Old Testament, those things that His audience was related with, and bring it up to the day and either refute it as not being applicable or this was something good then, and it's good

now. So I think Jesus had that ability which we certainly should pull from to look around, see what was happening, see where the people were; see the past and pull it into the present. And had it projected into moving in their lives, making a different future.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes. Thank you. Would you comment on the example of the personal devotional life of Jesus and His attention to personal prayer as a factor in your own life, and particularly, as it relates to your preparation for preaching and teaching?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** I'd like to say I'm a great prayer warrior. I'm not; I'm still learning how to pray. But also realize that it is the heart of being able to preach and teach and minister by His spirit to the people. So, I've become and sought to be more disciplined in my praying, creating and calling out. I've found an amazing thing; two things, in recent months really, although I've prayed a lot through the years and sought to have a quiet time, is taking the word of God in devotional and then writing it down in my own words. What's Jesus saying to me from the scripture? Then try to play that scripture and then have more prayer time after I've read the word. And what's just happened, and I didn't notice it first because it was just a quiet thing; two things, my time with the Lord is lengthened; it flies by. I think I've got plenty of time to pray then I'll go do this or that, and then I'll look at the watch or the clock and I've been thirty, forty-five minutes or so and a minute? Where did I? It was just five; I just thought I was in here ten minutes. That has been a huge thing for me, to realize that time of fellowship of praying and thinking about the Lord, has done something. That way, the time is just, when you're having a good time, I guess time flies. The other thing is that my preaching seems to be more anointed from what people tell me, and I didn't know it. But my wife has even

mentioned. She said, Jim, there's something happening. Lot of my people said preacher, you're preaching better than you've ever preached. I cannot account for that if I try to do any skill methodology particularly. But with, I believe the increased time to get the heart of Christ and pray and love Him is the bottom line. I see it more and more. Wish I had started it earlier.

**DAN LIGHT: Well, if you would comment on the way that you use stories and the narrative element in your own preaching.**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** I use them a lot. Jesus did and if you're looking at Paul and some of the others, you'll find that they did. I've always been a story teller. My kids tell me that they remember me telling stories at bedtime and all. I love illustrations. I feel like that they, people, I could start telling the story, and I can tell immediately, the interest is picked up tremendously. I try not to use so many that you become frothy, but if I'm trying to apply truth, it puts the spotlight on that truth. I'm basically an expository preacher I'd say. I find that illustration goes right with expository preaching. The preaching shouldn't be boring, and I find that illustration helps it come alive and not take something away. If they can hang a truth onto an illustration, then I've succeeded with the preaching.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes. The next question has to do with application, but you've already answered that well, so . . .**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** And I make that a strong point in preaching, is application. I probably used to be more knowledgeable about what this is saying as a teacher. I think I was doing some, a little above. I always used illustration. I think I probably was doing a little bit more. Here's what this means and teaching more. But in the recent years, I've

tried to keep the teaching sound and say, “Okay now, here’s the truth. Now what’s this mean to you tomorrow when you walk out and go to work or you go to your home?” That’s the thing I think I think has been a metamorphosis for me, is to really not just teach the truth, but stick it together so that tomorrow when I’m trying to think when I pray, I try to think of the guy sitting there, what’s this going to mean to him tomorrow when he goes to work; when he faces temptation; when she’s got the kids pulling her hair out and she’s trying to say what can I get to this week? What does this truth have to do with that? It’s keeping that in my mind that helps me to come along, I think, application-wise.

**DAN LIGHT: Great, great. Well, as an effective preacher, you are; I’ve heard you; in my humble estimation, what helpful advice would you give to those who wish to improve their preaching skills?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** Keep learning. You always should watch other people who are good communicators; not only preachers and teachers in the Christian faith, but sometimes great communicators are in the other fields, secular. If you watch, if they’re connecting with an audience, what are their methods? How are they doing that? What facial expressions, what illustrations, what are they doing to get the audience listening to them; like the audience is feeling like they’re talking to them? I think if you watch people who are good models, it’s very critical. For a young pastor I’d say if you want to improve it, watch people who are doing it; listen to people who are doing it; tapes and other things when you’re listening. Then I would say a third thing would be for that guy not to watch and not only to listen but to study and read good books by people who have been at the preaching thing, not just technically, but if they’re pastors and preachers and

communicators; and if they're writing about how they do it, how they prepare, how they get themselves ready, what models they use, what they think about when they're getting ready to preach, if they'll read after those guys, their biographies, their study habits and their preaching habits, that's also a third way that they can learn to be better as the communicators.

**DAN LIGHT: Right. What are some of the best things that you see emerging in evangelical preaching and teaching today?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** I feel like some of the younger guys and some of us older birds too are probably doing a better job. I think that some of the best communicators today, making, not that the Gospel has to be relevant--it is, but helping people process it and bringing that truth out and apply it to their lives. I think the younger guys, some of them, are really, really doing a great job. I'm encouraged as I watch and listen to some of these young men, not only the Baptist sect but others who are great teachers and communicators. They know how to use other things like drama, video, props so to speak, as a part of their thing. Because it's a visual age, they know how to use those things and they know how to get to the point and they're usually pretty good in application. Some of our best ones coming on are also very, very biblically sound. They're not frothy. Some of the best guys that are coming on are really solid. Now we've got some that are a little soft; I wish they'd be stronger in their expositive scripture. Some of the best that we've got that are really guys anointing and blessing, are those who are really expositive scripture but in refreshing way.

**DAN LIGHT: What do you see as some weaknesses that you've observed in that area?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** I think sometimes giving too much milk and not enough meat. I've heard a lot of people say I liked that but I didn't feel like I was getting it and I need to know what the Bible is saying. What does it mean? I hear that today more than ever. I need no longer take that for granted and I think for some of the younger guys, it would be very important for them to cut out some of the weaknesses. A lot of people don't know what the Bible says. I think they may think that they're further along in that than they are and they're not. So this is what God is saying. This is who God is. I think if I've observed anything that I was concerned about it would be a little soft, in some cases, some of them have had good opportunities of taking and really teaching the bible, so this is who God is and this is what God says. The application is sometimes better if you're taking a truth and applying it but sometimes we feel like it might be a little wider than deep. You don't have to go deep. You can go deep and lose people. I know that too. But, I feel like a weakness we have to be careful about is that we don't open the Bible and serve it to people. "This is what God is saying", without good exposition.

**DAN LIGHT: What do you see as a great challenge that preachers are going to face in the next ten to twenty years?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** I think there are probably two or three. One will be, I think in our culture, because who knows what God's spirit's going to do? But in the culture we live in, getting an ear to our increasingly secular world, by increasing the spiritual world that's looking in the wrong ways for the spirits of the masses. If the guys cannot communicate and get to that audience, then our secular world doesn't get it. If they don't get there, that's going to be a danger, if we don't reach those people because they are hungry and they're running after a lot of wrong gods to satisfy that inner hunger. That

would be one of the prime. The second one is that I think sometimes I think the guys have to be careful about becoming or ignoring relationship with other brothers and sisters in Christ and becoming islands while they're a part of the whole picture. That would be a concern because some of them are good and they're building strong churches but sometimes it's like we're the only voice here and they don't reach out a lot to the others. I think in time that would mute their message. I think maybe a third thing would be, and I think some churches are getting in it, we're trying to get it, it's help the pastor getting related to the secular guy and gal by spending time on time out there where they are, so that when I'm preaching, I've heard that guy. I don't believe that. Why do you believe that? And if we're out there where all of them walk, in Tennessee, we call them corn cobs; rough people. I don't mean, I'm not talking about who when we think, bikers or something. I'm just talking about people, maybe they're polished and all, but spiritually, they don't have any edges, they're tough, they're rough, and maybe have no time for God. If I can spend some time with those people and get to know them and love them and not have them intimidated by me and vice versa, then I'm going to have more ability to reach them with the truth and getting them to hear what I've got to say; hear what God's got to say, if I can get to them; so, not being isolated. If a guy gets isolated, he'll probably have difficulty reaching generations because there's that less and less deposit of biblical truth in the American mind in particular. We've been drawing off the last century of a rich deposit, but we've mining it a long time and that sense of the mind of God, the word of God is not in the culture as much. I find I can't take anything for granted from my audience, no matter what I think is simple, and it may not be simple at all because they hadn't heard it before. I used to; you could say something and then

would say Jesus said this as a certain. No longer; in a lot of the audience, do we have that connection? So, in order to get that connection, I've got to know what he's thinking and where he's coming from. So, hopefully, I know, maybe the questions he's asking. So I'm not answering questions nobody's asking.

**DAN LIGHT: Great; final question. How do you regard the Jesus model for preaching and teaching as relevant to these challenges that you just mentioned?**

**DR. JIM HENRY:** Well, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. So His model was effective two centuries ago and two millenniums ago; it's effective then; and then was effective afterwards by the great preachers and teachers. I think there have been some changes. I think that preaching once was out of touch where now it's effective and Jesus' model is even better and that's preaching with or speaking to them, not just at them. Jesus did that. That's why people got around him. He didn't come down on them, except the religious hypocrites. The people heard it gladly because he was "with" them. I think a lot of today's communicators and what I'm trying to do is, when I'm getting ready to talk or speak or preach, is, I'm going to talk to you today. Let's talk about something Jesus or God has said. But Jesus did that. He took what the Father said. The Father told me this…and if I can go back to His model, I'm more effective and my preaching and my teaching are more effective. As I watched some other communicators too and the combination has taught me to share the message, "He can change your life now and forever." So, I try to think when I get in the pulpit, and I'm sitting down there and there's one person out there in the congregation, who really gets it and if that comes across and a child takes something away that's eight years old or an adult that over ninety, I've succeeded in preaching.

# APPENDIX III

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. JOEL HUNTER, PASTOR NORTHLAND: A DISTRIBUTED CHURCH, ORLANDO, FLORIDA JANUARY 22, 2004

**DAN LIGHT: Dr. Joel Hunter, I'd like to ask you these questions in regard to my doctorate of ministry dissertation project. First of all, if you would, describe specific ways in which you relate to Jesus as a model for your preaching and teaching.**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** Well, that's fairly simple Dan. I tell a lot of stories. Jesus told a lot of stories. Stories are universal in their impact. Secondly, I keep it as personal as I can; I keep it as simple as I can. I also, cannot really preach without seeing the congregation; without seeing the reaction. I think one of the things Jesus did in his model of preaching was that it was all about people and it was all about responding to the particular needs that were there. So as a pastor, the pastors really have an advantage here, even at large congregations because we're still very aware of what our people have been through during the week. Being able to shape how you put things so that the impact is as significant as it can be and as least hurtful as it can be; you know you have to say some tough things but it's always for the sake of love. Anyhow, those are just some of the ways that I follow His example.

**DAN LIGHT: Well thank you; and question number two. In what ways do you believe the modeling of the method and message of Jesus as a communicator would improve the effectiveness of contemporary preaching and teaching?**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** That's a good question. First of all, one of the things that Jesus did, was he talked with a circle of people, i.e. disciples, also ongoing conversations with people who were against him, i.e., the Scribes and the Pharisees. He was informed about what they thought. I think in a lot of contemporary preaching, the pastor goes into a library of some sort and reads a lot of commentaries, does research on the passage and really doesn't talk with people who are asking real significant questions and kind of arguing things back and forth. Contemporary preachers my hunch is, especially in larger congregations, are more isolated. They're more surrounded with people who will agree with them on points. So, probably, a significant weakness would be they're not getting exposed to a lot of antagonistic or at least searching questions every day, whose lives really depend on what you're going to say. So, I think with Jesus' model, just being out among the people and just facing whatever was coming across in normal daily life, I think that would really help a lot of contemporary preachers.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes sir. Third question: What would you single out as the number one strength of Jesus' style of preaching?**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** His love. He certainly was a great story teller and He was a great responder to need, but Jesus was effective because, you know the old Marshall McLuhan, "the medium is the message." He was the Word. He lived the word. He was so authentic. The remark made, and I can't recall word for word right off hand, was kind of a question, how do you have so much more authority than all the rest of the teachers. Why do you have that kind? And the answer of course is because all of them were speaking truth but He was the truth. He lived it. I think that the whole reason he was

down here, His great love for people and the fact that it came through in everything He said, that was the power. That was part of the power of His preaching.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes. Comment, if you would, on ways in which you believe Jesus made his preaching and teaching clear, relevant, and applicable.**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** Well, I guess the stories. I keep coming back to that. I guess that's my favorite part. But the other thing was that, He preached what he saw. It was relevant because He didn't go out with a ready-made sermon. He went out and when He saw something, He responded to it. It was relevant because it came out of the needs of the people that surrounded Him; not because He had ten sermons on, you know, how to. He didn't make it up in isolation. He made it up as he walked along and he responded. The Holy Spirit and the Father gave Him what He needed to be able to respond to what was right in front of him.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes. If you would comment on the example of the personal, devotional life of Jesus and His attention to personal prayer as a factor in your own life and particularly as it relates to your preparation for preaching and teaching.**

**JOEL HUNTER:** Yeah, well, there is very evidently a rhythm established in Jesus' life. He poured His life into people and then he withdrew. And of course Jesus said to the Father, I can't do anything but what I have heard from the Father; what I've seen the Father do, and so on and so forth. My sense is an absolute dependence on God. After thirty years, I still get almost physically ill every week because I am so humbled by the fact that I am allowed to attempt to bring the Word of God to people. That's such an astounding responsibility; the absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit. It certainly matters how much preparation you put into it because you've wrestled with the angels so

to speak and you've said God, I've got to have this for your people. Bless me for the sake of your people. They need this. But when it comes right down to it, you can put fifty hours into one sermon and if the Holy Spirit isn't present, it doesn't go anywhere. So, the fact that Jesus used his prayer life to be absolutely intimate with the Father because He was needful of that. He said, except the Father does it. You know that's kind of the same attitude I have and that's the same way I go into prayer. It's not an additive to the message; it is an absolute. If you don't show up, I'm going to look like an idiot and your people aren't going to learn anything and we're all done for. It's just an absolute, on my face, many times, literally, saying Oh God, I need you.

**DAN LIGHT: Comment on the way in which you use the function of application in your preaching and teaching. We've touched on that, the way you confront the people with the application of it to their lives.**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** Well, every week we want people to literally carry out an application piece. And every person as they walk in that sanctuary, gets a section that not only has the passage in it, but has a place for notes and then it has, this is how we expect your mind will change, your heart will change and your actions will change. It's printed. On that piece there are several other things; there are references to catechisms and other books and so on and so forth; there is a five-day devotional study that people are expected to go through, both for the adults and for the teenagers; and for the kids. There are helps so they can get further into the Word. But the expected application is written right on a sheet that they take out with them.

**DAN LIGHT: Great. As an effective preacher, what helpful advice would you give to those who wish to improve their preaching skills and if you would relate that to the way in which it figures with Jesus as the primary model.**

**JOEL HUNTER:** You just have to live it. It's got to be your life. It can't be something you do. It's got to be what you were sent here for. One of the things that I taught in seminary for a dozen years now, and one of the things I sense is that there are people who go through seminary who want to be good at preaching because they want to be good at preaching; they want to do something well; instead of they want to have the truth of Christ absolutely grab them by the chest and drag them around. And be transformed by the Word itself. If a pastor can't give his own life up in order to be a vessel for the message, then he's not going to be a great preacher. And that's exactly what Jesus did; He gave up His own life in order to get the message of and the effects of that message across. And that's what preaching requires. Preaching cannot be something that you apprehend. It's something that apprehends you.

**DAN LIGHT: What are some of the best things you see emerging in preaching and teaching among evangelicals today?**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** I think that one of the things I've seen is a lot more general cooperation among a more full orbed worship experience. A lot more preachers are starting to weave their messages into the rest of the service and not just have stand-alone messages. Worship teams are using art; the worship songs are going along with the message and so on and so forth. It used to be you get up and it was time for the message, and then you had a couple of hymns and then you had a collective reading and then you had the offering and such and then the preacher in his words had to run the other ninety-

seven yards. In our church, I've just got to lean over and tip over the goal line. People are so ready because of what's happened in the rest of the service. One thing is preachers are integrating their sermons better into the whole worship service. The other thing is, that it's a lot less head stuff and a lot more life stuff. I really think that's true because people, this is an experiential culture, and unless you're experiencing the actual act of worship, you're not really going to be very effective. I think that preaching itself is getting better in that it realizes that is has to be life on life, rather than just a transfer of information.

**DAN LIGHT: In the same thing, what weaknesses?**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** Well, the weaknesses are the same as the strengths. You can always go for the flash in the pan emotion rather than the deeper truth that will stay with you when you walk out of that sanctuary. Many of the churches that are growing, and in many churches that are growing all over the country; they've got all that talent on the worship team and they've got the preachers who really have done it. These preachers know how to praise things in order to evoke certain emotions. The temptation of that is that you don't want to do a Disneyesque, boy that was a great experience, and not have people walk out there literally touched by the Word of God. You know you don't want to give them an experience that is something other than being filled up with the Spirit and the Word, so that it's their relationship with God instead of their experience in worship. Frankly, we have enough giftedness in the pulpits and enough giftedness in the worship teams to do the other very easily.

**DAN LIGHT: What do you see as the greatest challenges for preaching and teaching in the next ten to twenty years?**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** I think the discipline that it takes just week in and week out for a preacher to be spiritually formed by Christ; I think that relevance is not going to be an issue because if you're not relevant, nobody's going to come. It's just that simple. You're going to really have to be impacting people. The challenge is that the preacher himself would want more than anything to be more like Christ so that the Word is not something he handles, the Word is something that he becomes. So the greatest challenges for the preacher could be the example and the chief worshiper himself; and the chief one who is astounded by the power of the Word. So, I think the greatest challenge in the preaching lies in the preacher.

**DAN LIGHT: Well, this is the final question, home stretch here. How do you regard the Jesus model for preaching and teaching as relevant to those challenges you just mentioned?**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** Well, the irony, and this still boggles my mind, is that nobody I know wanted to be closer to the Father than the Son. He never took it for granted. He always wanted to pour himself out as an offering for the people on behalf of the Father and wanted to represent the people to the Father. So He was at once prophet and priest and His life was the sermon. To me, the model here is that the relevance comes from your life and I really think that as we look to Jesus and we continue to research and think and abide, as in John 15$^{th}$ passage, you know as we continue to abide in him, then, we're going to be relevant and we're going to be what He needs us to be.

**DAN LIGHT: I appreciate this so much.**

**DR. JOEL HUNTER:** I'm glad you're doing what you're doing.

# APPENDIX IV

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. TOM MULLINS, PASTOR CHRIST FELLOWSHIP, PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA DECEMBER 15, 2003

**DAN LIGHT: This is an interview with Pastor Thomas D. Mullins of Christ Fellowship of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.**

**DR. TOM MULLINS:** Hi Dan. It's good to be with you today, Dan.

**DAN LIGHT: The idea of my dissertation, its thesis is, that the teaching and preaching of Jesus, his method and message should be the primary model for preaching and teaching today and I'm trying to explore some of the ideas and attitudes and methods and message that pastors have who are effective preachers. So, these questions will involve that approach. So, the first question; if you would describe specific ways in which you relate to Jesus as a model for your preaching and teaching.**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: Jesus was a master contemporary story teller. He could take and weave within the circumstances of whatever current event or situation he found himself in and he would tell a story and in that, bring the revelation of a great spiritual truth to mind. Then he would paint for them the wonderful imagery of the truth, whether it be a city set on the hill; or that we are to be a light that's found under a basket. His illustrations were so relevant and penetrating and I think that's how I relate to Him as a model for our preaching and teaching today.

**DAN LIGHT: Great. Well, in what ways do you believe the modeling of the method and message of Jesus as a communicator would improve the effectiveness of contemporary preaching and teaching?**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: I think all of us have learned in our contemporary culture that within that culture it embraces story telling. Movies are so popular today in our contemporary culture; television is so popular today because they are always telling a story. Where we can involve and bring the narrative truth of the Word of God out through story telling and relating to practical illustrations and examples that our people in our world today can relate to we can attach to those the truths that God's given us in His word and it sticks. I guess that the power of our preaching is in does it have sticking power. Is it touching lives, is it changing lives? Are they able to retain not just our facts and our statistics but really the concepts of God's word and life he has for us in this walk of faith? So, I think that's the key. I think as we do that, it is effective. I think it's the only true effective manner at preaching that we have and Jesus modeled that for us.

**DAN LIGHT: Now thinking about what you just said, you've already covered it; the questions of what would you single out as the number one strength of Jesus' style of preaching and comment on ways in which you believe Jesus made his preaching and teaching clear, relevant and applicable. Now then, would you comment on the example of the personal devotional life of Jesus and His attention to personal prayer as a factor in your own life, particularly as it relates to your preparation for preaching?**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: Well, of course Jesus we know made it His habit to pray to set aside this time to get alone with God. It's always convicting of me because I think if

you're at the very center of God has to discipline Himself in this time factor on his life here on earth, how much more important is it for us not being divine to have this time with God. Dan, as you know, we must enter into every type of preparation for the word which is a sacred trust we have. I enter into this time with fear and trembling. I have great sense of responsibility in that. Therefore, the only way to get into it is through prayer; getting our hearts right with God; getting in tune with God because our desires will bring a relevant word from God, not just another message that fits what we think is best. But really, what is God's word for his people today? How will we communicate that effectively? I think that we don't really understand that if we're not in constant communication first. Our prayer life and discipline of prayer is essential; and in our prayer covering. I'm a big believer in prayer covering while you're sharing the message. At Christ Fellowship, we have a group of people praying during that time of sharing the word. And I can tell the difference when they're praying and when they're not praying. It's amazing. So prayer is absolutely essential to that.

**DAN LIGHT: Well as an effective preacher, what helpful advice would you give to those who wish to improve their preaching skills, especially as it relates to Jesus as a model?**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: I think in our story telling, which is important, you know all the illustrations that we use in our messages, I think we've got to first visualize ourselves there, getting that environment of the story. You've got to see it, you've got to feel it; you've got to kind of smell it. You've kind of got to get the flavor of it because it's like Jesus was such a master story teller. He used them; he kept them on the edge of their seats as we would say. Good storytellers that I hear today, good communicators, they

have a sense to bring out the flavor of the story, not just the facts of the story. I think you have to immerse yourself in that to discover that. For some communicators, that's more intuitive than in others. But the more you think about the different little aspects of what you're communicating and the relevancy of that today where people are living and the issues, I think that's a key principal in trying to do that. I don't know if that answers the question, Dan, but that was the first thought that came to my mind with that question.

**DAN LIGHT: Well, that also covers what I would ask in the seventh question, but this, comment on the importance of the function of application in your preaching and teaching.**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: Well I think that's absolutely essential. I think the bottom line is there's of course, Rick Warren has been a big advocate of this and then the other men you're going to be interviewing, is that we present the principle through the narrative element as Christ did. Then it's the perspective which is the application of the principle that has the word of God of our lives and of our faith. I think that with every message, people need to be able to leave with a practical application of that message in their every day living. We can preach about theory till we're blue in the face; we can preach about our concepts; we can preach about our doctorates. But it really gets down to where our people are living and what they are going to take away from this that's going to help them walk closer to Christ and fulfill their mission as a disciple of Christ. We have to bring it to that. I try to think about that actually first. What's the bottom line of the message that we're going to share? What's the one thing, the one thing that we want them to take away that they can apply to their life and walk in a closer state of victory

with Christ every day? So I think about that from the very beginning. So, it's absolutely essential, I think, the application part of it is.

**DAN LIGHT: Tell me of your approach to preaching as characteristically expository or topical.**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: I guess I would be more in the topical realm, although I love the expository narrative type approach that still brings us out to one primary topic or issue or point, as we say. Usually, we're driving home a point. So many times I think about and I think that point can be brought out of different styles. So I use the different styles, as you all know, and you can probably tell my style better than I can. But, I would say that I'm more prone that way. But I do love to use expository approach in a narrative setting of the scriptures where there's a story that we could pull a practical application out of that story and the principles of truth that this message throw out of a story narrative of a life, of an action, adventure character, whatever it might be in the Word. Then we apply that to our life today. Those people can tie it in a lot quicker, versus just taking a text that has nothing to do with a narrative story that's a text, a teaching of Paul or someone and we do expository principles that come out of that text. So I prefer the narrative approach, so I guess I would be labeled more topical.

**DAN LIGHT: What are some of the best things that you see emerging in preaching and teaching among evangelicals today? I notice that you listen to, you read the outlines of, you put a lot of time in paying attention to the preaching of other preachers today that you think are effective preachers, so what are some of the best things you see emerging in evangelical preaching and teaching today?**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: I think it gets back to the whole relevancy of our message and the application of it. I think Rick Warren had a great deal to do with this in influencing a lot of men and his theory of keeping it very simple, keeping it focused and keeping it practical. Where does it meet the road here? Where does it apply in my life? Rick also has the ability, and he's taught the word, and I think this is straight from Christ; Christ dealt with the felt needs of people. I mean, Jesus was right there when they were hurting. He was dealing with the issues that were relevant to them. I think I'm hearing more of that and I think men are doing a better job. So I'm encouraged that we're all learning how to bring the word of God down to where people are living and help them understand there is hope and there is direction and that this is relevant in their every day lives.

**DAN LIGHT: Regarding the flip side of that, what are some of the weaknesses that you see in preaching among evangelicals today?**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: I think it's still, it's awful easy for us to, maybe, proclaim a message that could be just so correct and we could just have our alliterations exact and we could have these parts, and we could have our doctoring just clear as a bell, we're defending and justifying our position ourselves; but it gets back to okay, after it's all said and done, are lives being changed? Are lives being drawn to Christ? So, I just hope that we're working away from this trying to be known as preachers of the gospel and being men and women who are communicating the gospel in such a way today that it is truly transforming lives. So, sometimes I hear guys share and I don't know who the audience is, who they sharing to or for? I think it comes back to once again, if we're sharing to the people, so that we can help them embrace Jesus and apply Him and His word into every day aspects of our lives. So, that would probably be my only concern. Most of the guys I

listen to today are just great guys; they're connecting, they're preaching right where the rubber meets the road; they're in after it. That's why I listen to it because I want to learn from them.

**DAN LIGHT: Great. This is the final question: What are some of the greatest challenges that preachers are going to face in the next ten to twenty years and how does the Jesus model for preaching and teaching speak to those challenges? I know this is speculation and I'm asking you to be something of a prophet, but looking down the road, what are those great challenges going to be?**

**DR. TOM MULLINS**: Well, obviously, we're living in a very post-Christian era and a lot of the things that we used to assume are even going to become more and more vague in concept in the future. I think we've almost got to get to a basis in our future preaching that we don't make any false assumptions that people have a certain foundation of understanding conceptually of truth, and even of God and that He exists, and that His son is Jesus. So, we're going to be based with almost like a missionary approach coming into a pagan culture. It's getting more pagan every day. But the great truth of the matter is, as long as we are communicating in relevant ways, and using the relevant hooks of the day as Paul did when he was in Athens, and use the statutes of the unknown god. Paul struck the conversation up there so he knew how to use that avenue. I think Jesus taught us that. And I think if we're genuinely concerned about people at their point of need and our preaching reflects that, our teaching reflects that, our spirits reflects that, there's a genuineness about our really wanting to reach out and love people at their point of need, then I think that opens up their hearts to be receptive to Christ. As you know, Dan, at Christ Fellowship, our mission statement has always been that we want to impact our

world and to illustrate it first. That up there is the heart. How many times did Jesus come in; he would touch, he would heal, he would lift, he would encourage and then the door of the stage was set; the door was opened, the stage was set for him to share the message of hope. I think the key to us being relevant is the fact that we're still reaching out to people at their points of need, loving them with the love of Christ and communicating in a way that we can speak to them in a relevant manner for their lives. I think that's going to be the key.

**DAN LIGHT: Pastor Tom, thank you. I appreciate it.**

## APPENDIX V

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. ADRIAN ROGERS, PASTOR BELLEVUE BAPTIST CHURCH, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE JANUARY 22, 2004

**DAN LIGHT: If you could please describe specific ways in which you relate to Jesus as a model for your preaching and teaching.**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** Well, the obvious thing is relevancy. Our Lord used what some denigrate and that is felt needs. But, it went beyond felt needs to needs people don't feel. "And, He, knowing human nature into all men need not to testify what was in man." So, not only did He answer questions they were asking, He answered questions they failed to ask. And, so, I would say, yes, speaking to the needs of mankind past the ephemeral needs to the real deep lasting eternal needs.

**DAN LIGHT: I believe the second question you've incorporated this answer into it in regard to ways you believe the modeling the method and method of Jesus as communicator would improve the effectiveness of contemporary preaching and teaching.**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** Strange as it sounds, Dan, I don't really believe Jesus is the model for preaching today. Let me think this through because I'm on dangerous ground right here. For example, Jesus did not do expositions. Why not? He was the Word. I have to determine what He said, analyze it, organize it, illustrate it, apply it and preach it. But, He didn't analyze, organize, illustrate as such. He originated. I don't originate. So,

there's a sense in which I have to be very careful that I don't say, "I'm preaching as Jesus preached." That's one of the things that amaze me about the preaching of Jesus. He spoke with authority not as the scribes. The scribes quoted. The scribes analyzed. The scribes organized. But, Jesus just said, "I say unto you." So, I think some preachers may be pretty arrogant if they say, "I'm going to model my preaching after Jesus' preaching." And, someone may say against expositional preaching by saying, "Jesus didn't do it." I say, "Of course not." What's the difference? The difference is the difference between Adrian and Jesus.

**DAN LIGHT: What would you single out as the number one strength of Jesus' style, in your opinion, the number one strength of His style of preaching and teaching?**

**DR. ROGERS:** If I could say awareness. Jesus went about doing good. He didn't go about to do good. He went about doing good. Every place was an opportunity. Every corner was a pulpit. He, walking in, He says," Consider the lilies how they grow." He didn't bring a lily today to show and tell. "Consider the lilies." "So he went for to sow." I can just see Jesus walking down with His disciples watching that man sow. And, then, giving those marvelous parables, they flowed out of Him. So, I think that a preacher today can learn very, very much from that. One of the questions Tom has asked me more than almost any other question, "Where do you get your illustrations?" I say, "Man, open your eyes. Live. Look. Listen. They're everywhere." This physical material world is but a reflection of greater, deeper spiritual truth. And, so that's the way Jesus taught in my estimation and that's the reason why the Bible says, "The common people heard Him gladly." I hear preachers today talk about dogs running under wagons, things like that, back on frontier days. Goodnight! That doesn't relate today. Jesus' preaching had He

lived in the twenty-first century would have been very, very, very different and very, very, very much the same. He would not be talking about agrarian things in downtown Chicago. He would be saying, "A taxi driver picked up a fare and the man didn't pay him. Now, to love or not." That's what He would be saying.

**DAN LIGHT: Comment on ways in which you believe Jesus made His preaching and teaching clear, relevant and applicable.**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** We hit on that some already. Again, to take the opposing view, He didn't always make it clear. Sometimes He hid it. Like His parables in Matthew 13, those parables were not only to reveal but conceal. So, He's not always clear. At least everybody and, I think that's another thing, we have to be careful. If we don't know (a) that everybody has to understand what we're saying because we may be coming down too much, and (b) we don't always say everything we know. Neither did Jesus. "I have many things to tell you and you are not able to hear them." So, there are certain things He held back and there are certain things He told to one group He wouldn't tell another. He didn't cast pearls before swine. And, people asked Him a question and many times He didn't answer the question, He answered the questioner. With Jesus, an honest question always got an honest answer. But, a trick question got another question and He answered with another question. And, so, there's so many things we could learn from the teaching and preaching of Jesus that are applicable and, I've even forgotten what the question was about now.

**DAN LIGHT: Well, you answered very well and, question number six, you've also incorporated the answer previously in regard to the way you use stories and narrative element in your own preaching and teaching. And, so, we'll move to**

**question seven. Comment on the way in which you use the function of application in your preaching.**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** Well, to me, you haven't preached without application. A little formula that I made up a long time ago that was: HEY, YOU, LOOK, GO. HEY, is to get their attention if they're not listening. So many times Jesus began with, "Behold." That's the same as "Hey you!" *I* say unto you. I say unto *you.* Make it personal, pointed. "Hey you, look." He explains it and then He calls for action, "If I your Lord and master have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. Go and do ye likewise" or whatever. A sermon, if it doesn't have an application, a goal is not a sermon, you are merely teaching. Preaching is not filling bucket it is lighting a torch. It is motivational. It comes to a conclusion and it moves toward a goal which Jesus always did. Everything is applicable in His teaching. It was not just teaching for knowledge sake.

**DAN LIGHT: Well, as an effective preacher, which I believe you are, I've heard you personally and over television and you have a way of getting a hit every time you step up to the plate, in my opinion. And, as an effective preacher, what helpful advice would you give to those who wish to improve their preaching skills and do your suggestions relate in any specific way to Jesus as the primary model?**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** Oh, I would study the teaching of Jesus where applicable to my teaching and preaching. And, I would also put a cheviot there. As I've said that He not merely taught the Word, which He did teach the Word. I mean He, it is obvious in the encounter with Satan, He had just been doing His devotions that morning in Deuteronomy. But, He is the Word. So, with that cheviot there, to say that therefore you

don't have to have a one on one correspondence in, I would say that Jesus taught with a clarity when He wanted to be clear with certain individuals. But, on the other hand, He did not feel it to be incumbent to explain everything to everybody. "Unto you is given to know these things and unto them it is not given." And number three; He didn't say everything that He knew. Number four, He was very common. He didn't use a lot of polysyllabic terms. He used things where the Bible says, "The common people heard Him gladly." And, so, He talked about things that were at hand, in ways that people could understand in everyday life. But, then, He went from these generalities and simplicities to profundities and, all at the same time. "Happy is the man that can do these things." Sometimes you hear these philosophers and I say, "Why don't you go learn from the master teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ." They give these convoluted arguments and all this but, who knew more about anything than Jesus? And, yet, listen to Him teach. So, just because a man is muddy doesn't mean he's deep. And, Jesus again, "The common people heard Him gladly."

**DAN LIGHT: Well said. What are some of the best things you see emerging in preaching and teaching among evangelicals today?**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** Oh, let me follow up on that question, "What would I say to preachers today?" How about, "Learn to preach especially about what Jesus did." I would say not only study the preaching of Jesus but I would also say, Dan, to study the preaching of other preachers. When I was in seminary I was told, "Now, don't model yourself after 'so and so.' Be original la, la, la." I think it's crazy. If I see a man and he's, for example, a major league baseball player. Let's take the guy, not Sosa but the other guy who's hit so many home runs recently. His name passes me right now. It'll

come in a moment. This guy's knocking the ball, knocking the hide off the ball. Now, if I'm a baseball player I'm going to study that guy. I'm going to find out why is he doing that and I was reading he said, "You know, when I hit the ball" he said, "One thing I do just as the ball connects, I let loose with my right hand." And, he said, "Because at that point my right had puts a drag on the bat." And so, he says, "I release just before." Now, that's neat. That makes sense. It's a very small thing but it's a small thing that makes a difference whether that ball goes over the fence or not. And, McGuire, and so he says, "I let go so I can bring my left hand all the way around." Well, alright, if I'm a ball player why shouldn't I study that guy? If I want to know who is hitting more homeruns, I'm going to watch him. I want to listen to him. I have to be careful, I don't want to pick up idiosyncrasies and I have to be careful also that I fail to be original and all that but don't get so proud that you can't learn. And, I would say to other preachers, "You know, learn, listen, and watch, not only to preaching of Jesus but those that preach for Jesus.

**DAN LIGHT: Yes, comment on the matter of some of the things you see emerging in preaching and teaching among evangelicals today.**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** Well, I think in my denomination, Southern Baptist, one of the things I'm concerned about is that we have been in a battle for the inerrancy of the scripture since 1979 and so forth, and I was one of the first guys to lead in this battle. In a sense we've kind of won that battle in our denomination. I think what we're doing now is losing the battle, not for the inerrancy of the scripture, but for the authority for the scripture. Where I think we think we have to have a kind of a dog and pony show or everything else except the preaching of the Word of God to reach people. And, it's like we're saying, "Yea, I believe it's the Word of God, it's just not sufficient to do the job."

And I think, I've been a pastor now for a long time, I really believe in the authority of the Word of God and I believe in the power of the Word of God as well as its inerrancy. So, that's a concern that I have about modern day preaching is that we have many people who give lip service to inerrancy but, in practicality, they're not really preaching the Word of God. Now, every road has two ditches. You can get off on one side in all the frivolities and user-friendly ditties. That's on one side. The other side is a guy that says, "I'm just going to teach the Word." And, so, he takes a passage of scripture and wears it out. People wear the varnish off the bench trying to get out of there and it will do the churches right on down. He thinks he has to give a word-by-word definition, exposition, and explanation of every verse. To me, that is not preaching. That may be teaching. It may be alright for the classroom and so forth but the kind of preaching I believe the world needs today is an exposition that takes a passage of scripture, draws its major truths out for that passage of scripture but has a theme which is kind of a thread that you put your pearls on and it's moving toward a conclusion. Somebody else could come and preach the same passage and preach a completely different message and still be true to that scripture because he selected out of it another theme. One of the things that bother me so much is people say, "Isn't the Bible wonderful? Well, it could mean so many different things." I say, "That's bologna. It means what it means, nothing more, and nothing less. It means exactly, precisely what it means. That's it." It has one meaning and ten thousand applications. So, find the one meaning. Once you found that one meaning then say, "How am I going to apply this? What am I going to draw out of this passage?" But, if I can get my people o pen a Bible and maybe never ever turn a page, sit there, look up and look down, look up and look down and say, "Yup, yup, yup. That's

coming right out of that passage of scripture." But, that's not everything in there. I'm not, you know, pausing at every Greek verb. Then, to me, that's what really meets the need and gets the job done today.

**DAN LIGHT: What are some of the greatest challenges that preachers are going to face, in your opinion, in the next ten to twenty years?**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** I think one of the great, great challenges the preacher is going to face in the next ten to twenty years is to dumb the Bible down until it's politically correct. I think that has already begun and that we'll find that more and more. If we say there is a fixed stand of right and wrong, if we preach against abortion, homosexuality, radical feminism, or preach the sanctity of the home, preach against divorce, preach about stewardship, absolute Lordship of Christ and holiness, this is a generation that is not going to take that, at least many people won't. I think there's a temptation that all of us feel to be a little careful, and be wise, be seasoned with salt. But, we need to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves but bold as lions all at the same time. That, I think is one problem that we're going to have is this, that we are so inundated with materials. It's coming at us from every direction. We are a media saturated society until we're almost going to build up an immunity and the preacher will be one more of those bees buzzing around our head. And, they'll be everywhere and we'll just want to get in bed and pull the cover over our head. To find an audience, to be able to get to people, that's the reason, I believe, that we have to remember our distinctiveness because down in the human heart is a hunger for what we have and what we teach. And, if we jettison that in order to reach them and become so like them that ultimately we're going to be our own undoing that we have to say, "Why should they come to us if we're just one more voice

in the cacophony of voices out there?" Because we're absolutely distinct and, of course, we know Jesus was, that's why they crucified Him. So, you know, He just went, "But, I say unto you." And, I think that's a great danger today, we (a) become politically correct and (b) that we become so much like those things that are swirling around. Those are major dangers, plus, the fact that if we lose our confidence in the Word of God we'll deserve what we get. The thing is stacked against us on the one hand. Two plus two is four. There is only one right answer. The wrong answers are infinity; only one right answer and billions of wrong answers so, think of how the odds are stacked against you unless you have the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They don't have that. But, if we fail to be holy in the anointing our one truth, it is just one truth in the billions of lies. And, so we've got to have the anointing. That doesn't really intimidate me on the one hand because I know, "If God be for us who can be against us?" But, it does sensitize me that I have to stay true. So, when I preach I'm far more interested in pleasing God than I am them, because I'm interested in God convicting them, so, user friendly, seeker sensitive. He's the seeker. The son of Man came to seek and to save. There's none seeking after God so He's the seeker. I've got to please the seeker so He can seek them. And, so, before I preach, I get on my knees, I tell God what I'm going to preach. I preach my sermon to the Lord. There's no use in outlining, He knows it already. But, I say, "Lord, I'm going to say this." If it doesn't sound good in my heart telling Him, I don't care what they think, and if I say, "Lord, this is what I'm going to say. Do You like that, Lord? Okay, here we go, Lord." Then, if I please Him, anything I can talk them into somebody else can talk them out of. But, anything He gives them is theirs. And, so, I'm saying I

want to bounce every sermon on heaven and, so, that's what I would encourage preachers to do today.

**DAN LIGHT: Home stretch. Last question. How do you regard the Jesus model for preaching and teaching as relevant to the challenges that you just addressed?**

**DR. ADRIAN ROGERS:** Well, Jesus said, "What I hear, I speak. What I see, I do." And, so, that's certainly a model for preachers because He said, "As My Father has sent Me, so send I you." And, what I'm willing to be to Jesus, what Jesus was to the Father. Jesus is willing to be to me, what the Father was to Jesus. And, so, you know, I want to be tuned in. I really want to get my priorities straight and I feel guilty even saying what I'm saying because I'm such a poor practitioner of it. But, praying is more important than preaching and preaching is more important that administration. So, we've got to get our priorities straight and I think Jesus had His straight. He said, "I do always those things that please the Father." Jesus was never ahead of time, never late. I'm both, often. And, Jesus, at the end of His life said, "I finish the things Father, You gave Me to do." So, I think it's a matter of focusing on Him, getting quiet. Jesus, in the midst of ministry, withdrew Himself to pray. What if He had said, "Well, we'll pray later, here are the crowds?" There's so much we could learn and should learn and, of course, He's the mentor. He's the chief shepherd.

# APPENDIX VI

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. STAN TOLER, PASTOR
## TRINITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA
## JANUARY 22, 2004

**DAN LIGHT: If you would describe specific ways in which you relate to Jesus as model for your preaching and teaching.**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** In my estimation Jesus is the master storyteller and I am convinced that men, especially today, identify with stories and that seems to be the toughest audience to connect with for preachers. I would say, first and foremost, storytelling and the parables of Jesus I follow.

**DAN LIGHT: What ways do you believe the modeling of the method and message of Jesus as a communicator would improve the effectiveness of contemporary preaching and teaching?**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** I think sometimes we get lost as preachers in the outlining process, not necessarily in the exposition although that's important that we expose the truth. But I think the effectiveness of Jesus was He modeled what He preached. And, for the communicator, I remember an old friend of mine named Rusty Goodman who said, "It's not how high you jump when you're on the platform, it's how straight you walk when your feet hit the ground." I think Jesus was modeling everything. He was healing the sick. He was raising the dead, etc.

**DAN LIGHT: If you would comment on the ways in which you believe Jesus made His preaching and teaching clear, relevant and applicable.**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** I think His ability to turn a mountain top into a retreat center, to turn a boat into a preaching point, His ability to connect with culture and contextualize His message, it quite impresses me. Because when He talked about how difficult it is for a camel to go through the eye of the needle a lot of us think that's a, you know, we start looking at it as the needle. But, really and truly and more importantly, Jesus was using humor in that passage and He had a great sense of humor and I connect with that.

**DAN LIGHT: Would you comment on the example of the personal devotional life of Jesus and His attention to personal prayer as a factor in your own life, particularly as it relates to your preparation for preaching and teaching?**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** Having a long, long history with Dr. John Maxwell, being his first staff member in Lancaster, Ohio, working with him at Injoy during the days when we were trying to raise up a million prayer partners, I've always been concerned about prayer partners and I won't preach if I don't have prayer partners. Every Sunday I have individuals who come and pray with me. There's something about me, maybe it's my coming from the hills of West Virginia and being the son of a coalminer and having some insecurities early in preaching but, it seems like every Sunday, and I've been preaching for thirty-nine years, now I'm fifty-three years old and in my fortieth year preaching, started when I was fourteen. I can tell you that I look at those sermons and go, "This thing looked good yesterday but now that I'm getting ready to preach, it doesn't look very good." I fall on my knees and ask God to take all those inadequacies away and it's when my prayer partners lay their hands on me and pray with me that I begin to regain

my confidence that I can go out there and maybe I can preach the sermon. Maybe the Holy Spirit will illuminate and then I begin to believe that can happen.

**DAN LIGHT: Comment on the way your use stories, the narrative element in your own preaching and teaching.**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** I would not call myself a narrative preacher but I would say that every message, in my estimation, requires three homerun stories. I need an opener, I need one mid range and I need one at the conclusion. Now, my messages typically are about twenty-two to twenty-five minutes in length. Par of that is because of my years in radio and television and be sensitive to time but the other is being consistent from the pulpit so that people can plan their schedules and lives around service times.

**DAN LIGHT: As an effective preacher what helpful advice would you give to those who wish to improve their preaching and teaching skills and do your suggestions relate in any specific way to Jesus as a primary model?**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** I think first and foremost all of us need to work within the framework of our personality and within our gift-mix. It was my mission early to learn about great preachers and go hear them. Dr. Paul S. Reese who was Vice President at large for World Vision greatly influenced, according to what Gordon McDonald told me, his preaching and, not surprisingly, he influenced mine. I went to hear this great expositor every time I could. He was a par excellent communicator and I think he also showed the love and attitude of Jesus. He always had time at a busy ministerial conference or whatever to take the young preacher boy, like myself, by the hand and pray with me. To me, that touch reminded me of what my mother said many years ago when she said, “We’re all little Christs.” When we reach out and touch we are not doing the

touching but Jesus is doing the touching. So, I have a view that my preaching will improve when I touch people. So, I don't make a grand entrance on the platform. I, in fact, try to shake as many hands and ask my staff members to do the same thing because I have a theory that if a lot of people preach better sermons than I can but not many can shake more hands. So, there's how Jesus put me touching people. He broke through all the barriers and touched people.

**DAN LIGHT: What are some of the best things that you see emerging in preaching and teaching among evangelicals today?**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** Without a doubt the whole concept of seeker sensitivity has moved preaching into a mode that connects. My only concern is that, at times, I'm worried about doctrinal issues and that we're sure that we're communicating our beliefs. I worry sometimes about the subject of sin and whether we're as clear as we should be on that subject when we seek to be sensitive. And, I think it is something we should look out for, the importance of repentance, turning around from our sins. So, in all the sensitivity, while I applaud it, I want to be sure that, with a tear, I may be able to say, "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

**DAN LIGHT: You've already incorporated some of this next question into your answer there, which I appreciate, but what are some of the weaknesses that you see?**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** I think lack of discipline in delivery, I think sometimes for the sake of multi-sensory experience we miss sharing the truth and forget to bleed a little bit ourselves. I'm a power point person. I'm using videos and to that in my teaching and seminars and so forth but I think heart, the heart of that leader cannot be left out. It has to

be felt. It can't just be five minutes and another video clip. There, somewhere, you have to bleed to bless.

**DAN LIGHT: What are some of the greatest challenges that preachers are going to face in the next ten to twenty years?**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** Well, I think our values are at stake. I heard Michael Duduit of "Preaching" magazine, who by the way would be a great interview for you and he's my friend and I could certainly get you connected with him. It's just Michael at e-mail.preaching.com or e-mailpreaching.com; just a great guy, just an accomplished man on preaching in Oklahoma City. He made a statement that we're living in a whatever world and if we're not clear this is going to come back to haunt us: "You know, I'll cheat on my spouse whatever." He said, "You know, I'll cheat on a test, whatever" and that is going to haunt us if we don't say, "Here are our values" and articulate them. In a book that I wrote with Alan Nelson called, *Five Star Church* I say, "Never delegate core values" and I think those values are being delegated or relegated to others and they're not as clear, and that is turf I must protect.

**DAN LIGHT: How do you regard the Jesus model for preaching and teaching as relevant to these challenges?**

**DR. STAN TOLER:** Well, the good news is, the ministry of Jesus is as current as today's newspaper. I love the Billy Graham model of the Bible in one hand and today's newspaper in the other and I think that's the way Jesus communicated, in relevancy, authenticity and inspiration. And, I want to follow that as a pattern, most of all, being able to contextualize what I'm sharing with the culture. Jesus did that magnificently and, amazing, it still inspires. You take the story of Matthew 21:37 where He says, "The last

of all he sent his son and I'm sure they'll respect my son." The story in that parable builds up to this man sending different people into the vineyard to get them to change their ways and they did not. The workers were abused and beaten. Finally, he says, "I'm going to send my son." See, a business person can identify with that. So, last of all, he sent his son. Sad truth is they did not respect his son, but they killed him and so Jesus hung on the cross for our sin. I thin, putting it into current vernacular is so right, translations are very helpful and sensitivity in presenting that will always help us lift up that model of Jesus being current and relevant.

## APPENDIX VII

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. KENNETH ULMER, PASTOR FAITHFUL CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA JANUARY 22, 2004

**DAN LIGHT: Would you describe specific ways in which you relate to Jesus as a model for your preaching and teaching.**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** For me, it is a challenge to relate to Jesus as a model preaching and it is a challenge because I find myself all too often, I think, drifting away from that model. I say that because I find that Jesus always seemed to strain that simplicity. I think he was always, not only aware of his audience, but I think uniquely sensitive to the capacity to understand and comprehend his audience and, therefore, He communicated in the light of that reality. When the Bible says the common man understood him, I ask myself, "Am I as plain as Jesus?" And, I think, I find myself falling short so often with deficient communication and deficient in the area of clarity and simplicity which I think is the essence of the message of the preaching style of Jesus, clarity and simplicity.

**DAN LIGHT: In what ways do you believe the modeling of the method and message of Jesus as a communicator would improve the very effectiveness of evangelical preaching and teaching?**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** Well, I think in one sense it would raise up a model of success. On the other hand, I think it would destroy many of our models of successes.

When I say that it would raise up a model of success in a positive way I think that, again, the challenge of clarity and simplicity always looms in the picture of the preaching and teaching style of Jesus. I think, again, if you look behind successful preaching of Jesus, how we define it, there will be a great disparity there. I think we gauge and we assess our success by numbers, by the size of the crowd. I mean, if that be the case, Jesus had diminishing returns. I'm amazed at the preaching of Jesus from the standpoint that sometimes it seems as though Jesus said things intentionally to run people away. He'd move to the hard stuff and another crowd would fall away and someone else would follow from afar and some would follow him no more. And so, I think that, number one, it raises a model obviously of what true preaching is about and, number two, I think it would force us to redefine success in preaching when we look at the success rate of Jesus.

**DAN LIGHT: What would you single out as the number one strength of Jesus' style of preaching and teaching?**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** I think, as I said before, clarity and simplicity. When you look at the proverbial Sermon on the Mount that historically is believed to have been for thousands in this great pastoral setting versus the passion of "My house" or what we call the House of Prayer when He cleared out the Temple area. I think that simplicity and clarity are the consistent threads that weave those two together. The simplicity of the Sermon on the Mount, although it was longer in terms of substance, a longer, quote-unquote, sermon but, no less clear was the "My house" or what we call the House of Prayer even though they were of different themes. I would say that the two consistent threads are simplicity and clarity. He was clear. He was clear.

**DAN LIGHT: Since you have incorporated the answer to question four, let me go with you to question five. If you would please comment on the example of the personal devotional life of Jesus and His attention to personal prayer as a factor in your own life and, particularly, as it relates to your preparation for preaching and teaching.**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** Again, very challenging issue and maybe even a very condemning issue because when Paul says, "Study to show thyself approved" I think in our culture we interpret that academically. We interpret that in terms of scholarship and technique, exegesis, all the technical aspects of hermeneutics, etc. etc. etc. I don't see that in Jesus. I don't see Jesus ever preparing to preach. I see Him as a prepared preacher. I think His prayer life, the times he pulled away from the crowd, He didn't pull away from the crowd to study the next five points or the next three points and the poem he was going to use on His message. He pulled away to commune with the Father and so His preaching was an overflow of His personal devotional prayer life with the Father and, therefore, it was not so much a prepared preachment as it is a consistently prepared preacher. My friends and I will spend ten, twelve, fifteen hours a week preparing to preach and pray before we go into the pulpit. Now, I have a few more spiritual ones who pray more the week but at the end of the day, most of the people I know, including myself, spend much more time preparing the preachment than being a prepared preacher. I think that is a direct overflow of the life of Jesus and His prayer life and His relationship with the Father.

**DAN LIGHT: Would you please comment on the way in which you use the function of application in your preaching and teaching?**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** Application becomes the contextual dynamic of preaching. I think the message of the Gospel, the message of the Word of God never ever changes. I think the interpretation often varies and I think the application must vary. I think the Word never changes. I think the interpretation certainly does vary but I think the application must vary. I think the contextualization, now from my perspective, is not a commentary on exegesis but the contextualization is a commentary on application. I'll give you an example. The principle of evangelism never changes. We're all called to "go." For the disciples it was go into Jerusalem or Antioch or the journeys of Paul. For Paul, that mandate was fulfilled by going, in most cases, to the synagogue first, and then to the Gentile. The principle of evangelism is universal. The particular practice of going to the synagogue and then to the Gentile obviously is not applicable in many, many contexts. I'm from south central Los Angeles. We don't have any synagogues but, I must still "go." So, whereas He would go to the synagogue first, I may go to the pool hall first. That applies to my culture. I'll give another example. Historically, when I was studying church growth, leaders in church growth at that time was the Baptist Fellowship, the Jerry Falwells, Jack Hyles, etc. They were the church growth stars. You go into a community, you buy some time on the radio, and you start knocking on doors. Okay. That was a contemporary application of the universal principle of "Go ye therefore into all the world." So, I'm studying all these books by Falwell, Jack Hyles, and all these guys and they're doing great things. I'm still in south central Los Angeles. Trust me my brother, you don't knock on doors in south central, at least not more than once. So, that particular application and men applying that principle will work one way in Lynchburg. It doesn't work in Los Angeles. And, yet, we both respond to the same principle. So,

again, I think application is where contextualization comes in. Application, illustration. Stories that clarify a particular Biblical principle I think that is a mark of a process where contextualization comes in. I cannot go to South Africa. I did this one time. I was preaching at a church in South Africa and I was preaching on something and I used some illustration about baseball. But, they didn't know anything about baseball. So the illustrations and the stories that are used to clarify and to expand and to expand upon what you're preaching on must be contextualized. I think again that's where social contextualization, even racial contextualization, cultural contextualization comes in. I think that the danger comes when one tries to culturalize your exegesis. You had to culturalize your theology that is bred out of your exegesis. I think there's where you get into the danger of a distortion of Biblical theology. I think distorting the message if you try to make it a black message or a white message or a South American message or whatever. However, I think there is, again, a cultural and sociological application and illustration of the particular principles that must be relevant to the particular context.

**DAN LIGHT: What, Pastor, are some of the best things you see emerging in preaching and teaching among evangelicals today?**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** That's a very good question. I think the best thing that I think I see is a trend toward. I'm not sure I would call it a trend. I think that the best thing that I see that may not be a trend, yet, is more and more attempts to practicalize and to declare the relevance of Scripture. I spent time saying that to declare the relevance of Scripture to me is different than making the Scripture relevant. I think the Scripture is already relevant. I'm not sure we adequately communicate this relevance. But, I see very concerted efforts to practicalize the Word of God and to declare its relevance in all

aspects of life. The weakness that I see first of all is the yielding to playing to the crowd and playing to the peanut gallery. I think there are many of us who either consciously or subconsciously that ask the question, "Will this work? Will they like this? Will someone say "Amen?" Will this hook them? Will this get them? Will this bring them back?" Because I think our goal is more, like I said earlier, our definition of success in preaching is measured quantitatively and not qualitatively; the number, the size, how many people come, how many come back, that sort of thing. So, what I see is a dangerous trend is the, at best distortion and maybe at its worst aspostatuting the Scripture in order to appeal to the masses, to the crowd which I think is obviously antipathetical to what we began with the model of Jesus. Like I said I think Jesus would get rid of the crowd sometimes. The things that I see in the interest of gaining and holding a crowd that often so distorts the Word of God is the contemporary move toward an emphasis on biblical offices, ecclesiastical offices, particularly the prophetic offices, the prophetic gifts that it frightens me. It is so much like the Book of Ezekiel and like the Book of Jeremiah and where Jesus says, "They have spoken but I have not sent them." It frightens me. But the attempt is for popularity; the crowd. It's hard to sustain the spectacular. It is nearly impossible to sustain the spectacular and I see attempts being made to outdo oneself. And, of course, what happens in the attempt is that the Word of God is, at best, distorted in many cases and, unfortunately, in a few cases we have put our words in God's mouth. That breaks my heart.

**DAN LIGHT: What are some of the greatest challenges that preachers are going to face in the next ten to twenty years?**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** I think one would be ministering in a cultural that has drifted from the Judeo-Christian moral worldview if it ever was that much. We can no longer stand and preach and in the middle of talking about Noah and say, "You know the story." They don't know the story. We can no longer say, "Jesus went to Calvary, you know the story." They don't know the story. The mindset of this generation and the coming generations is not what it was twenty, thirty years ago. These are not kids who were raised in the Sunday School, raised in the church, and these are not kids who saw their mothers on their knees in prayer. That generation is gone. The preacher and the church that is stuck back there has limited its effectiveness in going forward because they are trying to minister to a generation that is long gone. It's gone. They are trying to maintain a model that has disappeared. I think the challenge is the challenge of the tribe of Issachar. The Bible says of Issachar, "They were men who had an understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." I think the greatest challenge is to understand the times, to understand there is a time and a season for everything under the sun and we run the risk of ministering to a season that has passed and gone.

**DAN LIGHT: How do you regard the Jesus model of preaching and teaching as relevant to those challenges?**

**DR. KENNETH ULMER:** Because He always comes back home to home base in simplicity and clarity. Simplicity and clarity breeds relevance. Simplicity and clarity breeds relevance. I think that He had a word in season**.** That same word applies to this season. How we present it and the context in which we present it and those to whom we present it never changes.

# APPENDIX VIII

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON INTERVIEWED PASTORS

### Dr. Jack Graham

Dr. Jack Graham is Pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, one of America's largest churches with a membership of more than 24,000, where he has served since 1989. He is a member of the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, an association of some 40,000 independent churches. In June 2002, he was elected President of the convention and currently serves in that capacity.

Dr. Graham regularly preaches to an average of 16,000 people in five services each week in the church's 7,500 seat auditorium. The church continues to grow with an increase of approximately 2,000 new members annually.

Dr. Graham earned the Bachelor of Science degree with honors at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, and the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

His published books include: *You Can Make a Difference, Diamonds in the Dark, Lessons from the Heart,* and *A Hope and a Future.*

### Dr. Jim Henry

Jim Henry has been the Pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Florida since 1977. First Baptist Church has a membership of over 10, 000 with an average Sunday morning attendance of approximately 4,000. Out of the church's $11million annual

budget, a 1.5 million given to missions leads the Southern Baptist Convention with which the church is affiliated.

A native of Nashville, Tennessee, "Brother Jim", as his people frequently refer to him, is a graduate of Georgetown College in Kentucky and earned his Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Divinity degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Before becoming the pastor of his present congregation, he served churches in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Pastor Henry has held many positions of leadership including President of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1994-1996. A number of awards and honors have been bestowed on Jim Henry including receiving a Doctor of Humane Letters and a Doctor of Sacred Laws and Letters from Covington Theological Seminary, being named Floridian of the Year in 1997, "Minister of the Year" in 1995 (by the Greater Orlando Baptist Association) and receiving the John Young Award in 1995 (by the Orlando Chamber of Commerce). He is a much sought after speaker who has preached at the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, several Southern Baptist Convention Pastor's Conferences and made several guest appearances on "Noon Show" WSM-TV in Nashville. In addition to writing numerous articles and manuals, Pastor Henry has published several books, including *Keeping Life in Perspective, In Remembrance of Me,* a manual the Lord's Supper, and a wedding manual, *The Two Shall Become One.*

**Dr. Joel C. Hunter**

Since 1985, Dr. Joel C. Hunter has served as the Senior Pastor of Northland: A Church Distributed, formerly the Northland Community Church. The church offers seven worship services a week with an attendance of approximately 6500. In 1999 the elders

and pastors felt God's leading to become "a church distributed", one that purposely reaches out to form relationships with people at other churches and ministry organizations.

Dr. Hunter received his Doctorate of Ministry from Christian Theological Seminary in Indiana and ministered for 15 years in the United Methodist Church before serving at Northland. Founder and chairman of the Alliance for the Distributed Church, he served as adjunct Professor of Practical Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando from 1991 to 2000 and He is also on the Global Pastors' Network Board of Directors. He is a frequent speaker at various national church conferences

Dr. Hunter is the author of the following books: *Prayer, Politics and Power*; and *The Journey to Spiritual Maturity* series*: The Challenging Road; Finding Our Purpose; Overcoming Adversity; Learning to Love; Transforming Faith; Reason and Revelation; Growing in Holiness; Bring Salt and Light; Worship in Spirit and Truth;* and *An Eternal Perspective.*

**Dr. Tom Mullins**

Dr. Tom Mullins is senior pastor of Christ Fellowship of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Christ Fellowship is a non-denominational, multi-cultural church with an active membership of approximately 12,000 persons. Dr. Mullins preaches at five worship services every weekend to an attendance which averages over 9,000. A former athlete and college football coach, he bases the leadership and ministries of the church on the team concept.

Dr. Mullins received the Bachelors of Arts and Masters degree in Counseling from Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky. He also earned from a Doctor of

Ministry degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, Virginia, in 2003. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Pastors' Global Network and is a member of the Board of Trustees of Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida.

**Dr. Adrian Rogers**

Dr. Adrian Rogers is the pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee. Under his pastoral leadership, the church has grown from the 9,000 thousand members it recorded when he began his pastorate to more than 27,000 today. Dr. Rogers has served three times as president of the 14-million member Southern Baptist Convention and is respected as one of the nation's most skillful and respected preachers. Dr. Rogers is also the pastor/teacher of Love Worth Finding, a ministry which extends his message to listeners around the nation every day through 14,000 television outlets and 1,100 radio outlets in the United States and 150 other countries.

Dr. Rogers earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Stetson University, DeLand, Florida, and a Master of Theology degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana. He has received several honorary doctoral degrees including a Doctor of Sacred Theology from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in 2003.

He has also written a number of books including: *Believe in Miracles but Trust in Jesus; Mastering Your Emotions; God's Way to Health, Wealth and Wisdom; The Power of His Presence;* and *Ten Secrets for a Successful Family*.

**Dr. Stan Toler**

Dr. Stan Toler serves as senior pastor of Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and hosts the television program "Leadership Today." The worship attendance at his church is just over 1000. He also trains pastors and church leaders on strategic planning, stewardship, outreach, and leadership and is often referred to as a "pastor of pastors." During his career he has served as pastor of some of the fastest-growing churches in Ohio, Oklahoma and Tennessee, and has traveled throughout the world speaking at conferences and helping churches and missions organize and develop plans for growth.

Stan Toler's academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Nazarene University, Bachelor of Theology from Circleville Bible College, Circleville, Ohio; Master of Theology from Florida Beacon Seminary, Largo, Florida; Doctor of Ministry from Maranatha Seminary, Watertown, Wisconsin; and Doctor of Divinity from Southern California Theological Seminary, El Cajon, California.

Dr. Toler has also authored several books and manuals on the subject of church ministry, evangelism and "helps" for pastors, including the best-sellers *God Has Never Failed Me, But He's Sure Scared Me To Death A Few Times, The Buzzards Are Circling But God's Not Finished With Me Yet, The Five-Star Church, his popular Minuet Motivators Series* and his latest book, *The Secret Blend.*

**Dr. Kenneth C. Ulmer**

Dr. Kenneth C. Ulmer pastors Faithful Central Bible Church in Inglewood, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. Since Dr. Ulmer was installed as pastor more than

fifteen years ago the congregation has had an increase from 350 members to over 12,000.

Dr. Ulmer received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Broadcasting/Music from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois. His thirst for knowledge led him to continue his graduate work at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California; Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio; and the University of Judaism, Los Angeles, California. In June 1986, he received The Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Grace Graduate School of Theology, Long Beach, California, which became the West Coast Campus of Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana. In May 1999, he received his Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio.

Dr. Ulmer also holds a Doctor of Divinity from Southern California School of Ministry, Los Angeles, and studied Ecumenical Liturgy and Worship at Magdalene College at Oxford University, Oxford, England in 1994. He has served as an instructor in Pastoral Ministry and Homiletics at Grace Theological Seminary, instructor of African-American Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, an Adjunct Professor at Biola University, Los Angeles, California, and Pepperdine University. In 2000 Dr. Ulmer was installed as the Presiding Bishop over the Macedonia International Bible Fellowship, representing the countries of Zimbabwe, Namibia, England, Republic of the Congo, South Africa and the United States.

# APPENDIX IX

## QUESTIONS USED IN PASTOR INTERVIEWS

**1. Describe specific ways in which you relate to Jesus as a model for your preaching?**

**2. In what ways do you believe the modeling of the method and message of Jesus as a communicator would improve the effectiveness of contemporary preaching?**

**3. What would you single out as the number one strength of Jesus' style of preaching.**

**4. Comment on ways in which you believe Jesus made his preaching clear, relevant and applicable.**

**5. Comment on the example of the personal devotional life of Jesus and His attention to personal prayer as a factor in your own life and particularly as it relates to your preparation for preaching**

**6. As an effective preacher, what helpful advice would you give to those who wish to improve their preaching skills, especially as it relates to Jesus as a model?**

**7. How do you use of stories and the narrative element in your own preaching?**

**8. Comment on the way in which you use the function of application in your preaching**

**9. What are some of the best things you see emerging in preaching among evangelicals today?**

**10. What are some of the weaknesses that you see in preaching among evangelicals today?**

**11. What are some of the greatest challenges that preachers are going to face in the next 10 to 20 years?**

**12. How does the Jesus model for preaching and teaching speak to those challenges?**

# APPENDIX X

## TABLE

**THE PREACHING AND TEACHING PASSAGES OF JESUS**

***Their Relevance to the Lives of the People***

| Scripture Location | Single Group Crowd | As Prompted by Need, Hurt or Question |
|---|---|---|
| 1. John 3:1-21 | Single | Jesus speaks to Nicodemus about his spiritual problem. The "new birth." concept is discussed. |
| 2. John 4:5-42 | Single | Jesus converses with Samaritan woman about her dysfunctional life and spiritual problem. |
| 3. Luke 4:5-42 | Group | Jesus speaks in the Nazareth synagogue. Problem of dysfunctional religion is addressed. |
| 4. Mark 2:1-12<br>Matthew 9:1-8<br>Luke 5:17-26 | Group | A paralytic man is lowered through roof. Jesus heals the man and has His authority challenged to forgive sin. Jesus responds by answering the criticism with instruction. |
| 5. Mark 2:18-22<br>Matthew 9:14-17<br>Luke 5:33-39 | Group | A dispute occurs regarding fasting. Jesus responds with the Parable of Wineskins and teaches to correct dysfunctional theology. |
| 6. John 5:1-47 | Group | Jesus heals a lame man on the Sabbath. Responds to criticism of His healing on the Sabbath.<br>Jesus gives Christological information and answers a challenge for response. |
| 7. Mark 2:23-28<br>Matthew 12:1-8<br>Luke 6:1-5 | Group | Another Sabbath controversy involving disciples eating grain in the fields. Jesus responds to critics and defends His disciples conduct by teaching the correct interpretation of Sabbath conduct. |
| 8. Mark 3:1-6<br>Matthew 12:9-14<br>Luke 6:6-11 | Group | Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on Sabbath. He responds to criticism. |
| 9. Mark 3:7-12<br>Matthew 12:15-21 | Crowd | Jesus engages in healing, exorcism and teaching by Sea of Galilee. |

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| 10. Matthew 5-7<br>Luke 6:17-19 | Crowd | Jesus responds to people after healing diseases and unclean spirits. He teaches His standard of righteousness compared with conventional religion. |
| 11. Matthew 8:5-13<br>Luke 7:1-10 | Group | Jesus teaches briefly in response to His healing of centurion's servant. |
| 12. Matthew 11:2-19<br>Luke 7:18-35 | Group | Jesus' teaching springs from concern for the imprisoned John the Baptist. |
| 13. Matthew 11:25-30 | Group | Jesus' teaching precedes invitation to "all who are weary and burdened." |
| 14. Luke 7:36-50 | Group | A woman's anointing of Jesus feet prompts teaching: "He who has been forgiven little, loves little." |
| 15. Mark 3:19-30<br>Matthew 12:22-37 | Group | Jesus responds to accusation of His being Satanic after healing a blind, deaf demoniac. |
| 16. Mark 4:1-34<br>Matthew 13:1-53<br>Luke 8:4-18 | Crowd | Jesus teaches the first great group of parables to the crowd by the Sea of Galilee. The themes speak to spiritual needs. |
| 17. Mark 6:1-6<br>Matthew 13:54-58 | Group | Jesus teaches in the synagogue at Nazareth and refrains from healing because of the unbelief of the people. |
| 18. Mark 6:6-13<br>Matthew 9:35-11:1<br>Luke 9:1-6 | Crowd | Jesus teaching, preaching and healing "all manner of diseases." Sends out disciples with authority to exorcise, heal, and preach the kingdom. |
| 19. Mark 6:30-34<br>Matthew 14:10-41<br>Luke 9:10-17<br>John 6:1-13 | Crowd | The disciples return and report. Jesus withdraws with them to the other side of The Sea of Galilee to rest but his plans are changed by the reappearance of the crowd of five thousand hungry people. Jesus gives instruction to the disciples prior to and following the miracle of the multiplication of the bread and fish to feed the crowd. |
| 20. Mark 7:1-23<br>Matthew 15:1-20<br>John 7:1 | Group | Jesus responds to the Pharisee's criticism concerning His disciples' failure to ceremonially wash their hands. He teaches that defilement comes from the heart. |
| 21. Mark 9:33-37<br>Matthew 18:1-5<br>Luke 9:46-48 | Group | Jesus responds to argument of His disciples as to which among them will be greatest under the Messiah's reign. Jesus teaches them a lesson about humility. |
| 22. Mark 9:38-50<br>Matthew 18:6-35<br>Luke 9:49-50 | Group | Jesus rebukes the misplaced zeal of the Apostle John and uses parables to teach care and sensitivity. |
| 23. Matthew 8:19-22<br>Luke 9:57-62 | Group | Would-be disciples offer to follow Jesus, but only under certain conditions. Jesus teaches that His disciples must be willing to give up everything to follow Him. |

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| 24. John 7:11-52 | Crowd | Jesus creates intense excitement among the crowds at the Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem. He responds by teaching concerning His Messianic role. |
| 25. John 8:21-59 | Group | Jesus responds to the questions of the people and teaches them concerning His mission. |
| 26. John 9: 1-41 | Group | Jesus heals a man born blind. The religious rulers then forbid the recognition of Jesus as Messiah. Jesus proclaims Himself to be the Son of God to the blind man, who then becomes converted. |
| 27. John 10:1-21 | Group | Pharisees confront Jesus with a question. Jesus responds with a teaching couched in a parable of the Good Shepherd. |
| 28. Luke 10:1-34 | Group | Jesus instructs 70 people before they are sent out to minister. They return with their report and Jesus teaches them again in response to their report |
| 29. Luke 10:25-37 | Group | Religious law expert asks Jesus a question, perhaps as a confrontation. “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answers with the parable of the Good Samaritan. |
| 30. Luke 11:1-13 | Group | Jesus responds to the request of His disciples to teach them to pray. Jesus responds by giving them a model prayer and teaching them about persistent prayer. |
| 31. Luke 11:14-36 | Crowd | Jesus casts a demon out of a man. Some from the crowd ask for a sign from heaven. Jesus responds with a statement of rebuke and instruction and teaches about the “sign of Jonah” given by God. |
| 32. Luke 11:37-54 | Group | At a meal to which Jesus was invited, a Pharisee confronts Him about not doing the ceremonial washing before the meal. Jesus responds with a rebuke and exhortation, primarily against religious hypocrisy. |
| 33. Luke 12:1-59 | Crowd | Jesus speaks to a crowd of thousands about hypocrisy and answers a question that reveals covetousness, materialistic anxieties, the final Judgment, and His own approaching death. Included are the parables of The Rich Fool, The Waiting Servants, and The Wise Steward. |
| 34. Luke 13:1-9 | Group | Jesus responds to the expressed concerns of people over Galileans who had been executed by the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate. Jesus refers to two other current tragedies as illustrations of the importance of repenting before it is too late. |

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| 35. Luke 13:10-21 | Group | Jesus heals a woman on the occasion of His teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath. He is criticized by the synagogue leader for healing on the Sabbath. Jesus responds by teaching, using the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, both regarding the Kingdom of God. |
| 36. John 10:22-39 | Group | Jesus attends the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) and responds to the question about His Messianic identity. |
| 37. Luke 13:22-35 | Crowds, Groups | Jesus teaches in the villages on His way to Jerusalem. He responds to a question concerning "Who will be saved?" by teaching why few will find salvation. |
| 38. Luke 14:1-24 | Group | Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath, and responds to the Pharisees' objections by teaching about the meaning of Sabbath, humility, and the cost of following Him. |
| 39. Luke 14:25-35 | Crowd | Jesus teaches the multitudes that follow Him, focusing on the theme of the cost of following Him. (Although it is not specifically referred to in this passage, Jesus regularly healed the sick among the crowds to whom He ministered.) |
| 40. Luke 15:1-32 | Crowd, Group | Jesus receives tax-collectors and sinners. The Pharisees criticize Him for this. Jesus defends His action by teaching through the three great "lost and found" parables: The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Lost Son. |
| 41. Luke 16:1-17:10 | Group | Jesus instructs His disciples concerning stewardship (with Pharisees present, v.14). Pharisees criticize Jesus and He responds by continuing to teach about stewardship. He uses the parables of The Unjust Steward, The Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Unprofitable Servants. |
| 42. Luke 17:11-37 | Group | Jesus heals ten lepers and only one returns to thank him. He is asked about the time of the coming of the Kingdom of God by the Pharisees. Jesus answers that it is both here, now, and coming in the future. |
| 43. Luke 18:1-14 | Group | Jesus addresses a spiritual need by teaching about prayer, using the parables of The Persistent Widow and The Pharisee and the Tax-collector. |
| 44. Mark 10:1-12<br>Matthew 19:1-12 | Group | Jesus responds to a question from the Pharisees concerning divorce. He answers by teaching His own pronouncement regarding divorce. |
| 45. Mark 10:13-16<br>Matthew 19:13-15<br>Luke 18:15-17 | Group | Jesus corrects the rejection of children by His disciples, teaches the importance of receiving children, and the childlike attitude of faith necessary for entering the Kingdom of God. |

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| 46. Mark 10:17-31<br>Matthew 19:16-20:16<br>Luke 18:18-30 | Group | Jesus responds to the "Rich Young Ruler's" refusal to follow Him by teaching His amazed disciples about the rewards of forsaking all to follow Him. This teaching includes the parable of The Laborers in the Vineyard." |
| 47. Mark 10:32-45<br>Matthew 20:17-28 | Group | Jesus foretells His death and resurrection to the disciples and rebukes the selfish ambition of James and John. |
| 48. Luke 19:1-28 | Crowd | Jesus meets and responds to Zacchaeus and teaches the crowd about accountability, using The Parable of the Pounds. |
| 49. Mark 11:1-11<br>Matthew 21:1-11<br>Luke 19:29-44 | Group | Jesus enters Jerusalem in the "Triumphal Entry." He responds to the protest of the Pharisees to the praises of the people by stating that their praise is appropriate. He also predicts the coming destruction of Jerusalem. |
| 50. Mark 11:12-18<br>Matthew 21:13-19<br>Luke 19:45-48 | Crowd, Group | Jesus curses the fig tree, then proceeds to enter and "cleanse" the Temple. These actions are accompanied by teaching about the defiling of the "house of prayer for all nations", and the danger of spiritual barrenness. |
| 51. John 12:20-50 | Group | Certain Greeks come to see Jesus. He responds by teaching the disciples about seeing life and death as sacrifice and to show how His being "lifted up" will draw all men to Him. |
| 52. Mark 11:19-25<br>Matthew 21:19-22<br>Luke 21:37,38 | Group | Jesus and His disciples find the fig tree that He cursed, withered. Jesus teaches them the necessity of faith-in-action. |
| 53. Mark 11:27-12:12<br>Matthew 21:23-22:14<br>Luke 20:1-19 | Group | The religious rulers (Sanhedrin) formally challenge the authority of Jesus as an accredited teacher (rabbi). Jesus responds by teaching them the reasons He has the authority. He uses the parables of the two sons whom the father assigned the task as keepers of the vineyard, the keepers of the vineyard who murdered the owner's son, and the wedding feast. |
| 54. Mark 12:13-17<br>Matthew 22:15-22<br>Luke 20:20-26 | Group | Pharisees and Herodians try to trap Jesus with a question about the issue of giving tribute to Caesar. Jesus responds by using a Caesar-inscribed coin to teach the "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" principle. |
| 55. Mark 12:18-27<br>Matthew 22:23-33<br>Luke 20:27-40 | Group | Jesus responds to a question from the Sadducees concerning the resurrection after death. |

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| 56. Mark 12:28-34<br>Matthew 22:34-40 | Group | The Pharisees approve of Jesus' answer to the Sadducees and confront Him with a question as to which of the commandments from God (in the Mosaic Law) is the most important. Jesus answered by teaching that the "Shemah" (Deuteronomy 6:4 ff) contains the answer, along with Leviticus 19:18; loving God totally and loving one's neighbor as yourself. |
| 57. Mark 12:35-37<br>Matthew 22:41-46<br>Luke 20:41-44 | Crowd | Jesus asks a question of the Pharisees while teaching in the Temple. The question and its answer relate to a Messianic interpretation of Psalm 110. "The large crowd listened to Him with delight." |
| 58. Mark 12:38-40<br>Matthew 23:1-39<br>Luke 20:45-47 | Crowd | Jesus teaches the crowds with a warning against religious hypocrisy, describing the double-standard of some religious leaders. The teaching meets a spiritual need in the form of a warning. It climaxes with Jesus' lament over rejection, a prediction of the desolation of the Temple, and His eventual end-time return. |
| 59. Mark 12:41-44<br>Luke 21:1-4 | Group | While sitting near the containers into which Temple offerings were placed, Jesus responds to the offering of an impoverished widow by commenting on the difference between giving money in a superfluous manner instead of sincerely contributing all one has to God. |
| 60. Mark 13:1-37<br>Matthew 24-25<br>Luke 21:5-36 | Group | Jesus responds to the statement of His disciples about the impressive buildings of the Temple area as an occasion to alert His disciples to end-time events, beginning with the destruction of the Temple, the appearance of false-messiahs, persecution of the believers, the signs of His return, and the "Parables of Readiness": The Parable of the Sleeping Watchman, The Master of the House, The Faithful and Evil Servants, The Ten Virgins, the Talents of Gold, and the Division of the Sheep and Goats—all dealing with the end-time judgment of God. |
| 61. Mark 14:3-9<br>Matthew 26:6-13<br>John 12:2-8 | Group | At Bethany in the house of Simon, Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus with spikenard (a burial perfume). Jesus uses the occasion of the protest of this extravagant anointing to foretell his death. |
| 62. Mark 14:17<br>Matthew 26:20<br>Luke 22:7-13 | Group | Jesus begins the Passover meal with the 12 apostles and rebukes them for their jealousy. |

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| 63. John 13:1-20 | Group | At the continuation of the procedure of the Passover *seder* (order) Jesus washes His disciples' feet and teaches about the attitude and action of servanthood as one of His basic emphases. |
| 64. Luke 22:31-38 | Group | Jesus remarks to His disciples that He must fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, which he quotes (Isaiah 53:12). |
| 65. Luke 22:17-20<br>Mark 14:22-25<br>Matthew 26:26-29<br>I Corinthians 11:23-26 | Group | In the order of the Passover seder Jesus institutes the bread and wine memorial of His body and blood sacrifice in death. |
| 66. John 14 | Group | Jesus speaks a farewell discourse to his disciples, primarily focusing on His leaving and going to the Heavenly Father. The teaching contains the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit and His ministry. |
| 67. John 15-16 | Group | Jesus teaches His disciples on the way to Gethsemane. The teaching of the vine and the branches emphasizes total dependence on Jesus. He states that love for Him is demonstrated by keeping His commandments. He again promises the coming of the Holy Spirit who will glorify Him. He also foretells the scattering of the disciples, even though they professing loyalty to Him. |
| 68. John 17 | Group | Jesus prays and asks the Father to sanctify His disciples and bring them into unity and keep them from the Evil One. |
| 69. John 18:12, 19-23 | Group | Jesus begins the "trial" procedure, being examined by Annas, the ex-High Priest, and responding with instruction about His teaching activities to charges made against Him. |
| 70. Mark 14:53, 55-65<br>Matthew 26:57, 59-68<br>Luke 22:54, 63-65<br>John 18:24 | Group | Jesus is quickly tried and condemned by Caiaphas the High Priest and the Sanhedrin, who mock and beat Him. He answers Caiaphas' question about being the Messiah with an affirmative answer, testifying of His future triumph and return with the clouds of heaven. |
| 71. Mark 15:1<br>Matthew 27:1<br>Luke 22:66-71 | Group | Jesus is later formally condemned by the Sanhedrin and repeats His prior answer to their question concerning His being the Messiah. |
| 72. Mark 15:1-5<br>Matthew 27:2, 11-14<br>Luke 23:1-5 John 18:28-38 | Group | Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate the first time for judgment. Upon being asked if He is king of the Jews, Jesus responds in the affirmative, but informs Pilate that His kingdom is not a political kingdom.* |

* In Luke 23:6-12, Jesus is brought before the Tetrarch Herod Antipas, but makes no vocal response to the charges leveled against Him. He is sent back to Pilate.

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| 73. Mark 15:6-15<br>Matthew 27:15-26 | Group | Jesus is brought before Pilate the second time. Pilate has Him scourged then offers to free Jesus instead of the criminal Barabbas. The crowd demands the criminal's release and the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus responds to Pilate's boast of authority by telling him that he would have no power unless it were given him "from above." |
| 74. Luke 23:26-33 | Group | On the way to His crucifixion Jesus warns the "Daughters of Jerusalem" who are mourning for Him of the coming destruction of the Temple and the people by the Romans. |
| 75. Mark 15:24-41<br>Matthew 27:35-51<br>Luke 23:33-49<br>John 19:16-30 | Group, Crowd | Jesus undergoes crucifixion, during which he utters this "Seven Sayings from the Cross." |
| 76. Mark 16:12,13<br>Luke 24:13-32 | Group | The resurrected Jesus appears to Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaeus and "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." |
| 77. Mark 16:14<br>Luke 24:36-43<br>John 20:19-25 | Group | Jesus appears to the disciples (with Thomas absent) and gives them a commission. |
| 78. John 20:26-31<br>I Corinthians 15:5 | Group | Jesus appears again to the disciples (Thomas present). Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you believe. Blessed are they who have not seen, yet believed." |
| 79. John 21 | Group | Jesus appears to seven disciples beside the Sea of Galilee and teaches them, following the miraculous catch of fish. Included here is the forgiving and commissioning of Peter. |
| 80. Mark 16:15-18<br>Matthew 28:16-20<br>I Corinthians 15:6 | Crowd | Jesus appears to more than five hundred people on a Galilean mountain and gives them the "Great Commission." |
| 81. Luke 24:44-49<br>Acts 1:3-8 | Group | Jesus appears again to the disciples and gives them another commission in response to their question about His restoring the kingdom to Israel. |
| 82. Mark 16:19,20<br>Luke 24:50-53<br>Acts 1:9-12 | Group | In His last appearance Jesus blesses His disciples before His ascension into Heaven. |

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