# LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# HOW TO DEVELOP A MODEL FOR WRITING A BIBLICAL CONCLUSION TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PREACHING FOR KOREAN PASTORS

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# LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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**ABSTRACT** 

HOW TO DEVELOP A MODEL FOR WRITING A BIBLICAL CONCLUSION TO

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PREACHING FOR KOREAN PASTORS

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010

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The purpose of this dissertation is to help Korean preachers to make biblical and

effective conclusions to improve the effectiveness of their sermons. This dissertation was

performed on the basis of literature reviews, studies on the principles of the sermon

conclusion, studies of various types of sermon conclusions, and analyses of types of

conclusions of four representative Korean preachers: Dongwon Lee, Sunhee Gwahk,

Hanhum Ohk, and Byeonguhk Jeon. This dissertation also provides practical guides to

Korean pastors who want to improve their sermon conclusions in order to write various

types of sermon conclusions.

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iii

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	٧
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
The Statement of Purpose	4
The Statement of Limitation	5
The Statement of Methodology	6
Summary	- 8
CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL BASIS, A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND T CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON	
Biblical Basis	9
The Preaching of Jesus	9
The Content of Jesus' Preaching	10
The Form of Jesus' Preaching	10
The Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount	12
The Preaching of Peter	15
The Conclusion of Peter's Sermon	16
The Sermon of Paul	18
Paul's Sermon Conclusion	19
A Review of Literature	21

The Sermon Conclusion	- 24
The Definition of the Sermon Conclusion	- 24
The Importance of the Sermon Conclusion	- 26
The Purpose of the Sermon Conclusion	- 28
Conclude the sermon	- 29
Leave the central idea	- 29
Carry out the aim	- 30
Move the audience to action	- 31
Apply the text	- 32
Summary	- 33
CHAPTER THREE: THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SERMON CONCLUSION	- 35
Sermon Conclusion Should Be Prepared Well	- 35
Sermon Conclusion from Sermon Body	- 37
Sermon Conclusion Achieving Personal Encounter	- 39
A Strong and Powerful Conclusion	- 41
A Conclusion Based on Biblical Authority	- 42
Single Conclusion	43
Positive Conclusion	. 44
The Climax of the Sermon	- 45
Definite Conclusion	46
Conclusion without Excuse	47
Do Not Say the Word "Conclusion"	- 48
Concise Conclusion	- 50
When to Write the Conclusion	- 51

Summary	53
CHAPTER FOUR: VARIOUS FORMS OF CONCLUSIONS	54
Recapitulation	55
Illustration	57
Exhortation	59
Application	61
Invitation or Direct Appeal	62
The Quotation of the Text Itself	66
Quotation of Another Scripture	66
Quotation	67
Poem	69
Hymn	70
Encouragement	71
Question	72
Shock or Surprise	73
Pronouncement of Blessing	75
Imagination	76
Prayer	77
Prophecy	78
Contrast	79
Summary	80
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF SERMON CONCLUSIONS OF FOUR REPRESENTATIVE KOREAN PREACHERS	
Pastor Dongwon Lee	82

	His Life and Ministries	82
	His Homiletics	84
	Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types	85
Pastor	Sunhee Gwahk	90
	His Life and Ministries	90
	His Homiletics	91
	Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types	92
Pastor	Hanjum Ohk	97
	His Life and Ministries	97
	His Homiletics	99
	Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types	100
Pastor	Beonguhk Jeog	105
	His Life and Ministries	105
	His Homiletics	107
	Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types	108
Summa	ary	112
CHAPTER SIX	X: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	114
BIBLIOGRAP	HY	119
VITA		129

# LIST OF FIGURES

1.	The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount	12
2.	Sermon Intensity Graph	27
3.	Dongwon Lee's Types of Conclusion	89
4.	Sunhee Gwahk's Types of Conclusion	97
5.	Hanhum Ohk's Types of Conclusion	105
6.	Beonguhk Jeon's Types of Conclusion	112
7.	Four Representative Korean Preachers' Types of Conclusion	116

# **CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTION**

Pastors are called to preach and have to do their best to spread the Word of God.

This is clearly stated by the Apostle Peter. He said that pastors give their attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. Pastors should want to become better preachers than they were. It is hard to explain how precious preaching the Gospel of God is. Pastors should do it with logical theology and emotional expressions in front of the congregation.

However, preaching is also a source of pressure for a pastor. The pastor sometimes wants to run away when he sees the church is not inspired at all by his sermon. Why does the sermon prepared with hard work and time not work effectively? One of the reasons can be a lack of an effective conclusion. According to Ilion T. Jones, the most vital part of the sermon next to the introduction is the conclusion. Robinson said in his book, *Biblical Preaching*, that as an experienced pilot knows landing requires extreme skills, an expert preacher understands that a conclusion requires thoughtful preparation. If the conclusion is not prepared well, the entire sermon could be meaningless, because the last part the congregation hears is the conclusion and they go home with it. The conclusion, which should be the most powerful part of the sermon, can sometimes fail to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> William Black, *How to Prepare an Expository Sermon* (Seoul: Scripture Union, 2000), 140.

give the congregation new life, and even fail to get any interest. Pastors have to ask themselves how to maintain an effective conclusion in order to lead and challenge people to a new life. It is interesting that most pastors know the importance of an effective conclusion. However, sermon conclusions are frequently considered the most difficult part of the sermon to prepare. As J. Daniel Bauman comments, "It is no surprise, to discover that nothing is so consistently inadequate among the printed sermons as the conclusion." It is hard to prepare the conclusion in a sermon, but it is a must.

It is unfortunate to neglect a well-prepared conclusion. Because it is hard to prepare a good conclusion, preachers tend not to do their best in preparing conclusions. They wait until the last minute before they preach, and they do not have enough time to prepare. Some might think that the main contents in the sermon itself will make a good conclusion. Others might think that a formal conclusion is not needed. It is inappropriate to expect that a good conclusion will follow while preaching. Thomas G. Long stresses that the decision about timing the sermon conclusion must be made during preparation and not in the pulpit.

An unprepared conclusion may lead a preacher to commit the following pitfalls.

The first pitfall which a preacher might encounter is "the broken-promise conclusion."

The preacher states repeatedly that he will presently conclude, or that with one more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> J. Daniel Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Don De Welt, If You Want to Preach, trans. Wonbong Cha (Seoul: Tae Gwang, 1980), 115.

 $<sup>^7\,</sup>$  Thomas G. Long , The Witness of Preaching (Louisville, KY: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1989), 151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Henry Clifton Brown, *Steps to the Sermon; A Plan for Sermon Preparation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1963), 121.

illustration he will finish the sermon, and yet he continues on and on. <sup>9</sup> This kind of preacher is compared to the pilot who is landing an airplane. He is in the final approach toward the runway when, at an altitude of only a few feet from the ground, he gets a new thought and zooms up into the air again instead of landing. Once more he then circles the field, lines up with the landing strip, lowers his flaps and starts to come in for a landing, only to shoot up into the sky instead. <sup>10</sup> When it happens, the people in the church will be exhausted like the passengers of the airplane, and will forget the main points of the sermon.

The second pitfall is "the rambling conclusion" in which the preacher wanders aimlessly.<sup>11</sup> He seems unable to land the sermon and continues to circle the field until he runs out of gas. When he finally comes in for a landing, he is exhausted, and the congregation is weary.<sup>12</sup>

The third pitfall is to finish the sermon furtively. These kinds of preachers finish their sermon saying something like, "Now, may God bless these words to each of you." They stumble around looking for a way out, repeating and repeating themselves until they see any sort of opening, and then make a dash for it.<sup>13</sup>

The fourth pitfall is that preachers stop their sermons too abruptly. John R. W. Stott says that "their sermons are like a play without a finale, like music that has neither

<sup>10</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Preaching with Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Presbyterian and Reformed, Ministry Resources Library, 1986), 65-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Brown, 122.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Adams, 66.

crescendo nor climax."<sup>14</sup> To avoid this, the conclusion has to be prepared in advance, carefully, and completely. The preachers who do not prepare the conclusion thoroughly will make those mistakes which reduce the effectiveness of the sermon. The preachers must preach the last five minutes of the sermon well in order to give the congregation a long-term impact. Sermons with long-term impact will affect people's daily lives in the world.

It is hard to find books regarding the sermon's conclusion even though people know the conclusion is the most important part of the sermon. Therefore, this paper will offer various kinds of methods and practices in order to provide good models for pastors who struggle with sermon conclusions. Korean pastors in particular will gain much benefit, because of the analysis of famous Korean preachers' sermons which consider Korean congregations. Korean pastors especially need to prepare the conclusion well, because Korean people tend to remember the last part of a speech. Therefore, for Korean people, the body is more important than the introduction, and the conclusion is more important than the body. The conclusion absolutely alters the effectiveness of the sermon.

# THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

How many pastors recognize the importance of the conclusion to maximize the effectiveness of a sermon? How many pastors invest their time preparing a sermon conclusion as they invest their time preparing the sermon body? Among the introduction,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Gyutae Lee, *The Knowledge Structure of Korean*, Korean Series 2 (Seoul: Sinwon, 1991), 31.

the body, and the conclusion of the sermon, which one gets the least interest from pastors? Is it the conclusion? Even though there are various ways to write down an effective sermon conclusion, are not pastors paraphrasing the body or repeating conventional language in the pulpit? These questions led the writer to research this topic.

First, the purpose of this dissertation is to encourage pastors to acknowledge the importance of the sermon conclusion. The conclusion of the sermon is not just the end of the sermon, but a part that pastors should invest as much of their time and effort into as they invest in the body. The last five minutes of preaching is the best moment to lead people to choose new life.

Second, the purpose of this dissertation is to provide preachers with a practical guide to improve their sermon conclusion, by suggesting practical examples and theories.

# THE STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

As is evident in the title of this dissertation, the writer admits that this work has some limitations. First, this dissertation will only be a study of the conclusion of a sermon. It is not intended to be a treatise on homiletics in general. Although the introduction, illustration, application, delivery, and other aspects of a sermon are very important, this project will limit itself exclusively to the conclusion.

Second, this dissertation will not include the issue of the spiritual preparation of the preacher as an essential element in the creation of a conclusion. The spiritual preparation of the preacher is of the utmost importance. However, this project will strictly look at the homiletic aspect.

Third, in this dissertation the writer analyzes or evaluates Korean pastors' pattern

of conclusion only. This dissertation will not discuss the theology of the preachers involved in the study, because it is a homiletics dissertation, not a theological one.

Fourth, no doubt the contents of this dissertation will be useful for pastors of any nationality, but this dissertation addresses Korean pastors in particular.

#### THE STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

The methods to be employed in this dissertation will not be complex or difficult to understand. First, chapter two will examine the biblical and theological basis for a proper conclusion to improve the effectiveness of preaching. It will examine how Jesus and the apostles use conclusions in their sermons. Also, it will provide a review of literature and general condensation of the teaching on the conclusions found in homiletics books. It will demonstrate the definition of a conclusion, the importance, and the purpose.

Second, chapter three will provide these principles in more detail. This work will include factors involved in making an effective conclusion, discussing the timing of writing a conclusion and the proper length of it.

Third, chapter four will provide the various types of conclusions in a sermon, providing specific examples for types of conclusions. This chapter will give preachers who want to make effective conclusions tools to improve their sermons and excellent information that they can use to write their sermons' conclusions.

Fourth, chapter five will analyze and evaluate sermons of four representative Korean pastors. This chapter will include research on over forty sermons from each pastor in order to analyze the types of conclusions in their sermons. These are Dongwon Lee, Sunhee Kwahk, Hanhum Ohk, and Beonguk Jeon.

Dongwon Lee is the senior pastor of Global Mission Baptist Church in Seoul, which is the biggest Baptist church in the world. He is also the author of many sermon books, and is well known as an excellent preacher.

Sunhee Gwahk is the former senior pastor of Somang Presbyterian Church in Seoul. Also, he has written many sermon books. He has a reputation as an excellent expository preacher.

Hanhum Ohk was the former senior pastor of Sarang Presbyterian Church in Seoul. Especially, his church has grown sharply over the past thirty years. When he became the church's senior pastor, the attendees (only adults) were just 9 people, but present attendees are 40,000 people. Also, he was a special speaker for revival meetings, and a speaker who fascinated the congregation with his sermons. He retired in 2003 and died on September 2, 2010.

Beonguhk Jeon is the senior pastor of Samil Presbyterian Church in Seoul. He, also, is one of the special speakers for young people's special meetings. He is the most popular preacher and the bestselling author among believers in Korea now.

This chapter will analyze their sermons and will seek the characteristics of their sermons' conclusions. Therefore, this chapter will provide Korean pastors with examples of proper conclusions for Korean believers.

Fifth, chapter six will conclude with some recommendations how to develop a model for writing a biblical conclusion to improve the effectiveness of preaching for Korean pastors. These will solidify that the conclusion is very important and that an effective conclusion will enhance preaching.

#### **SUMMARY**

It is not easy to find books regarding the conclusion of a sermon, since the conclusion does not get serious attention even in homiletics. However, pastors have to be careful when they write their conclusions, in order to have an effective sermon. The conclusion of the sermon, which in this dissertation is defined as the final five minutes, is the last moment that a preacher can summarize his sermon so that listeners may apply it to their lives. But it is undeniably true that pastors tend to invest most of their time into preparing their body and introduction which can draw a listener's interest. Some pastors make a habit of getting in the pulpit without a conclusion. These pastors assume a good body will lead a sermon to a proper conclusion. But if the pastor did not prepare the conclusion thoroughly, a sermon will not have the proper impact he intended. Even the writer of this dissertation has stumbled through the ending of his sermons without having a proper conclusion.

There are some preachers who tend to finish a sermon with an old cliché. These pastors' sermon conclusions become similar even though the text is different. Unprepared conclusions make sermons less effective. One thing preachers have to realize is the importance of the sermon conclusion. The goal of this dissertation is to improve sermon preparation, yielding effective sermon conclusions. The biblical basis and a review of the literature will be discussed in the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

# BIBLICAL BASIS, A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THE SERMON CONCLUSION

#### **BIBLICAL BASIS**

# The Preaching of Jesus

In the coming of Jesus, the cornerstone of Christian preaching was laid.<sup>1</sup> Also, Jesus himself was a preacher, and to preaching he devoted much of his energy. Not only did Christ make preaching important in his own country, but also he commanded his disciples to preach (Mt 10).<sup>2</sup> In three years of public ministry, Jesus went through Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people (Mt 4:23). He did three things principally: teaching, preaching, and healing. Two out of three of Jesus' ministries were related to the sermon.

Jung says, "The root of Christian preaching was started by Jesus, then the apostles became the successors of Jesus in preaching." That is why Jesus' preaching is a model of teaching and spreading the gospel which Christians today must follow. Jesus proclaimed himself through preaching as the Son of God, the only way to get to the Father, the truth and the life, the redemptive atonement for all sinners, the returning judge, and the eternal ruler of this world.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Henry Clifton Brown, *Steps to the Sermon; A Plan for Sermon Preparation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1963), 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Jangbok Jung, *The Dictionary of Homiletics* (Seoul: Worship and Academy, 2004), 274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> David Buttrick, *Preaching the New and Now*, trans. Woonyong Kim (Seoul: Jordan, 2002), 100.

# The Content of Jesus' Preaching

Though Jesus' preaching recorded in the Gospel hasvarious contents, it holds a unified subject, the Kingdom of God. Mark, in the first chapter of his Gospel, introduces Jesus' ministry: "Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 'The time is come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news'" (Mk 1:14-15). Jesus' preaching and teaching carry the concept of the kingdom of God. He also used parables for better understanding, on topics such as a sower, a precious pearl, and a mustard seed. He ordered believers to seek the kingdom of God first (Mt 6:33). When He appointed seventy people and sent them into every town, Jesus said, "Heal the sick who are there and tell them, the kingdom of God is near" (Lk 10:9).

Raymond Bailey says, regarding Jesus' preaching, that the advent of the kingdom of God is the core of Jesus' preaching and this kingdom became nearer in Christ and through Christ. The kingdom of God not only means the beginning of the reign of God in each individual's heart, but also means the kingdom that Jesus will govern when He comes back. Therefore, the kingdom of God is present and future. Jesus himself was the completion of the Old Testament promises and proclaimed its message.<sup>5</sup>

# The Form of Jesus' Preaching

Even though Jesus never wrote sermon notes, or recorded anything, his sermons were the living word themselves and his dialogue was preaching. Through his spoken word, he healed people, forgave sins, and proclaimed the kingdom of God. To help listeners understand, Jesus often used illustrations and parables. Regarding the kingdom

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Raymond Bailey, *Jesus, the Preacher*, trans. Myunghee Lee (Daejun: Korean Baptist Seminary, 1996), 99.

life, Jesus used parables of salt and light, lamplight, narrow door, serpent and pigeon, a debtor, two sons, talents, a good Samaritan, and a foolish rich man. Regarding the kingdom of God, Jesus used parables of a mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, pearl, and net, among others. Regarding the second coming and the judgment, Jesus used parables of the evil farmers, the great feast, the fig tree, the ten bridesmaids, the three servants, the sheep and the goats, invasion of a burglar, the awaking gatekeeper, and the faithful steward. Regarding the love of God, Jesus used graphic parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, and the good shepherd.

Sometimes, Jesus used exaggeration to make a strong impression. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell" (Mt 5:29-30). The expressions such as "the plank in your own eye" (Mt 7:3-5), "a camel to go through the eye of a needle" (Mt 19:24), and "You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel" (Mt 23:24), are other examples of exaggeration. Furthermore, sometimes Jesus used similes. For example, in the Gospel of Matthew, those are "as sheep in the midst of wolves," (10:16) "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish," (12:40) "as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire," (13:40) "will shine forth as the sun," (13:43) "as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings," (23:37) "as the lightning comes from the east," (24:27) and "as a shepherd divides his sheep from goats" (25:32).

The main form of Jesus' preaching was a conversational style. In the dialogue,

Jesus used all kinds of methods such as a metaphor, a simile, an exaggeration, a comparison, and a contrast. These were effective and simple ways to deliver the truth to listeners.

# The Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 to 7 is very similar to contemporary preaching. The Sermon on the Mount will be good material to study for confirming the effect of a sermon conclusion on the overall sermon. This is the outline for the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>6</sup>

- 1. Setting (5:1-2)
- 2. Introduction (5: 3-16)- Blessings (3-12), Salt and Light (13-16)
- 3. Body (5:17-7:23)
  - 1) Jesus is the one who fulfills the law of Moses (5:17-20)
  - 2) Teachings (5:21-7:20)
    - (1) The best righteousness (5:21-48)
      - -Do not be angry (5: 21-26)
      - -Do not commit adultery (5: 27-32)
      - -Do not swear falsely (5: 33-37)
      - -Do not resist an evil person (5: 38-42)
      - -Love your enemies (5: 43-48)
    - (2) The righteousness before God (6:1-18)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Dale C. Allison Jr., *The Sermon on The Mount* (New York: The Crossroad, 1999), 36-38.

- -Secret charitable deed (6:1-4)
- -Secret prayer, the Lord's prayer (6:5-15)
- -Secret fasting (6:16-18)
- (3) Seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (6: 19-34)
- (4) Righteousness for others (7: 1-23)
  - -Stop judging others (7:1-5)
  - -Ask, Seek, Knock (7: 7-12)
  - -The narrow gate (7: 13-14)
  - -Warning against false prophets (7:15-23)
- 4. Conclusion (7: 24-27): Building on a solid foundation
- 5. Response (7: 28-29)

Figure 2.1 The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount teaches how to live separately in this world as the people of the kingdom of God by suggesting a spiritual moral standard. The Sermon on the Mount ends with an ominous parable. It envisages a flood wide overcoming a house built on sand while a house founded on rock endures. Jesus used contrast to emphasize the importance of living according to what he said. When Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount, he uses the word *therefore* so that he indicates to people that this is the conclusion: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid.

practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Mt 7:24). In his conclusion, Jesus uses two similes.<sup>9</sup>

Here "everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice" introduces the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, which is a rebuke of false prophets who do not have love. Jesus wants his people not only to listen to his sermon, but also to do as they learned. So the one who puts the words into practice is like a man who built his house on the rock. Jesus uses these similes, which constitute the sermon conclusion, to lead his listeners to make decisions. Jesus proclaimed that to do the words is more important than just to listen. The similes that Jesus used in his sermon conclusion are composed of fresh illustrations. They strongly appeal to the listeners' hearts, and they are enough to draw spiritual decisions from a listener.

Jesus finishes his sermon with the most straightforward and clearest illustration. The Bible tells about the people's reaction after the sermon: "And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mt 7:28-29).

The sermon conclusion that Jesus used shows today's preachers not only the importance of the sermon conclusion but also a practical and concrete example.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24-27, NKJV). Unless otherwise noted all subsequent references from the NKJV.

# The Preaching of Peter

Through the book of Acts, it is clear that Peter was the spokesperson not only of the Early Church, but also of the apostles. As the spokesperson of the apostolic witness, Peter emerged as a prophetic preacher who urged repentance at Jerusalem. Peter called upon Jews to return to God by believing in Jesus Christ. The fact that Peter was the first apostle who spoke about Jesus Christ after Pentecost and Peter's unique way of witnessing Jesus Christ show the position of Peter in the Early Church. 11

Moreover, from chapter 1 through chapter 15 of the book of Acts, nine sermons of Peter are recorded: The sermon for choosing an apostle (1:16-22), the sermon on the day of the Pentecost (2:14-40), the sermon to the crippled beggar at the temple gate (3:12-26), the first sermon before the Sanhedrin (4:8-12), the second sermon before the Sanhedrin (5:29-32), the sermon to Simon the sorcerer (8:20-25), the sermon at Cornelius's house (10:34-43), the sermon regarding Gentile salvation (11:5-17), and the sermon at the Jerusalem council (15:7-11).

Among these sermons, the writer wants to look at sermons in chapters 2, 3, and 10, mainly focusing on the sermon conclusion. They were delivered on three separate occasions, and each has its own particular importance. The speech in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost serves especially to explain the pouring out of the Holy Spirit; the speech in Acts 3 lays emphasis on the fact that the door of salvation is not yet shut for the Jews, even though they crucified Jesus, and in fact it stresses that God appeals to them first of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *People from God's School*, trans. Hyesook Choi (Seoul: Compass House, 1986), 253.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson, *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 322.

all. The speech in Acts 10, on the other hand, especially opens the door to the Gentiles. <sup>12</sup> Through the sermon recorded in chapter 10 of Acts, Peter asserts the legitimacy of the mission to foreign countries. This sermon is important not only in theology, but also in homiletics.

# The Conclusion of Peter's Sermon

Peter's sermon in Acts 10 can be divided into three parts. The first is the exordium, the second part is unfolding the main idea of witnessing Jesus Christ, and the last part is an application which encourages spiritual decision making.<sup>13</sup> This same structure can be found in all three of Peter's representative sermons.<sup>14</sup> While analyzing the sermons of Peter, Ridderbos says that the testimony of Peter was a preparation for letting listeners repent and be saved which is the true purpose of the sermon.<sup>15</sup> This shows that the most important part of Peter's sermon is the conclusion, which demands people's spiritual decision.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached in front of many people about the coming of the Holy Spirit and the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ. The people who heard this sermon were cut to the heart and said to Peter, "What shall we do?" Peter replied with his sermon conclusion: "Repent, and let every one of you

H. N. Ridderbos, The Speeches of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles (London: Tyndale Press, 1964), 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Acts 2:14-40; Acts 3:12-26; Acts 10:34-43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Ibid., 27.

be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

He finished his sermon by saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation" (Acts 2:40). Peter not only proclaims the cross of Jesus Christ and his resurrection, but also gives them suggestions on how to live. Many Jews had come to Jerusalem to keep the day of the Pentecost. Peter probably pleaded strongly and firmly for spiritual decision at the sermon conclusion. Maybe the sermon conclusion was the strongest part of his sermon.

In chapter 3 of the book of Acts, it is easy to find the same sermon pattern. After testifying Jesus Christ boldly, Peter said, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). This is the invitation.

At the house of Cornelius, Peter finishes his sermon with an altar call. The sermon in chapter 10 is not stronger than the sermon of chapter 2 or 3, and the context is very similar. He finishes his sermon by saying, "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

It is significant for today's preachers that Peter finishes his sermon with strong confidence so that he can call upon people for spiritual decision and repentance of sins. The sermon conclusion of Peter is based on apostolic authority. He testifies of the things he saw with his eyes and the things he heard with his ears as a witness does in front of a judge. Particularly, at his sermon conclusion his message became more powerful when calling people to repent of their sins and be saved. His preaching was a message of

salvation. That is why his sermons can be summarized in one sentence: "Be saved!" Finally, Peter also quotes the Old Testament. He quotes Joel to invite his listeners: "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

# The Sermons of Paul

On the way to Damascus, Paul met Jesus Christ and believed in his resurrection and received a call from God as an apostle for the Gentiles. After his repentance, Paul realized that he had to spread the good news not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. He thought that evangelizing was the only appointed mission for him, and he spent his entire life spreading the Gospel. Paul's sermon shows the arrangement of theological issues: divine providence, Christianity, completion of prophecy, and redemption history. <sup>17</sup>

There are four sermons of Paul recorded in the book of Acts: The sermon to the Jews at the synagogue in Antioch (13:6-41; 46-47), the sermon to the Gentiles (14:15-17; 17:22-31), the farewell sermon to the Ephesian elders (20:18-35), and the apologetic sermon to the Jews and Romans (22:1-21; 23:1-6; 24:10-21; 25:2-11; 26; 2-29; 28:17-28). His sermons were missionary preaching and apologetic preaching. His sermons focused on progressive revelation of God's redemption plan and the perfection of salvation completed in Jesus Christ. Therefore, his sermons move toward proclaiming God's command and determination.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Marshall, 365.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ibid., 366.

#### Paul's Sermon Conclusion

Paul's preaching at the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41) testifies to the promise of God through the line of David and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ through the cross. In other words, Paul preaches about Abraham, Jesus Christ as the descendant of David, the testimonies of John the Baptist, Jesus on the cross, the resurrected Jesus, and the redemptive ministry of Jesus to whoever believes in him. This sermon can be a model for today's sermons. First, the introduction is regarding the promise of God to Israel; it mentions the history of the Old Testament era (v. 17-22). The body claims that the promise has been completed through Christ (v 23-37). And the conclusion invites Jews to salvation, makes application to life, and gives encouragement (v. 38-41). Paul emphasizes forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and righteousness by faith. Not only that, he quotes Habakkuk 1:5 in order to say that if someone rejects his message, he is rejecting the salvation of God and he will perish (v. 41). Through this sermon, Paul is declaring the blessings of redemption and the righteousness by faith.

Paul's sermon in Athens (Acts 17:22-31) shows a characteristic of ministry to Gentiles. This is the reaction from Paul after looking at idols in Athens: "His spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols" (Acts 17:16). This indicates the motive of Paul's preaching. Through this sermon, Paul proclaims who God is to those who do not know God and idol worshipers. First of all, Paul declares God is the creator of the universe.<sup>20</sup> Then, he explains the relationship between the creator

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Robert L. Reymond, *Paul, Missionary Theologian*, trans. by Kwangyeon Won (Seoul: Christian Digest, 2003), 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth*, trans. Gundoo Jung (Seoul: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007), 338.

and human beings (v. 27-28). In conclusion, he wants people to repent (v. 29-31). Paul points out how vain worshiping idols is and at the same time he preaches Jesus Christ as the savior. The sermon conclusion in Athens was to exhort listeners to repent.<sup>21</sup> This repentance requires fundamental change of lifestyle. Here Paul orders them to stop idol worship and to serve God who is the Lord of all.

The sermon to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:18-35) is a farewell sermon. This sermon is composed of the report of three missionary journeys, his future plan, and asking a favor. So far Paul has preached mainly to the Gentiles, but here Paul is preaching to the believer. This sermon contains calm self-confession and a faithful oath. As he concludes his sermon, Paul shares his life as a model Christian life. "And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) is his last sentence. The listeners, the elders of the Ephesians church, prayed on their knees after the sermon. In chapter 5 of this dissertation, the sermons of several representative preachers of the Korean church will be discussed. One topic for discussion will be the reason why Korean pastors lead their listeners to pray after the sermon. This is not only the tradition of the Korean church. It was done by the Ephesian church and Paul.

The sermon before Felix (Acts 24:1-27) and the sermon before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-32) conclude by telling how Paul lived before his repentance and how he has been changed since his repentance. He testified of Jesus whom he saw and met, and how Jesus changed his life. He preached about his misunderstanding of Jesus when he did not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all" (Acts 20:36).

believe in Him and the right understanding of Jesus after he believed in Jesus. Confession and testimony have tremendous power to move a listener's heart. It is so powerful when someone's testimony comes from real life experiences. Real testimony makes a sermon effective.<sup>23</sup> This can be verified again through Paul's sermon. Not only that, but testimony is Paul's own unique sermon style. Particularly in the sermon to Timothy, Paul challenges Timothy powerfully (1 Ti 6:11-21).<sup>24</sup> In verse 12, Paul says to Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." Then in verse 13, Paul says, "I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus." Through the epistle to Timothy, it is clear how strongly a sermon conclusion should be delivered. Paul used sermon conclusion as his strongest tool.

# A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is hard to find homiletics books which concentrate on sermon conclusions.

However, the following books provide a small quantity of useful information: the definition of the sermon conclusion, the important of the sermon conclusion, the purpose

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> John R. Claypool, *The Preaching Event* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 85-108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen."

of the sermon conclusion, the principles of the sermon conclusion, and various forms of conclusions.

Biblical Preaching is a book written by Haddon W. Robinson. This book is a must book for all preachers. He describes methods and concepts of preaching and offers examples of biblical preaching. In preparing the conclusion, he emphasizes the importance of the sermon conclusion and a well-prepared conclusion. He says that "in fact the conclusion possesses such importance that many skilled preachers prepare the conclusion first so that the sermon will proceed toward the conclusion in a direct path."<sup>25</sup> Also, he specifically provides the types of sermon conclusion with practical examples.

Christ Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon is a book written by Bryan Chapell. This book crystallizes the essence of expository preaching and presents clear, transferable principles for preaching effectively. Bryan Chapell shows how expository preaching can reveal the redemptive aims of Scripture and offers a comprehensive approach to the theory and practice of preaching. Also, he provides a complete guide to a preacher so that he can write a biblical conclusion in his sermons. He emphasizes the purposes of conclusions, the types of conclusions, and the cautions for conclusions. Especially, the cautions for conclusions provide important insight into the principles of the sermon conclusion.

The Preparation of Sermons is a book written by Andrew Watterson Blackwood in 1948. He was probably the best known—as well as the most widely published and read—homiletician of the twentieth century because he published a total twenty-two books on every aspect of preaching. This book is a definitive edition to preaching. In this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 176.

book, he provides a practical guide for preaching to all preachers because this book fixes attention on preparing for the pulpit.<sup>26</sup> The force of the conclusion, he states about the variety of endings, the plan for the conclusion, and the things to avoid. In the variety of endings, he explains the nine types of the sermon conclusions in more detail with good examples. In the plan for the conclusion and the things to avoid, he also offers practical and concrete principles for writing the sermon conclusion. This book is an outstanding tool for this dissertation.

*Principles and Practice of Preaching* is a book written by Ilion T. Jones. This book is one of the books that serves as the standard to the one who wants to learn to preach more effectively. In preparing the conclusion of this book, Jones clearly shows what the purposes of the conclusion are. He also provides the principles of writing the sermon conclusion, and he suggests a preacher to vary the types of conclusions. He recommends that preachers should "not end all sermons in the same easy way."<sup>27</sup>

William Edwin Sangster wrote *The Craft of the Sermon*. This book is having a large sale in England. A number of theological seminaries have adopted it as their homiletical textbook. He stresses the importance of the conclusion in a sermon. He says about the importance of the sermon conclusion that "some keen craftsmen prepare the conclusion first." Also, he discusses the various kinds of conclusion and stresses using the various kinds of conclusion in the sermon.

James Braga wrote *How to Prepare Bible Messages*. He provides preachers with logical, step-by-step guidance to preparing and delivering effective sermons. Each

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons*, 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> William. Edwin. Sangster, *The Craft of Sermon* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), 139.

chapter thoroughly defines and describes each critical component of a sermon, from the introduction to illustration and the conclusion. Braga provides a definition of the conclusion and suggests using the various forms of the conclusion: Recapitulation, Illustration, Application, A Quotation of the Text Itself, The Quotation of Another Scripture, Poem, Hymn, and Exhortation. Also, he provides the core principles for the preparation of the conclusion.

# THE SERMON CONCLUSION

# The Definition of the Sermon Conclusion

It has to be understood in advance what the term *conclusion* means before defining a sermon's conclusion. A conclusion is "the end" or "last part," which is reached after considering evidence, arguments or a premise.<sup>29</sup> According to this definition of a conclusion, the sermon conclusion can be defined just as the finishing part of the sermon. But the term *sermon conclusion* means more than that. Before defining *sermon conclusion*, it will be helpful to examine various opinions from scholars.

Haddon W. Robinson explains a sermon's conclusion through the relationship between a preacher and a listener as the following:

You should conclude, and the conclusion should produce a feeling of finality. Like an able lawyer, a minister asks for a verdict. Your congregation should see your idea entire and complete, and they should know and feel what God's truth demands of them. Directly or indirectly, the conclusion answers the question, "So what? What difference does this make?"

D. M. Lloyd-Jones attributes authority to the sermon conclusion. The main points

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Victoria Neufeldt and David Bernard Guralnik, *Webster's New World Dictionary of American English* (New York: Webster's New World, 1988), 289.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 176.

of the sermon must lead to the highlight of the sermon, the conclusion. Lloyd-Jones says,

You do not say the same things repeatedly. You are aiming at the ultimate conclusion. That is why you need the point of an argument, and development of statement in sermon preparation. This is a very serious issue. You must end it at its peak. Make everything lead to the sermon conclusion so that the wonderful truth becomes evident. Then, let your listeners go home with it.<sup>31</sup>

Andrew Watterson Blackwood states that "in any piece of writing or speaking nothing else bulks so large as the beginning and the end. By the conclusion we mean the last part of a sermon, the part that embodies the purpose." Jangbook Jung says, "The last 1 to 2 minutes of the sermon is the final chance for the listener to listen, and as for the preacher, it is the last moment to show what his main theme is. Therefore, the sermon conclusion is the moment of accomplishing the goal." Anryun Kwahk declares, "Sermon conclusion is an answer for 'How does this message relate to me?" <sup>34</sup>

Concluding from various scholars' opinions, the sermon conclusion is the finishing part of the sermon, in which a preacher should be able to summarize the main points and show the purpose of preaching. Through the sermon conclusion, a preacher not only has to suggest answers for the questions asked, but also has to lead his listeners to make spiritual decisions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Ouoted in Kundoo Jung, *Homiletics of Lloyd-Jones* (Seoul: Jeshurun, 1999), 19-20.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 32}$  Andrew Watterson Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), 162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction* (Seoul: Church Communication Research, 1992), 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Anryun Kwahk, *Homiletics* (Seoul: Korean Christianity, 1993), 107-108.

# The Importance of the Sermon Conclusion

A sermon that starts with a gripping introduction should end with an even more powerful conclusion.<sup>35</sup> Bryan Chapell affirms that "listeners are more likely to remember a conclusion than any other portion of a message."<sup>36</sup> The sermon component retention hierarchy that he surveyed included concluding material, introductory material, illustrations (particularly of the conclusion and/or introduction), specific applications (particularly if the listener strongly disagrees or agrees), basic idea of the message, an interesting thought in the message, a main-point statement, and an expositional concept.<sup>37</sup>

According to this research, the sermon conclusion makes a bigger impression than any other sermon part. Because the last few words of a sermon leave a trailing note in the listener's heart, and lead listeners to spiritual decisions about their lives, preachers have to work on every sentence of the sermon conclusion as an artist does his best when he finishes his piece.<sup>38</sup>

Most students of preaching agree that the conclusion is the most-likely-to-beneglected aspect of proclamation. However, just as an athlete needs to finish strong at the
end of a race or game, the preacher must be at his best in the closing minutes.<sup>39</sup>
Introduction, exegesis, and sermon body are all marching to the sermon conclusion. That

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, ed. J. B. Weather-spoon (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 253.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 37}$  Bryan Chapell, Using Illustrations to Preach with Power (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 151-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Soongil Heo, *Reformed Preaching* (Seoul: Christian Publishing Ministry, 1996), 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> John MacArthur, *Rediscovery Expository Preaching* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1992), 251-52.

is why the sermon conclusion has to be planned carefully. Also, the conclusion has to have enough substance to be a significant part of the whole and occupy enough time for the listeners to realize that something important is being asked of them in these closing moments of the preaching of the Word of God.<sup>40</sup> If one were to graph the conceptual and emotional intensity of a well-constructed sermon, the results would usually look like figure 2.1.<sup>41</sup>

At the moment of conclusion, preachers need to pay attention to the response of the congregation. The main goal of the sermon conclusion is not teaching, but encouraging and building up. 42



Figure 2.2 Sermon Intensity Graph

Note overall upward progression of the entire message.

Preachers have to deliver an unforgettable, simple, and impressive message, and listeners have to keep it in their mind when they leave. When it works well, listeners can

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Samuel T. Logan, *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century* (Phillipsburg, NY: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986), 295.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Chapell, Christ Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon, 254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Sunggu Jung, *Reformed Homiletics* (Seoul: Chon-Shin Press, 1996), 635.

remember the sermon conclusion very easily. A sermon conclusion has a wonderful power which lets listeners act on what they learned.<sup>43</sup> It is a tragedy that this important part of the sermon is not prepared perfectly because of a preacher's lack of interest and preparation, since a sermon without a well-prepared conclusion has little impact on a listener's life.

As an attractive introduction leads people to a sermon, an effective conclusion delivers main points and lets people leave with a mission.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the sermon conclusion is the most important moment for a pastor to lead his people to make spiritual decisions according to his spoken words.

## The Purpose of the Sermon Conclusion

G. Campbell Morgan says that "a conclusion must conclude. And in order to conclude well it must include. In order to conclude perfectly, it must also preclude." To do this well, it must include what was previously said and preclude the possibility that that the implications and the consequences of the message will escape listeners. <sup>46</sup>

Of all the aspects of the conclusion, its purpose is the most neglected in the writing of preachers. Yet one will hardly know where to start if there is not a reason behind the effort. There is purpose behind the homiletic device known as the conclusion. Often the purpose is simple, other times more complex.

<sup>45</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, *Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976), 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Reg Grant and John Reed, *The Power Sermon: Countdown to Quality Messages for Maximum Impact* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 93.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Chapell, Christ Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon, 254.

#### Conclude the Sermon

This would seem at first to be almost too simple a purpose to consider if it were not for the fact that so many find such difficulty in doing just this thing. Morgan says, "When we are concluding we are concluding." The conclusion is the device which helps the preacher exit from his task of preaching the word. William E. Sangster admonishes,

Having come to the end, stop. Do not cruise about looking for a spot to land, like some weary swimmer coming in from the sea and splashing about until he can find a shelving beach up which to walk. Come right in, and land at once. If the last phrase can have some quality of crisp memorableness, all the better, but do not grope even for that. Let your sermon have the quality that Charles Wesley coveted for his whole life: let the work and the course end together. 48

Without a conclusion, the preacher must depend upon the inspiration of the moment or upon the habits of the past. Both of these methods will fail. If the inspiration is not there, which will be true more times than not, the sermon will flounder and stumble to a conclusion. When the preacher depends upon habit, the lack of variety will quickly cause him to lose the attention of his audience. The only device which ensures this will not happen is an effective, well-planned sermon conclusion. It will bring the sermon to an effective close. 49

### Leave the Central Idea

The second purpose of a conclusion is to leave the central idea of the sermon on the mind of the listeners. After preaching a passage of Scripture and perhaps sharing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Morgan, 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> William E. Sangster, *The Craft of Sermon Construction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 150.

<sup>49</sup> Kwahk, Homiletics, 150.

several ideas, the preacher must bring all of his thoughts together so that when his listeners leave, they will leave with one central thought in mind. He accomplishes this through a well-planned, effective conclusion. John E. Baird says, "The conclusion should round out the thought and make the speech seem finished. It is never merely a tail attached to the last main-head; it should conclude the speech as a whole. It should leave the central idea fresh in the minds of the audience."

In other words, preachers must make the last sentences clear in order to highlight the main points of the sermon so that the people who heard the sermon can remember what they heard.<sup>51</sup> Robert Dabney well stated that "the separate branches of argument are the parallel rays of the sun of truth; the conclusion is the lens which refracts them into one burning focus."<sup>52</sup>

## Carry Out the Aim

Every sermon has a special goal which the preacher wants it to accomplish. To complete that goal and to accomplish it is one purpose of the sermon conclusion. <sup>53</sup>

Therefore, before the sermon is even put together, the preacher should have a clearly defined goal before him. For a biblical preacher, this goal is usually a reflection of the text before him. However, on special Sundays, such as Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving, the goal may be a result of the generally expected teaching for that day. On

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> John E. Baird, *Preparing for Platform and Pulpit* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1968), 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Jinhwan Han, *The Glory of Preacher* (Seoul: The Word of Life, 2005), 303.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Robert Lewis Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric: Or, A Course of Lectures on Preaching* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Jung, *The Dictionary of Homiletics*, 931.

Easter, a pastor may have for a goal "praising the resurrected Lord" and, as a result of that goal, choose an appropriate Scripture. Regardless, the conclusion will clearly reflect the stated goal of the message. Hearers should be able, by listening to the conclusion, to discern what the preacher's goals were even before the sermon was put together.

White believes that a failure in this area is the major reason for weak conclusions: "We have no strong conclusion because we had no clearly defined aim; it is impossible therefore for us to arrive with any flourish or finality." The solution, of course, is to have a clear goal beforehand and then review a conclusion so that it clearly reflects this goal. Therefore, at the sermon conclusion a preacher has to say clearly the things which he intended. 55

#### Move the Audience to Action

The sermon is more than just a vehicle to disseminate information. It means "to cry out, herald, or exhort." Preachers, therefore, should pour out the message with passion and fervor in order to stir souls. A sermon is an encounter with God and his Word with a goal to change lives and move hearers to action. It is logical, then, that the conclusion as the final note, must effectively touch the soul so as to accomplish that task. A preacher should not permit himself to forget that from beginning to end he is out for a verdict, a commitment, a choice, and an action on the part of the hearers. Pressure on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> R. E. O. White, *A Guide to Preaching: A Practical Primer of Homiletics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 107.

 $<sup>^{55}\,</sup>$  George Edgar Sweazey, Preaching the Good News (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid.

their wills, an effort to arouse their emotional response, is definitely an integral part of the conclusion. No preacher should ever apologize for endeavoring to feelingly move his hearers to action as he closes his sermon.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, the sermon conclusion is the part for making new decisions and encouraging the listeners to change their lives.<sup>59</sup> Preachers have to make a connection clearly between the sermon and the conclusion<sup>60</sup>, so that people can take off the old life and can be fully armed with the word of truth.<sup>61</sup> Having expounded the text, the conclusion will tell the hearers what their appropriate response should be. In an evangelistic sermon, this will often include the invitation to decision.

# Apply the Text

This is closely connected with the preceding purpose. The hearers have a desire to know how the text just proclaimed can be applied in everyday life. The question is whether Scripture is unrelated to modern man, or vitally relevant today. The conclusion should convince the hearer that the text is vitally relevant. Ralph L. Lewis says, "In our day application too often tends to be minimized by indefiniteness and impersonal generalities. Too many sermons seem to lack personal application, specific instances, and practical suggestions for the individual. Too often the congregation leaves the church with one big question: 'How.'"62

<sup>59</sup> Sunggu Jung, *Reformed Homiletics* (Seoul: Chong Shin University, 1996), 635.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Jones, 162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Jooyeong Lee, *Today's Homiletics* (Seoul: Sungkwang, 1993), 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Han, 304.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ralph L. Lewis, *Persuasive Preaching Today* (Wilmore, KY: Asbury Theological Seminary,

It is also essential to realize that the average hearer will not automatically make the right application. Having spent the week laboring over a text, the preacher sees the application with clarity. However, the hearer, who perhaps even comes to church with thoughts completely elsewhere, must be given the application in clear and simple language. The conclusion must do this.

#### **SUMMARY**

The Bible illustrates that an effective conclusion makes an effective sermon. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses illustrations with fresh picture language, and then he draws spiritual decisions from listeners. Peter is another example of using good sermon conclusions. Peter wanted his listeners to repent, be saved, and have faith. He always strongly orders spiritual decision and repentance in the last part of the sermon. Not only Peter, but also Paul delivers strong messages in the last part of the sermon. In order to make changes within the listener's life, Paul shares his testimonies, quotes the Old Testament, and finishes with strong encouragement.

What is the sermon conclusion? Why is the sermon conclusion so important in sermon preparation? What is the goal of the sermon conclusion? What is the biblical basis for it? This chapter focused on trying to get answers for those questions. The sermon conclusion can be defined as the finishing part of the sermon; it summarizes the main points of the sermon so that listeners may understand the motives of the sermon; it answers the questions which are asked in the introduction, and it is the final moment to lead people to make spiritual decisions. Also, it is obvious the sermon conclusion is the

most impressive moment for listeners, as an athlete does his best right before the goal. Since the introduction and the body are marching towards the sermon conclusion, preachers must be careful when they prepare the sermon conclusion. Through the sermon conclusion, preachers let listeners make spiritual decisions. Therefore, one purpose of the sermon conclusion is to make new spiritual decisions so that listeners can have a new, changed life. The principles of making sermon conclusions will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **CHAPTER 3**

### THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SERMON CONCLUSION

In preaching, the sermon conclusion is very important, because it is the final opportunity to deliver an entire sermon effectively. That is why it requires some technical skills. These technical tools not only help a pastor avoid a poor conclusion, but also provide a foundation for a strong conclusion.

### Sermon Conclusion Should Be Prepared Well

Since the sermon conclusion contains the clear purpose of the sermon, it is effective to prepare the conclusion first, not the sermon body. In *The Mystery of Preaching*, James Black says that in planning the sermon one should begin with the conclusion. Ilion T. Jones advises, "Decide the purpose of the conclusion before getting into final sermon form." Therefore, a preacher should have a sermon conclusion in mind when he starts his sermon. A preacher has to be able to see the conclusion before organizing his thoughts. The first question a preacher should ask is, "Why do I have to preach this sermon and what is my purpose through this sermon?" The sermon conclusion has to be prepared in advance. A preacher must not finish impromptu at the pulpit and must not depend on momentary inspiration, because unprepared conclusions usually do not give any impression, passion, or power which can stir a congregation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Andrew Watterson Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976), 126-127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> David R. Breed, *Preparing to Preach* (New York: George H. Doran Co, 1911), 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The most vital and practical part of a biblical sermon is the conclusion. That is why sermon preparation starts from a well-prepared sermon conclusion, and the clear goal of the sermon is the starting point.<sup>5</sup> As the first step of a trip is to locate the destination, the first step of sermon preparation is to prepare the sermon conclusion.

When a preacher is not ready for his conclusion, he often tends to speak in platitudes: "And now, in conclusion, just let me say, that, uh in summary, I'm sure you would agree with me in saying that the apostle's words are an encouragement to us all, I'm sure, and now, well, may the Lord richly bless this to our hearts." This conclusion gives the congregation the feeling that the preacher wants to finish the sermon and is making an impromptu conclusion. This type of conclusion is indefinite and unclear and it prevents the main message from being delivered to the congregation.

Some preachers do not prepare the conclusion well and try to conclude the sermon with excuses: "Well, the old clock on the wall is a mean taskmaster this morning so let me just quickly say in conclusion that we will pick up here next time in the travels of the great apostle." This type of sermon displays to the congregation poor sermon preparation. The preacher is trying to play tricks cautiously without arousing suspicion, but he does not succeed.

Most Korean pastors love to speak the words, "I bless, I hope, and I pray" when they finish their sermons. Not only is finishing a sermon in the form of a prayer very

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Andrew Watterson Blackwood, *Preaching from the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1941), 184.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Reg Grant and John Reed, *The Power Sermon: Countdown to Quality Messages for Maximum Impact* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid.

popular in Korean pulpits, but also the listeners think that a sermon has to be finished with the phrase, "I bless." If a preacher finishes his sermon with "I bless" most people will respond with "Amen." This might be a reason Korean pastors tend to finish their sermon with a type of blessing.

However, preachers must remember that this is not a spiritual response, but habitual. A louder "Amen" response does not mean a more spiritual sermon. It is the pastor's illusion. Of course, some sermons should be finished with a blessing. But finishing all kinds of sermon with "I bless" is unwise. The pastor should be more careful about the expression he uses, because it is the last sentence in the sermon conclusion.

A preacher should have his conclusion in mind when he starts sermon preparation. If a preacher understands that the introduction, main text, and sermon body are focused on the sermon conclusion, he will never make the mistake of having a poor conclusion.<sup>8</sup>

# Sermon Conclusion from Sermon Body

The sermon conclusion has a role in delivering messages precisely, impressively, powerfully, and appealingly so that people know what the sermon means. That is why the sermon conclusion has to come from the main subject. As a matter of content, a good sermon conclusion draws from the sermon body naturally so that the body and the conclusion do not have different topics and are connected to each other logically. Some preachers have a sermon conclusion which has nothing to do with the sermon body. This

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> William Evans, *How to Prepare Sermon* (Chicaco: Moody Press, 1964), 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Dooman Jang, *How to Write an Expository Sermon* (Seoul: Jordan Press, 1992), 158.

is a mistake of having another sermon in a sermon, and it reduces the effectiveness of preached messages. The sermon conclusion should be focused on putting together what has been preached and maximizing what a preacher wants to say.

The sermon conclusion has to be connected naturally with the sermon body in style. Ilion T. Jones said that the first element of the sermon conclusion is "a proper transition or connective." When a preacher moves from body to conclusion, he needs a "bridge word" in order to connect the body and the conclusion. A conclusion without connector can be unexpected to a congregation or leave an inappropriate impression. In a preacher's notes the sermon body and conclusion should be separated clearly. Even so, a conventional phrase, such as "I want to conclude," is not recommendable. The transition can sometimes be made satisfactorily by a pause, a vocal inflection, or a change of pace. Sometimes, just a word or two, such as "and now," "so," "thus," "therefore," or "surely then," are sufficient. Jesus used "therefore" as a "bridge word" in his Sermon on the Mount.

Therefore, a preacher can have a successful conclusion if he reaches it without letting a congregation realize that he has done so, which gives the congregation spiritual determination. <sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>14</sup> "**Therefore** whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Mt 7:24)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Jones, 162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Jones, 163.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction* (Seoul: Church Communication Research, 1992), 161.

### Sermon Conclusion Achieving Personal Encounter

The conclusion should be unmistakably personal in its aim. Preaching is a personal encounter. 16 Whatever a preacher may do elsewhere, in the conclusion he must be very conscious of his hearers and must speak very directly to them. <sup>17</sup> In today's society a person tends to be absorbed by a group, but Jesus considered a person as a precious being. Even though a preacher preaches to a congregation, he always has to keep his mind on the individual. 18 It is apparent that the basic purpose of the sermon is a personal encounter with God through a proclaimed message. 19 Through the entire course of the sermon, the congregation can experience a personal encounter with God. But the preacher must remember that the sermon conclusion is his final opportunity to lead his congregation to personal encounter with God.<sup>20</sup> Preachers must realize that everyone who listens to the sermon from the pulpit has to have a moment of personal encounter with God through the sermon conclusion. To create a personal encounter, a preacher should not commit a personal attack.<sup>21</sup> For example, a preacher should not directly address the known issues, sins, and struggles of the congregation from the pulpit in his sermon conclusion. This could potentially offend some listeners and cause them to ignore the preacher's message.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, ed. J. B. Weather-spoon (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching*, 134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Jung, *Homiletics Introduction*, 161.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Andrew Watterson Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), 169.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was an outstanding personal appealer. He finished his sermons in various ways, prepared the sermon conclusion very carefully, and delivered a truthful message to his congregation's conscience and will. Because Spurgeon spoke as if he was talking to one of his friends in front of a thousand people, listeners felt that he was their personal friend talking to them.<sup>22</sup> Whatever the type of sermon is, one thing a preacher should never forget is personal tone.<sup>23</sup>

While the spirit and attitude of the preacher greatly contribute to the achievement of personal response, his diction and word choice are also important. The use of personal pronouns—especially *you*, *your*, *yours*, *we*, *us*, *our*, *ours*—gives the message a direct, warm, personal touch. A preacher should never forget to use the pronoun *you*. When a preacher says *you*, he recovers the "You and I" relationship, and this is a long-time custom among preachers. If a preacher never uses the word *you* it is not a sermon, but an essay or a teaching. Le. Adams said that a preacher should use *you* firmly and repeatedly in the conclusion.

In 1 Samuel 12, the prophet Nathan used a parable of a rich man and a poor man to David, who had Uriah killed to get Bathsheba. Even though the rich man owned many sheep and cows, he tried to take away the poor man's only sheep to feed it to a guest.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching*, 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Jay E. Adams, "The Conclusion for Application," *The Word*, October 1998, 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Henry Clifton Brown, *Steps to the Sermon; A Plan for Sermon Preparation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1963), 122.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Herbert H. Farmer, *The Servant of the Word* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Adams, "The Conclusion for Application," *The Word*, 98.

When David heard this, he became so angry and said, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!" Nathan replied, "That is you." 28

The fact that a sermon has to achieve personal encounter was highlighted by Nathan. Especially in the conclusion, listeners have to realize that the message was for them. If a preacher can do this, he has achieved his goal.

# A Strong and Powerful Conclusion

No doubt, the sermon conclusion is the most intensive part of the sermon. That is why a passionate and powerful sermon conclusion is an essential tool to pursue direct decision making or to appeal to the heart.<sup>29</sup> The matter of passion or power does not always mean the quantity of volume. Using a loud voice does not mean it is a powerful and effective sermon. Sometimes a natural, simple, quiet ending is more effective than a strong feeling of excitement.<sup>30</sup>

One natural mistake that preachers make, regarding passionate sermons, is having an excited tone. Often, the excited tone makes the preacher seem to have lost control rather than drawing empathy from the congregation.<sup>31</sup> Sometimes, the excited tone may cause psychological anxiety by stimulating the listener's mind.<sup>32</sup> The most important thing is having spiritual intensity and passion, and not just sound. A preacher

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> 2 Samuel 12:1-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Broadus, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> James Braga, *How to Prepare Bible Message: A Manual on Homiletics for Bible Students* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1969), 198-199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Jooyeong Lee, *Today's Homiletics* (Seoul: Seongkwang, 1993), 170.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

should never be ashamed of showing emotion when he appeals to the listeners to accept God. Some say that if a preacher could not encourage spiritual decisions, he would not be fit for the kingdom of God.<sup>33</sup>

A preacher must remember his faith for a strong, powerful conclusion. When he concludes, he must be full of conviction. When he is not confident in his message, he cannot expect his listeners to have faith and conviction through his sermon. A preacher's faith and conviction are not forcible, and not a matter of feelings. Preaching is a coministry between a preacher and the Holy Spirit. A sermon without the help of the Spirit is like a chiming bell or an echo. When a preacher stands firmly on prayer, his passion and power will come from the Holy Spirit, and not from his personal feelings. He will experience the meaning of Heb. 4:12.<sup>34</sup>

# A Conclusion Based on Biblical Authority

A sermon is a testimony of the word of God. Therefore, a sermon conclusion should always stand firmly on biblical authority. The phrase, "God said this" has to become the ground on which a preacher bases his conclusion. This means at the conclusion a preacher should not state his personal authority. Also, a preacher's personal opinion should not be an authority. Only the Word of God can change a person's whole personality, not the philosophy, science, or rationalism of this world. Therefore, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Handbook of Preaching* (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Jooyeong Lee, 169.

sermon conclusion has to be prepared thoroughly based on biblical authority.<sup>36</sup>

Jangbok Jeong revealed that Korean pastors seldom use the subject of a sentence, because of linguistic habits from a social hierarchy.<sup>37</sup> This was caused by Confucianism (the younger should give precedence to the elder), where it is general that the person in authority sometimes ignores the grammatical subject. This positional-order custom may make listeners think that the preacher is higher in position. Sermon conclusions emphasize application and use command sentences so that, occasionally, not using a subject in a sentence may display the preacher's authority rather than God's.

Therefore, when preachers write down a sentence for application, they have to recognize that the main agent is not themselves. If possible, preachers must use God as the subject so that the listeners may realize that the main agent of the sermon is God. Moreover, Korean pastors must use God as the subject when they finish their sermon habitually with "bless" or "pray." For example, "God wants something," "God rejoices over something," and "God bless someone" are recommendable.

## Single Conclusion

Another thing a preacher must remember is that there is only one conclusion in a sermon. Multiple conclusions may bring a burden to the listener's heart, but one conclusion can bring a better result.<sup>38</sup> If a preacher wants to lead listeners to another summit, he should start a new sermon.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction*, 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Van Cleave, 65.

The "one sermon must have one conclusion" principle is a very important element for the listener's concentration and practice. In other words, since the most emphasized part of the sermon is application, only the conclusion's main lesson has to be remembered.<sup>39</sup> For example, it takes the same amount of time to reach a conclusion as it does to aim a missile. So the conclusion is like launching a nuclear missile at the listener's mind and emotions.<sup>40</sup>

### Positive Conclusion

Occasionally, a preacher will apply "shock treatment" to his audience by using threats in his conclusion. If this method was ever effective and valid, it is seldom useful today.<sup>41</sup> Even though the purpose of the sermon is to realize personal sins, a preacher must finish the sermon with a hopeful message.<sup>42</sup>

In Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, he proclaimed, "You are the one who killed Jesus Christ at the cross." However, his sermon was a message of hope that concluded with the invitation of salvation. It is an unsuccessful sermon if a preacher leaves his listeners depressed, hopeless, helpless, and broken. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> William Black, *How to Prepare an Expository Sermon* (Seoul: Scripture Union, 2000), 146.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 180-181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Brown, 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 257.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> David L. Larsen, *The Anatomy of Preaching: Identifying the Issues in Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), 129.

pastor should remember that the gospel is the Good News. Also, the conclusion should challenge and lift the heart. 45

Donald E. Demaray rightly asserts, "No man has a right so to preach as to send his hearers away on flat tires. Every discouraging sermon is a wicked sermon. . . . A discouraged man is not an asset but a liability." Moreover, a preacher should not speak a message of warning at the conclusion. Hearers usually respond better to affirmative pleas and exhortations than to threats and warnings. A preacher always tries to lift the heart of not only the weakest men but also the most wicked men in the church, so that they may receive the message of hope: "You can do it." These messages that a preacher uses can change lives. When people leave the church, they will go with the challenge and expectation of new life. 49

### The Climax of the Sermon

A sermon conclusion should be the summit of a sermon. A climax can be used while a preacher develops the sermon body, but the final and strongest climax must be placed at the conclusion. Bryan Chapell says that "the preacher has reached the conclusion's climax when a preacher seems to have raised the emotions, hammered home the point of a message, and called hearers to action." However, a preacher must

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Chapell, 258.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Donald E. Demaray, An Introduction to Homiletics (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978), 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Broadus, 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Brown, Jr., Clinard and Northcutt, 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermon*, 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Chapell, 258.

remember that using high-pitched tones or shouting is not always the best way. Most preachers make this mistake, because they feel a pressure to lead people towards spiritual decision.

As mentioned earlier, a calm and serious attitude can maximize the effectiveness of the sermon. Moreover, the content of the sermon is a more important element than using a loud voice.<sup>51</sup> The sermon moves toward the climax. A preacher finishes his sermon at the conclusion, which is the climax of the sermon, after building up emotion and spirit. Also, at the emotional climax, the sermon should end. After that, there is a risk of spoiling the climax.<sup>52</sup>

## **Definite Conclusion**

Definition is another thing a preacher has to pay attention to. It is a misfortune among misfortunes if the listeners cannot understand the preacher's exact words. The definition has to come out obviously at the conclusion. If a preacher has one moment to deliver the main idea of the sermon clearly, this moment would be during the sermon's conclusion.<sup>53</sup> The conclusion is the most important part, when a preacher requests the listeners' application through spiritual decision. Even though he deals with complicated doctrinal contents, the conclusion should always be definite. Great preachers teach listeners how to apply the message correctly.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction*, 162.

 $<sup>^{52}\,</sup>$  J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Broadus, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Van Cleave, 65.

The definite conclusion has to be prepared in the study, and not at the pulpit. If a preacher depends on instant inspiration, not only will he not have a clear goal, but his conclusion will also be very formal and conventional.<sup>55</sup> For example, "I want you to have lots of blessings from God through this message." This general and dubious sentence can never appeal to listeners.<sup>56</sup>

Particularly, the last sentence of the conclusion should be prepared perfectly with sufficient time,<sup>57</sup> because it is the final moment of the sermon, and can affect the listener's heart. A preacher must understand his goal when he stands up at the pulpit, delivering it with understandable language. If the preacher knows this and has a definite conclusion, he will have strong conviction through his entire sermon and will enjoy preaching.<sup>58</sup>

### Conclusion without Excuse

At the most powerful and important moment, lack of preparation for a sermon conclusion leads to the mistake of finishing a sermon with excuses under the disguise of modesty. Surprisingly, even many skilled preachers keep making poor excuses at the pulpit.

Even one of the greatest preachers, Charles H. Spurgeon, said in his sermons that he was not able to preach as effectively as he wanted.<sup>59</sup> This happens often among many

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Broadus, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Black, 147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Chapell, 259.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Broadus, 126-127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Jooyeong Lee, 169-170.

other skilled preachers. Preachers should never make excuses in the conclusion, such as, "Thank you for listening to this poorly prepared sermon" or "I have not prepared it well." It makes listeners feel deceived. But more than that, excuses in the conclusion lower the sermon from God's word to man's word. Preaching is the word of God for humanity, not the word of humanity regarding God. If a preacher makes excuses for his sermon, it is the same as admitting his sermon was his word, not God's.

Therefore, a preacher should not only have confidence in his holy ministry, which delivers God's word to listeners, but also keep in his mind that he must always prepare completely so as not to make an excuse at the conclusion.

## Do Not Say the Word "Conclusion"

It is better for a preacher not to make it clear that a sermon is at the conclusion. <sup>61</sup> To show transition from body to conclusion, using the phrase, "I want to conclude" or "I want to say in conclusion" is not effective. If a preacher says, "Finally, lastly, or conclusively," it is like saying, "Do not look at me; look at your watch." <sup>62</sup> Of course, if the listeners are not paying any attention to a preacher, giving them a notice of the last moment may work as a desperate effort for those who have already given up and closed their eyes. <sup>63</sup>

But sometimes even though preachers have already said "lastly or I will

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Dooman Jang, 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Jerry Vines, *A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 144; Demaray, *An Introduction to Homiletics*, 100; and Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Chapell, 260.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

conclude," some might go back to the main body or say "I will conclude" again. If this happens, the listeners become disappointed and lose their concentration. R. E. O. White warns about this: "An apostle may say 'Finally, brethren...' and go on for two more chapters: but not you. A troubled English vicar asked a farm-laborer why he came to church only when the assistant preached. 'Well sir,' said the laborer, 'young Mr. Smith,' he says 'in conclusion' and he does conclude. But you say 'lastly' and you do last." This illustration shows again that if a preacher says, "lastly," he has to finish the sermon right there.

Not only the direct mention of the word "conclusion," but also actions from a preacher can give listeners a hint for the conclusion. Richard Ramesh said, "Do not give false cues." This means to give a suggestion through a preacher's gesture without saying directly, "conclusion." For example, some preachers close their Bible long before they finish their sermon. The audience sees this merciful gesture and wonders why the preacher is still going strong five minutes later. Looking at a clock unconsciously is another cue. The preacher has to be discreet so as not to distract listeners' attention by picking up a hymnal, looking at a clock, or any kind of action leading listeners' attention to time or letting them know the preacher is nervous.

Preachers must think about what kinds of signals they send. Not only the signals given by saying, "I will conclude," but also the signals given by acting unconsciously or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> White, 111.

 $<sup>^{65}</sup>$  Ramesh Richard, Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons*, 173.

habitually must be improved. Any signals indicating that it is the time of conclusion may cause the listeners' heart to be distracted. Haddon W. Robinson says that "in a well-planned sermon, conclusions should conclude without announcing their appearance." <sup>68</sup>

### Concise Conclusion

The sermon conclusion has an important role in the sermon. But this does not mean the conclusion has to always be long. John Broadus warns that the biggest mistake in a sermon is to make the conclusion long.<sup>69</sup> Some preachers keep on preaching while acting as if they are going to conclude soon, because they are too passionate. Listeners naturally expect the sermon to end as the sermon gets closer to the end. Even though preachers want to keep on preaching, listeners do not have the composure to wait.<sup>70</sup> Preachers must remember that their conclusions are less effective when extended.<sup>71</sup>

The conclusion should be as short as 5 percent or 10 percent of the sermon. If a sermon is thirty minutes long, the conclusion would be one and a half minutes to three minutes.<sup>72</sup> The conclusion should be direct and concise and not longer than five minutes. The last sixty seconds are typically the most dynamic moments in excellent sermons.<sup>73</sup> Through the last couple sentences, a preacher delivers to the listeners the main idea of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 181.

 $<sup>^{69}\,</sup>$  John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, ed. J. B. Weather-spoon (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Van Cleave, 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Grant and Reed, 322.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Chapell, 254.

sermon, making the sermon clearer.<sup>74</sup>

A long conclusion often means a sermon was not prepared thoroughly. If a conclusion is two or three paragraphs, it is too long. One paragraph is the most effective. Concluding summaries should sound like hammer strokes, not sonatas. Therefore preachers must make the conclusion powerful, simple, and clear rather than rhetorical and beautiful, because in the conclusion, the purpose of the sermon has to be imparted.

## When to Write the Conclusion

It has already been mentioned that the sermon conclusion has to be in a preacher's mind when he starts preparing his sermon. Homiletics experts have different opinions on the best time for writing the sermon conclusion. Chapell explains that there are two ideas of when to write the sermon conclusion. Idealists argue that the conclusion to a sermon should be the first component written so that the sermon has a clear and definite destination while it is being prepared. Realists want the conclusion prepared after the sermon has taken shape so that it definitely reflects the specifics of the developed message.<sup>78</sup>

However, in the real field, a situation can occur which is quite different from what homiletics experts assert. After closing a sermon preparation, sometimes a preacher

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Braga, 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Chapell, 259.

is concerned, because he does not have a sermon conclusion yet, but sometimes he can have a bright idea about the sermon conclusion while he is preparing his sermon. One thing a preacher has to keep in his mind is that the sermon conclusion is not only the last part of the sermon which he must deliver clearly, but also the summit of the sermon during which he must lead his people to make a spiritual decision. That is why a preacher must have an outline of his sermon before he writes down the sermon text. A prepared conclusion performs the role of a compass, because it leads a sermon in the right direction.

The best way of writing the sermon conclusion is to have a rough draft of a conclusion before writing the sermon text. Then while writing down the sermon body concretely, the sermon conclusion can be modified to deliver the content of the sermon body more clearly. This does not mean that the writing of the sermon conclusion should take a limited amount of time like the delivery of the conclusion, but it means that the entire process of writing the sermon should be focused on the conclusion. Writing the sermon conclusion is an important element which demands more time and effort than writing the other contents of the sermon. David Larsen recommends that his students spend two-thirds of their time on the last one-third of a message. Whether they agree with Larsen or not, preachers have to admit that it should take more time to write the conclusion than any other part of the sermon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> David L. Larsen, *Anatomy of Preaching: Identifying the Issues in Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1989), 121.

#### SUMMARY

It is very important to understand basic principles before trying to do something. There are some considerable principles in writing the sermon conclusion. The sermon conclusion cannot come out simply from a well-written sermon body. The sermon conclusion is not merely the final part of a sermon, but an important moment of delivering the main points of the sermon so that a preacher can draw a spiritual decision from his listeners.

That is why the conclusion has to be prepared at the time the text is selected and it requires more effort than preparing the sermon body. The sermon conclusion always has to focus on the main proposition, which the main body of the sermon discusses and which also has to completely depend on the authority of the Bible to encourage and challenge listeners. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the sermon conclusion, there should be only one conclusion, and it should be simple, clear, and powerfully delivered, so that it becomes the highlight of the sermon. In the conclusion, preachers must not excuse or defend their sermons or make some kind of gesture that will cause listeners to lose their expectation and concentration.

Before writing the whole sermon text, a preacher must compose a draft of the conclusion, write a sermon body based on a draft, then modify and compose the draft of the conclusion in clear sentences, by which the preacher can deliver the sermon body clearly. Therefore, the entire process of making a sermon is focused upon writing the conclusion. In the next chapter, various detailed types of conclusions will be discussed.

### **CHAPTER 4**

## **VARIOUS FORMS OF CONCLUSIONS**

Most preachers already knew that various types of conclusions can be used in their sermons.<sup>1</sup> However, it is so hard to meet preachers who use the various types of conclusions in preaching. The ineffectiveness of a preacher's closing words may spring from a lack of variety.<sup>2</sup> Actually, if the audience encounters the same type of conclusions every Sunday morning, their expectation might naturally decrease.

The first reason that preachers do not use the various types of conclusions is lack of awareness. A preacher has tried a certain way of ending a sermon, and has found it effective. So he has settled down to this one mode.<sup>3</sup>

Another reason is that a preacher does not prepare his sermon conclusion well. If the preacher does not prepare his sermon conclusion well, having no time and concluding his sermon in the pulpit impromptu, causes him to repeat the same types of conclusions. Using various types of conclusions in sermons will be a powerful tool to improve the effectiveness of the sermon. The writer, therefore, wants to propose various types of conclusions, which can provide preachers practical benefits with their examples through this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Henry Clifton Brown, *Steps to the Sermon: A Plan for Sermon Preparation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1963), 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Andrew Watterson Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# Recapitulation

Recapitulation is a basic form of sermon conclusion. Blackwood states, "Another old-time way of ending a sermon calls for recapitulation. When a man does not know how else to round out a message, he may close with summary." This type simply repeats for the hearer the main points of the message. This is normally called for in argumentative sermons, 5 as well as instructive sermons.

Recapitulation takes place when a preacher restates his main headings to make more decisive his arguments, or make clearer the demonstration of the proposition.<sup>7</sup> If the preacher has good divisions in his sermon, a pleasing effect will be produced on the audience as he restates them at the close of his discourse.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the preacher uses recapitulation closely after repeating issues addressed in the introduction, and then he states the main points that are addressed in the body once more. This helps the audience to remember the sermon very well. Also, it gives the audience who loves to take notes an advantage. <sup>9</sup>

Particularly, when a preacher uses recapitulation for a conclusion, it is better to use different wording to avoid monotony rather than to use repeated expression. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons*, 164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> W. E. Sangster, *The Craft of Sermon* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), 141.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Donald E. Demaray, An Introduction to Homiletics (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978), 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Harold Elrin Knott, *How to Prepare an Expository Sermon* (Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Pub. Co, 1930), 94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction* (Seoul: Church Communication Research, 1992), 164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Handbook of Preaching* (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 67.

Recapitulation is not merely an unnecessary repetition of the main division.<sup>11</sup> It is a remphasis of the impression given during the message, in order to reveal the one main truth of the sermon.<sup>12</sup> The wise preachers do not generally state this recapitulation in the very words of the main divisions, but use terse, pointed statements to express each one of these main ideas.<sup>13</sup>

So if any sermon calls for a recapitulation, the preacher must obey that call, and then follow with something that will lead the hearer to act. One should never end with a summary looking back.<sup>14</sup> It should not be a second preaching of the sermon.<sup>15</sup> The summary type of conclusion may be used in several ways.<sup>16</sup> First, the summary may be a reiteration or a re-emphasis of the Scripture text. Second, the summary may stress the title again by way of definition, elaboration, or application. Third, the most frequent use of the summary is the recapitulation of the major body points. Fourth, the summary is a renewed emphasis of the thesis and specific objective.

Moonhoon Kim, the senior pastor of Podowon Presbyterian Church, preaches four major body points: First, Noah was a perfect person in his time. Second, he was the most righteous person. Third, he always walked with God. Fourth, he observed the orders

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 196-197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> James Braga, *How to Prepare Bible Message: A Manual on Homiletics for Bible students* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1969), 196.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Blackwood. *The Preparation of Sermons*, 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Brown, 124-125.

of God—under the title of a perfect person in the time (Gn 6:1-12).<sup>17</sup> Finally, he closes by summarizing his sermon as follows:

Noah was a perfect man at that time. He was not following the world. He gave up the success, health, fame, and advancement that people sought. He thought he was blessed to walk with God. That is why the Bible recorded him as a righteous and perfect man. We call this era sinful, as the time of Noah was. If, like Noah, you do not follow this world, I bless you to live the life of a perfect man in this world by walking with God. <sup>18</sup>

#### Illustration

The use of illustrations in preaching has had a long and honorable record in the history of the Church. The great preachers of the fourth and fifth centuries, like Chrysostom, Augustine and Ambrose, used them. And the use of illustration was popular in the midst of the twentieth century. Today, a popular and effective type of conclusion is the use of a good illustration. The ideas or truths of a sermon can sometimes be brought to a climax most effectively by the use of a powerful or apt illustration. This is especially the case when the illustration itself is a summation of the main truth of the message. Harold Elrin Knott says that the merits of using illustration in conclusions are as follows:

It makes it easy for one to leave the formal character involved in the development and with complete abandon, look into the faces of the people and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Moonhun Kim, *The Blessing of the Person Who Is Used by God* (Seoul: Yeyoung Communication, 2005), 94-111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 237

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Brown, 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Braga, 167.

let them see how profoundly he believes what he is saying. It also stimulates interest at that point in the sermon where it is most important, that one should have the undivided attention of the people. If he is making an appeal, it makes the appeal easy, for he knows just exactly what he concludes his illustration. It also makes certain that his message will be finished with the people interested.<sup>22</sup>

However, a preacher should only use illustration as a conclusion when necessary. Unless a preacher uses care and skill, the illustration may call attention to itself or to him.<sup>23</sup> Also, if not done properly, or if the illustration does not do exactly what the preacher wishes it to do, or if it does not have precisely the same tone and warmth that is appropriate to the mood he has established, it will detract rather than help.<sup>24</sup>

Haddon W. Robinson advises that using illustration in conclusion is as follows: "The illustration must hit the bull's-eye so that the listeners grasp its meaning in a flash without explanation. When you have offered the illustration, stop. The illustration should be so transparent that only a sentence or two need to be added. It has even more power when the illustration needs no explanation at all."<sup>25</sup>

Preachers who want to use an illustration as a conclusion must learn all the principles of storytelling first, and then they need to search for the most suitable illustration for the purpose of the conclusion. Unless the illustration delivers the main idea of the sermon to the audience, it can cause a negative effect, which does allow the conclusion to perform its role. Pastor Sunhee Gwahk finished his sermon titled, "God in Secret" (Mt 6:5-8; 16-18), with the following moving illustration:

<sup>23</sup> Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons*, 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Knott, 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Preaching with Purpose* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 176-177.

In Scotland, there was a rich man, but he was a miser. How cheap was he? He never gave his four sons money, which caused them to dislike him. They called him stingy, a penny pincher, and a cheapskate. On the day of his death, his sons said, while cleaning up his dead body: "Poor father, who did not eat or spend." They found a will that stated, "All of my property will belong to George Muller." The four sons went to the orphanage with the will, and they found an amazing truth. Their father had been supporting the orphanage for his entire life, despite his sons' criticism. At the final moment of his life, he donated everything that he owned. Do not tell anyone! Why should we do something in secret? Do you want or count your name to be praised for doing something small? Do not hurry. A man reaps what he sows. Do not worry. Jesus said, "If you offer even a cup of water, you will never lose your prize." Let's do something good in secret and quietness. Jesus will pay you back abundantly in a secret way.

#### Exhortation

Exhortation takes the form of a challenge.<sup>27</sup> It is an attempt by the preacher to challenge his hearers to perform the action specified by the text. Exhortation is generally for believers in Christ. It is an encouragement or warning to them to bring their behavior in line with God's word. The exhortation may be about devotion to God, loyalty to the Lord, repentance for a special sin, and other topics.<sup>28</sup>

Many preachers like to use exhortation for their sermon conclusions. When a preacher concludes his sermon with exhortation, he has to speak to his audience as a group or a person. In this case, if the preacher looks at his audience and exhorts them directly after memorizing his manuscript, the effect of the sermon will be improved greatly. Exhortation should follow a review of the central proposition and main points. This is not new material, but a general review of specific applications made earlier in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Sunhee Gwahk, *The Trouble of Moses* (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1992), 68.

 $<sup>^{27}\,</sup>$  J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Dooman Jang, *How to Write an Expository Sermon* (Seoul: Jordan Press, 1992), 160.

message.<sup>29</sup>

The Bible gives examples of conclusions with exhortation. Peter's sermon is the best model for the conclusion as exhortation. On the day of Pentecost, to the people who felt a guilty conscience Peter said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Then, he finished his sermon by demanding repentance and determination: "Be saved from this perverse generation" (Acts 2:38-40). In this way, the conclusion of Peter's preaching is exhortation to urge the audience to make decision regarding their faith.

Also, the apostle Paul challenged young Timothy: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and our season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Ti 4:1-2).

Seotaek Kim, who is the senior pastor of Daegu Dongbu Presbyterian Church, finished his sermon titled, "The Circumcision of Gilgal" (Jos 5:1-15), with the following exhortation:

Then, how can we follow the steps of Jesus Christ? We have to let the Word of God lead us. More than anything, growing up in faith has to be the priority of our lives. Also, no matter how important it is, you should not do it with ambition or avarice. At this time, we have to take our shoes off. I am only a servant of God and have to make up my mind to do whatever the Lord wants me to do. We have to go only when he tells us to go and we have to fight only when he says to fight. If we do that, we can conquer the land of Canaan easier. <sup>30</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Reg Grant and John Reed, *The Power Sermon: Countdown to Quality Messages for Maximum Impact* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Seotaek Kim, Exposition of the Book of Joshua (Seoul: Christian Literature Press, 2009), 134-135.

### **Application**

Application in a sermon means the pointed relation of the truth newly expressed to the lives of the people immediately in front of the preacher. Application usually includes practical counsel in reference to some opportunity, duty, or challenge that emerges from the truth of the sermon. The application concentrates on the conclusion. This concluding application requires, even more than the other parts of the discourse, that the preacher should have strong faith, warm religious experience, and intense earnestness. At the end of his sermon, a preacher expects that his hearers will take the actions they heard about, rather than understanding the main ideas. The final purpose of the sermon should be more than to effectively communicate the truth of the word of God. The greatest interest of preachers should be how the truth of the word can be applied concretely and practically to the hearers.

Preachers, therefore, have to tell how the message should be applied in the lives of the hearers. In this context, the application should be practical and concrete. If the preacher does not give practical and concrete application to the hearers, his preaching will merely be used to convey knowledge. In the conclusion, if the preacher suggests a practical and concrete application to hearers, good testimonies will result through the lives of the hearers in response to the preaching.<sup>34</sup>

Pastor Hanhum Ohk shows an example of an application conclusion which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Sangster, 142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, ed. J. B. Weather-spoon (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Dongwon Lee, *The Preaching That Awakens the Audience* (Seoul: Jordan Press, 1991), 213.

requests special deeds in his sermon conclusion. In his sermon titled, "The Servant of Jesus Christ, Paul" (Ro 1:1-7), he asked his listeners to make an application of the proclaimed word as follows:

Before you close your Bible, there is one more thing we have to do: take a look at verse one. The Bible says, "Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ", but is only Paul a servant of Jesus? Now, we found that all of us are servants of Jesus Christ. Then, let us write down our names next to Paul's. "Servant of Jesus Christ, Hanhum Ohk," is written in my Bible; which is glorious. Another thing we must remember is found in verse 6, "You also are called as a servant of Jesus Christ." Is not the pronoun "You," vague? Why don't you write down your name instead of the pronoun you?<sup>35</sup>

# Invitation or Direct Appeal

One of the characteristics of the apostles' and prophets' sermons is to conclude their sermons as an appeal. Invitation is needed in contemporary preaching. A preacher, in his message, can present a need for salvation and a method of response. In the conclusion, a most effective approach is to plead for action on the basis of the message. It calls the congregation to do something about the sermon, privately and quietly or publicly and overtly. On the property of the message of the message of the message.

In an evangelistic-type sermon, the lost men are called to repent and turn to Jesus. Of course, this form is not limited to evangelistic preaching. It can be made for Christians to unite with the church, or for young people to respond to God's call for individuals to be set apart in his service.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Baumann, 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Hanhum Ohk, *The Wonderful Salvation That I Received* (Seoul: Duranno, 1993), 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Brown, 124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Brown, 124.

In many American churches, the direct appeal is made in the form of an invitation to confess Christ publicly or to repent of unfaithfulness and pledge oneself to faithful living.<sup>39</sup> D. L. Moody directly appealed for an immediate decision as an invitation to the inquiry room.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, D.M. Lloyd Jones rarely made an appeal at the end of his sermon. Consequently, he was told by people at the end of the service that he did not preach the Gospel, simply because he had not made an appeal.<sup>41</sup> He mentioned the use of the appeal actually came in with Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) who introduced the "anxious seat" or "new measure" which called on people to take a decision there and then.<sup>42</sup> Since then, the invitation has been used most importantly, as a method of calling for salvation decisions by many preachers who have tried to give hearers a confidence of salvation.<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, the invitation is not a tool to conclude a sermon, but it is a useful tool if the sermon has a specific goal. The invitation is a logical conclusion which has evangelical merit. A sermon that concludes with an appealing provides information about the doctrine of salvation first, suggesting the gospel of forgiveness and eternal life, then finishes with an appeal which asks for determination.<sup>44</sup>

Invitation has been used in various ways. A simple and direct invitation in which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Broadus, 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Van Cleave, 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> D. Martyn-Lloyed Jones , *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid, 270

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Haddon W. Robinson et al., *The Sermon That Leads Listeners to Get Confidence*, trans. Jinwoo Kim (Seoul: Torchlight Press 1995), 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> James W. Cox, *Preaching* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985), 174.

one comes and kneels in prayer in the front of the sanctuary during the playing of hymns is often very effective. Sometimes, after dismissing the congregation, a preacher may use the invitation as an "after meeting" for the people who accepted the call from the altar. He may explain how to devote one's life as a Christian, then leads them to make a spiritual decision.

Some people who respond to an invitation are asked to kneel down and pray. Some are asked to make a confession that Jesus is Lord.<sup>45</sup> The invitations mentioned above are often used after the preaching at Thomas Road Baptist Church, which the writer is attending now.

However, D. M. Lloyd Jones points out the problems of the invitation. First, the invitation that puts too much direct pressure on the congregation is dangerous because in the end it may produce insincere response by the man who "comes forward," which is motivated not so much by the Truth itself, but, perhaps, by the personality of the preacher, or some vague general fear, or some other kind of psychological influence. Second, this method surely carries in it the implication that sinners have an inherent power of decision and of self-conversion. Third, there is an implication in the invitation that the preacher somehow is in a position to manipulate the Holy Spirit and His work.<sup>46</sup>

Jones stresses that new life is solely the work of the Holy Spirit. And he points out that there was no interval between the sermon and the appeal in Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 2. He says, "Indeed Peter was not even allowed to finish his sermon. The mighty work of conviction was going on, and it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Robinson et al., *The Sermon That Leads Listeners to Get Confidence*,132-133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Lloyed Jones, 271-277.

showed itself, as it invariably does show itself.",47

What Jones points out regarding invitation is understandable. That is why most Presbyterian Church pastors do not use an invitation for their sermon conclusion. However, invitation can become a good way to maximize the effectiveness of a sermon according to the message, if it has not been used every time. Particularly, for the evangelistic sermon or repentance sermon, the invitation might be a strong tool to accomplish the goal of the sermon. Moreover, this invitation can be used for a stronger determination and action.

The English preacher, Christmas Evans, gave a sermon titled, "The Triumph of Calvary" (Isa 63:1-6), which has a strong invitation at the conclusion:

Let us flee from the wrath to come! Behold, the sun is risen high on the day of vengeance! Let us not be found among the enemies of Messiah, lest we fall a sacrifice to His righteous indignation on the field of Armageddon! Let us escape for our lives, for the fire-storm of His anger will burn to the lowest hell! Let us pray for grace to lay hold on the salvation of His redeemed! It is a free, full, perfect, glorious and eternal salvation. Return, you ransomed exiles from happiness, return to your forfeited inheritance! Now is the year of jubilee. Come to Jesus, that your debts may be canceled, your sins forgiven, and your persons justified! Come, for the Conqueror of your foes is on the throne! Come, for the trumpets of mercy are sounding! Come, for all things are now ready!<sup>48</sup>

It is necessary for listeners to come up to the front or to stand up for this kind of sermon. It should not be done artificially, but naturally. The writer recommends that Korean pastors use the invitation for the sermon conclusion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Jerry Falwell, ed., 25 of the Greatest Sermons ever Preached (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), 54.

## The Quotation of the Text Itself

This is to quote a verse or verses of the text as the last words in a conclusion. Sometimes this type has a more powerful impact on the listener's mind than any other type of conclusion. It may sum up an entire sermon and even apply it.<sup>49</sup> The emphatic repetition of the text in closing will impressively sum up all that has been said,<sup>50</sup> especially when a preacher concludes his preaching using this type of conclusion, and the congregation goes back to their home to put the text in their hearts and get a positive effect, which challenges them to repeat the text in their houses.

Robert Murray McCheyne' sermon "The Pilgrim's Staff" (Heb 13:5), concludes as follows,

"Eternity alone will unfold the riches of this promise. He who died for us will be our eternal friend; and He who sanctifies us will forever dwell in us; and then God, who loved us, will be ever with us. Then will we get into the meaning of His promise—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Amen. <sup>51</sup>

# Quotation of Another Scripture

While the previous type of conclusion quotes a verse in the text, this type concludes by quoting another verse of Scripture. This type is found in Paul's preaching in Antioch, Pisidia. In this preaching, Paul proclaimed that the salvation plan of God had been completed by the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He preached that Jesus is the only Messiah and stressed that the one who believes in him will be justified through faith. The apostle Paul concludes his preaching by quoting the prophet Habakkuk (Hab

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Broadus, 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Falwell, ed., 61-62.

1:5): "Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you" (Acts 13:40-41).

This type of conclusion, although seemingly simple, requires careful planning. The Scripture must be just right, or the audience will be lost. It is often effective to have memorized much of what will be shared. This type of the conclusion has the supreme authority over all the other types. It is more natural and effective if a sermon is focused on a biblical text or concluded by quoting the passages of Scripture.

Pastor Dongwon Lee finished his sermon titled, "A Parable of Merciless Servant (Mt 18: 21-35)," by quoting verses:

If we cannot forgive others, then look at the cross first. There, try to find out how he forgave us. Try to meditate on how wonderful his love was. And try to think about the blessings that we will gain through forgiveness and reconciliation rather than to think about my wounded heart. If we can do that, we would say this, "My neighbors, brothers, I forgive you, too." At this point, this is the message that we need today. That is why it is forgiveness which takes up most of the Pauline epistle. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph 4:32)<sup>52</sup>

## Quotation

This type of conclusion quotes a non-biblical author's writing. Sometimes a well-chosen quote used in the conclusion can state the sermon idea more strongly and more vividly than one can craft himself.<sup>53</sup> The carefully chosen quote traces the rim of thought with iridescent light, adding color, definition, and precision. It helps the congregation say

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Dongwon Lee, *Jesus Tells Many Stories* (Seoul: Compass House, 1990), 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 177.

to themselves, "Aha! Now I see!" If one uses a quotation, it should be short, and it should be memorized. 55

Because long quotations are difficult to read well and come at a moment when the preacher needs directness, a long quote becomes indirect.<sup>56</sup> Killinger adds, "It is probably wise not to attempt too long a quotation or to use the method very frequently."<sup>57</sup> It is not desirable for the pastor to read the sermon conclusion from the manuscript. A preacher has to memorize the last several sentences so that he can deliver it while making eve contact with the congregation.

Dongwon Lee finished his sermon titled, "The Life of Repentance and Obedience" (Jas 4:1-17), by quoting a famous pastor:

Famous evangelist George Whitefield was asked, "What would you do, if Jesus would return in three days?" He answered, "I would pray and continue all the things that I planned." He was a man who lived a life with conviction. He lived according to the will of God, he planned his future. How important it is to live a life without regret. George Truett, who pastored one of the biggest churches in the United States, said this: "To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge of the world. To do the will of God is the greatest achievement of the world." This is a great declaration. I hope all of you live a life of knowing God's will and doing God's will every day. 58

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Grant and Reed, 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 177.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> John Killinger, Fundamentals of Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Dongwon Lee, *Mature in This Ways* (Seoul: Compass House, 1997), 152-153.

#### Poem

A few lines taken from a poem may capture the truth of one's sermon effectively. Generally, poetry should be brief, as well as clear and to the point.<sup>59</sup> If the poem is crystal clear in its message, it will grab the attention of the listeners simply from the fact that it changes the rhythm of the preached message. In the use of poetry, the preacher must be sure that the selections are not too long. When quoting the poetry, one or two stanzas will generally be sufficient.<sup>60</sup> As with the use of other forms of quotations, a preacher must avoid using poetry too frequently.<sup>61</sup> Most teachers cautiously discourage the use of poetry. In ordinary hands the poetic ending is likely to call attention to itself or to the preacher. Unless he is a master of the spoken word there is likely to be a sharp contrast between the beauty of the quoted lines and the baldness of his own diction. As a rule it is better to close with words of one's own, or else with the text, which is sure to say exactly what the sermon has in view.<sup>62</sup>

When a poem is used, it should not be read but memorized because in this way the preacher may concentrate on the people, rather than a piece of paper. <sup>63</sup>

James S. Stewart's sermon "The Wind of the Spirit" concludes,

If only we would take Christ at His word today! If only the Church, if each of us, would allow the Holy Spirit to have His way with us! I know the difficulties. I know all too well the towering, formidable difficulties. But I also know that in the last resort it is as simple as this: will I take Jesus at His word? Now is the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 177.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Bragga, 151.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Andrew Watterson Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976), 126-131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Grant and Reed, 97.

accepted time. Listen to the wind, Nicodemus. Listen to the wind! "And so the shadows fall apart, and so the west winds play; and all the windows of my heart I open to Thy day." 64

# Hymn

A few lines taken from a hymn may capture the truth of one's sermon effectively.<sup>65</sup> When a hymn is quoted and then sung by the congregation, its impact may be doubled.

There are several ways to use a hymn in the conclusion of the message. First of all, the preacher can quote the verse or verses of a hymn. Hymns have an advantage over poetry from the simple fact that most faithful believers have some familiarity with them. Secondly, a preacher with musical ability might sing the hymn. This would allow for greater artistic expression if done well. Thirdly, a preacher might have the congregation sing a hymn before concluding his message with a sentence of exhortation.

Pastor Dongwon Lee gives one a good example of sermon conclusion through the sermon titled, "Delayed Answer (Gn 16:1-15)." At the last part of sermon conclusion he reads the lyrics of a hymn, then leads them to sing that hymn:

But we do not have enough time to listen to God's voice or to see God's glory. We are very busy with meaningless daily affairs. We have to pray, "Lord please help me to realize how important it is to have a time of fellowship with you." When we are all right in the relationship with God, we do not have to worry about anything. Why do you fear, if God is with you and leads your life. Do not hurry and wait for his guidance. "Light after darkness, Gain after loss, Strength after weakness, Crown after cross; Sweet after bitter, Hope after fears, Home after wandering, Praise after tears. Sheaves after sowing, Sun after rain, Sight after mystery, Peace after pain; Joy after sorrow, Calm after blast, Rest after weariness, Sweet rest at last. Near after distant, Gleam after gloom, Love after

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> James S. Stewart, *The Wind of the Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 177.

loneliness, Life after tomb; After long agony, Rapture of bliss, Right was the pathway, Leading to this."66

## Encouragement

The main aim of preaching is to encourage the congregation to live with a positive attitude in which God is always with them, so preachers need to use encouragement for their sermon conclusions. Especially, when a preacher preaches a sermon which includes solemn warning and rebuke, he needs to use an encouraging conclusion that will inspire the congregation. Not only should the preacher praise the one who are doing well, but also he should provide a chance to begin again through encouragement for those who are not doing well.

In current urban ministry settings pastors cannot counsel with people individually, due to constraints of time and conditions. Therefore, the pastors can use conclusions of the encouragement type for their counsel sermons. <sup>68</sup>

Sunhee Gwahk is the representative preacher who most often uses encouragement in his sermons. Hope Church, where Pastor Gwahk ministered, is located at the center of metropolitan Seoul. Because it is the richest area in Korea, Christians in that area are thoroughly exposed to secular culture. It is possible that many church members feel guilty or suffer a breakdown of faith when they come to church, since their lives were heavily influenced by sin—much like those of Sodom and Gomorrah. Hope

 $<sup>^{66}\,</sup>$  Dongwon Lee, Abraham Who Become the Root of the Faith (Seoul: Compass House, 1997), 115-116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction*, 165.

 $<sup>^{68}</sup>$  Jongsoon Park, Sheds New Light on Korean Church Sermons v.1 (Seoul: Shinmangae Press, 1987), 68.

Church is known as a "Comforting Church." Pastor Kwahk comforts and greatly encourages his congregation through his sermons.

Through the sermon titled, "The Choice of Selected One (Gn 13:1-3)," he compared the two choices of Abraham and Lot. While explaining the false choice of Lot and folly of a man who knows something is not right, he concludes,

"What is your anxiety today? Are you having a difficult time to keep on acting on your right choice? If it is so, you are doing very well in front of God. Endure it until the end. God will bless your right choice. Well, are you concerned about your wrong choice? Do not worry. It is not too late. You can fix your orbit. The chosen never choose a thing which has nothing to do with God. When you do that, God will take care of your way. 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" of the your way. 'And surely I am with you always, to the

# Question

When God approached a man, He used questions. God called Adam who hid among the trees of the garden for committing a sin. The question, "Where are you?" (Gn 3:9) caused Adam to take a look at his spiritual condition. In the same way, an effective and essential question in the sermon conclusion can make listeners think, "Where am I?" Therefore, an appropriate question, or even a series of questions, can conclude a sermon effectively.

Pastor Dongwon Lee is a representative Korean pastor who uses questions frequently in his sermons. In his collection of sermons, he uses many questions in conclusion. His sermon titled, "Stay on what you learned and were convicted of" (2 Ti

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Sunhee Kwahk, *The Person Who Was Led by the Vision* (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1994), 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Rudolf Bohren, *Practical Theory of Homiletics*, trans. Geunwon Park (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1980), 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 178.

3:13-17), is concluded with many questions.

Folks, why do you read the Bible? How do you get the context of the Bible? We do not read the Bible as a material for scientific comment. We are not going to be disappointed when we read the Bible with two questions. It is first, how to live; second, how to die. How does the Bible answer these questions? The Bible was given to us to answer those questions. Then, do you earnestly approach the Bible with those two questions? And have you got the answer? After you got the answer, are you building up your life based on the answer you learned from the Bible? Is the Bible changing your life gloriously? Can you tell your children to study the Bible as your last will at the final moment of your life, because you know that the Holy Bible is the answer for your children's life? Can you tell your children the Bible is the only answer?

In the question conclusion, a preacher must prepare questions in advance. He must prepare questions, not with one or two questions, but with many questions which can develop messages in order to achieve the goal of sermon.

## Shock or Surprise

This type of conclusion should come so unexpectedly that it would stun the listeners. It does not mean the contents of conclusion should be totally different from the main body. It sounds like "Strong Challenge Conclusion," but it is a method of challenging people with shocking expressions.

There are many insensible Christians among sermon listeners. Therefore, if a preacher uses shocking expressions in the conclusion, he could provide a moment of refreshing the faith by stimulating the sensibility of the listeners. Of course, he need not use vulgar expressions, or he might lose the sermon's authority; it has to be a challenge, not a threat or menace.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Dongwon Lee, *The Morning of the Ferry* (Seoul: Jordan Press, 1999), 292.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction*, 165.

The sermon of Stephen, recorded in the book of Acts, is an example of a shocking and surprising conclusion. He summarized the history of the Old Testament, then used a shocking and surprising conclusion with an intention of urging regret and repentance of listeners: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murders, who have received the law by the direction of angel and have not kept it" (Acts 7:51-53).

Peter Marshal once concluded a sermon on Elijah by saying, "If God be God, worship Him. But if Baal be god, worship him and go to hell. Let us pray."<sup>74</sup> This is not a reprobation. With the heart of love, a preacher must deliver a message so that the listener's faith might be changed. The sermon exists for salvation, not for reprobation.

Therefore, this is a unique form of conclusion which is used rarely. Kyeongdong Jang, senior pastor of Daejeon Joong Moon Baptist Church, challenged his listeners in his sermon titled, "Fertile Soil" (Mt 13: 18-23), with quite shocking sentences.

There are no blessings in North Korea. If their faith were discovered, they would die; or not, they could live. But there is a consistent prayer. When they became ill to death, they pray, "Thank you, Lord! I have just got a sign that I can go to heaven now." North Korean Christians are thanking God even for their death, but South Korean Christians are murmuring at God, "How could this happen?" How humiliating our prayer! We have to remind them of how precious their faith is. 75

Quoted in J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Keongdong Jang, *The Encouraging Performance* (Seoul: Jordan Press, 2009), 241.

## Pronouncement of Blessing

Most Korean preachers often use "I bless" as a closing phrase. However, this type, "Pronouncement of Blessing," is not the same as "I bless" in meaning. It is to proclaim God's amazing grace and blessing to listeners, if they practice the main points of the sermon as God wants. In other words, preaching is not to invoke God's blessing upon listeners but to proclaim the truth with which God, who is the Lord of all blessing, blesses his people with unimaginable grace. The benediction also belongs to this type. It may take the form of prayer and supplication to God on behalf of the people, or it may take the form of an ascription of glory and praise to God, as in a doxology.

John Chrysostom is the supreme master of this form of conclusion. He ends with a combination of prayer and doxology. His last homily on the Epistle to the Romans uses his closing formula:

Let us then, laying all this to heart, stand nobly; for Paul was a man, partaking of the same nature with us, and having everything else in common with us. But because he showed such great love toward Christ, he went up above the Heavens, and stood with the Angels. And so if we too would rouse ourselves up some, and kindle in ourselves that fire, we shall be able to emulate that holy man. For were this impossible, he would never have cried aloud, and said, "Be you imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Let us not then admire him only, or be struck with him only, but imitate him, that we too may, when we depart hence, be counted worthy to see him, and to share the glory unutterable, which God grant that we may all attain to by the grace and love toward man of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom, and with Whom, be glory (power and honor) to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, now and evermore. Amen. <sup>79</sup>

This type of conclusion has a strength which gives listeners a feeling that a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Jangbok Jung, *Homiletics Introduction*, 166.

Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Ibid.

preacher is not just a speaker, but a minister who preaches the word of God and shows the authority of the sermon.

# **Imagination**

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones deplores that most of today's people are so scientific there is no room for imagination. He says, "Imagination has practical contribution to preach the truth because it makes the truth vividly." The method of imagination is to appeal to the "What if...?" especially at the end of a heavy sermon. The phrase "What if ...?" holds out realistic hope, not wishful thinking. Also, it challenges to action as it appeals to the imagination, and it compels the listeners to consider the possibility that things could change in their lives if they would only act on the truth they have heard.

Unlike other scholars, Haddon W. Robinson calls imagination by the name *visualization*. It shows a congregation, beforehand, how they can apply the sermon to their lives by assuming a situation they may confront. Visualization is a method that projects a congregation into the future and pictures a situation in which they might apply the truth that is preached.<sup>83</sup> Visualization takes on force if the situation it envisions is possible, or better still, probable. Listeners can imagine themselves in that situation or one like it before it takes place.<sup>84</sup>

Pastor Byeonguhk Jeon finishes his sermon titled, "Biblical Husband" (1 Pe 3:7),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Kundoo Jung, *Homiletics of Lloyd-Jones* (Seoul: Jeshurun, 1999), 194.

<sup>81</sup> Grant and Reed, 99.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 99-100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 179.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

by helping listeners imagine something. He preached about an era characterized by a lack of fatherhood and categorized it as the intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual territories of the biblical husband. He gave examples of foolish husbands, Adam and Lot, and compared them with Aquila, the husband of Priscilla. Then he finished his sermon as follows:

"I hope all husbands who are worshiping God today have a dream of a biblical husband and a biblical family. When husbands pray to God, their families will become families which God designs. Our children will come and ask us, 'Dad, what is heaven like?' How would you answer? I want your answer to be: 'Heaven is like our home.' I desire each family to receive this answer so that the husband might be called a servant of God."

# Prayer

This type of prayer is written down by the pastor as the conclusion of his sermon.

A prayer can make a fitting conclusion, provided it is an honest petition and not a device to summarize the sermon or make an indirect application to the audience.<sup>87</sup>

This is a proper conclusion to lead listeners naturally to the congregational prayer. Nowadays, some Korean pastors invite the congregation to prayer time after finishing their sermons. It is more effective to lead the congregational prayer when finishing the sermon with a form of prayer, rather than just requesting them to pray together. Sometimes, as the sermon ends, it is good to invite the people to pray. Sometimes we will pray aloud and extempore, seeking to express the congregation's response to God's Word. At other times

Institute for Church Growth, *The Sermons of Pastors That Who Serve Twenty Growing Churches* vol. 35 (Seoul: Institute for Church Growth, 1999), 14-18.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 178.

it may be wiser to call the people to silent prayer, for the Holy Spirit may be prompting different responses in different hearts, which a single prayer could never encompass.<sup>88</sup>

Pastor Lee concludes his sermon occasionally in the form of prayer. He finishes his sermon by suggesting a model prayer rather than delivering the prayer himself. He finished a sermon titled, "The Doctrine of Virgin Birth" (Mt 1:18-25), as follows:

O, God! Thank you for coming to this world in an amazing way, appearing to me. Also, many people in this world are not accepting the truth of God based on limited human rationality. Thank you for helping me to believe you. Lord, if the truth of a virgin birth was an obstacle for me so far, please help me to trust the virgin birth of Jesus Christ by going back to the Scripture. I want to accept the Lord as my God and savior who came to this world in flesh. Help us to find a meaning and purpose why Jesus came to this world through this Christmas. We love you Lord. I want you to become my savior. I want you to be my Lord. <sup>89</sup>

# Prophecy

Prophecy conclusion uses a phrase like, "God said this." It sounds like a prophet is speaking for God. It can be observed through Denis Lane's sermon. He finishes the conclusion of a sermon entitled "Faith's Final Test" based on Genesis 22:

In the cross, God is speaking to us and saying something like this: "My child, I am asking you to love Me first, and more than anything or anyone. I ask you to love Me with all your heart and strength and soul and mind for this is exactly the kind of love with which I love you. I have gone to the place appointed. I have gone up the mountain with My Son. He carried the cross, but I carried the knife, and I bound Him there and smote Him there, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. I love you like that. I am not asking from you anything I have not given Myself. My son, My daughter, give Me your heart. If I love you like that, can you not surrender those few worthless toys that you cling on to so much? If I love you like that, persevere in that work for Me, continue to nurse that person for Me, or give over that friendship? I gave you My son, may I not ask for the best years of your life on earth? Can I not take your son for My service across the

<sup>88</sup> Stott, Between Two Worlds, 254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Dongwon Lee, *Have You Prepared Christmas* (Seoul: Compass House, 1990), 157.

world? Am I really asking too much?",90

The above conclusion uses the first-person pronoun and sounds as if God speaks directly to the congregation. Genesis 22 is the story of Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah; it symbolizes God sacrificing his only Son at the cross. It is very proper to use the first-person pronoun in this context. When a preacher refers to God using the first-person pronoun, listeners can realize the heart of God easily. If a preacher has a strong conviction about his sermon as God's words, the prophetic conclusion could be more influential to listeners. But this way can become dangerous when a preacher exaggerates his word as if it is God's. When a preacher wants to use this conclusion, he must have the correct interpretation of the text and proper hermeneutics.

Allegorical or groundless interpretation has to be avoided. Prophetic conclusion can only be useful when a preacher wants to deliver the heart of God. In closing a sermon, if a preacher uses first person-pronouns, he can draw spiritual decisions from the congregation.

#### Contrast

Contrast in the conclusion leads listeners to the opposite side of the main push of the sermon. If a preacher was preaching about hell, the conclusion might be to focus on the love of Christ to rescue from hell. If one is preaching on the love of Christ, the conclusion might center on the hell that awaits those rejecting His love. This method is especially helpful when the main thrust of the sermon has been negative. Blackwood states that Schleiermacher, a great German preacher, stated that "no message from the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Denis Lane, *A Man and His God* (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1981), 157.

pulpit ought ever to end on a judicial note or with an air of severity."91

Two dangers exist with contrast. The first danger is that the contrast is not sufficient to illuminate the main point. This tends to confuse rather than help. The second danger is, if not well prepared, the contrast will lead to a second sermon within the one the pastor is trying to conclude.

Pastor Lee effectively ends his sermon, "Have you failed?" (Jn 21:1-17), by using the following contrast: "Have you failed recently? Why have you failed in faith, business, marriage, relationship, etc? Running away cannot be a solution. Face it. Stand before the Lord Jesus who persuades you with love. Believe that even though you cannot overcome it yourself, you can do it by the power of God. Accept the words that Jesus spoke to Peter. Start it over!" 92

## **SUMMARY**

The types of sermon conclusion are more various than one may be aware of. It is apparent that the varieties of sermon conclusions maximize the effectiveness of a sermon. The types of conclusions, as mentioned above, are as follows: Recapitulation, Illustration, Exhortation, Application, Invitation, Quotation of the Text, Quotation of Another Scripture, Quotation, Shock or Surprise, Poem, Hymn, Encouragement, Question, Pronouncement of Blessing, Imagination, Prayer, Prophecy, and Contrast.

Some preachers use only one conclusion type in a sermon; others use a mixture of the conclusion types that are stated above. Those are widely used already in the

<sup>91</sup> Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons, 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Dongwon Lee, Are You All Right? (Seoul: Compass House, 1988), 117.

ministry. There are more conclusion types besides those. Preachers have to put the same effort into writing down sermon conclusions as into writing down the sermon body. The sermon conclusion is the last moment of the sermon that can seal the main message of the sermon. Using various types of sermon conclusions can be a strong tool for maximizing the effectiveness of the sermon. Detailed information will be provided in the next chapter, by analyzing sermon conclusions of four Korean representative pastors.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **Analysis of Sermon Conclusions of Four Representative Korean Preachers**

This chapter will provide an analysis of the sermon conclusions of four representative Korean preachers, Dongwon Lee, Sunhee Gwahk, Hanhum Ohk, and Beonguhk Jeon. A few years ago, the publishing bureau of Kookmin Daily conducted a survey of two thousand students of thirteen theological seminaries in South Korea with the question, "Who is your favorite preacher?" As a result, their favorite preachers were the four preachers who will be analyzed through this paper. <sup>1</sup>

The reason why the writer chose the above four preachers in order to analyze sermon conclusions is that they were the preachers whom the students as future preachers loved. This chapter will analyze about forty sermon conclusions for each preacher from their sermon books. This project will show preachers that various conclusions are most important thing in preaching.

# **Pastor Dongwon Lee**

## His Life and Ministries

In his book, Lee says that it is important to review the life journey of a preacher in order to understand the preacher's sermons, because the life experiences of the preacher affect his sermons.<sup>2</sup>

Lee was born the oldest son of a typical family in December 1945 in Suwon. His

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Publishing Bureau of Kookmin Daily, *Who Is Your Favorite Preacher?* http://missionlife.kukinews.com/article/view (accessed on August 15, 2010)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Dongwon Lee, Wearing Vision Shoes and Walking (Seoul: Duranno, 2006), 13.

family had a non-Christian religious background which mixed Buddhism with Confucianism and shamanism. Since elementary school, he used to attend a church with his friend on Christmas in order to act in a play. His heart was broken by a conflict between his mother and his grandmother and the continuing failures of his father's business. This family background made him isolate himself and bury himself in many books.<sup>3</sup> While he was attending a Bible study group after failing to enter the most prestigious university in Korea, the leader of the study challenged him with his need for salvation. He was saved by believing the gospel of the cross as explained in Galatians 2:21 during a discussion about Galatians in his Bible study group in September 1965.

After that he devoted himself to Youth For Christ (YFC) as an assistant administrator and began to serve as a Sunday school teacher. While he was serving in the army, he was chosen for the Korean Augmentation To the United States Army (KATUSA) in which he learned English and how to use an English typewriter. He also acquired experience as a preacher by serving a church after finishing his army work. After fulfilling his military duty, he returned to Youth For Christ as an assistant administrator and devoted himself to evangelizing the youth.

In the early 1970s, he went abroad to study at William Tyndale College in the United States of America and graduated as an honor student, and he was selected as "the preacher of this year." He came home to Korea after being called by the senior pastor of Suwon Central Baptist Church, Janghyeong Kim, to give up his studies, and he served as an associate pastor and the manager of YFC in Korea. After that he was called by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid., 28.

Seoul Baptist Church to serve as the senior pastor, and his ministry there increased his church's regular attendance from three hundred to two thousand in just four years. But he again went to the United States of America due to conflicts of ministry, and he resumed his studies and ministry to Korean immigrants for a full ten years from 1983 to 1993. In the end of 1993, after earning the Doctor of Missiology at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago, he came back to Korea and planted his church, Global Mission Church, in Bundang.

At present, the church is a mega-church which has 22,000 attendees on Sunday morning. Also, Lee is serving as the chairman of the international division of Korean Students All Nations (KOSTA), the chairman of Operation Mobilisation (OM) in Korea, and the leader of Meeting for Preparation of Korean Church's Future and Meeting for Preparation of Baptist Church's Future.

## His Homiletics

In his book, *The Preaching That Awakens the Audience*, Pastor Lee expresses concretely his homiletic views. A sermon is an earthly message from heaven. This means that it should be the message of the kingdom of God and it should be proclaimed with earthly language at the same time.<sup>5</sup> A preacher remains in both the earthly situation and the biblical situation.<sup>6</sup>

His preaching is not only excellent to the point of getting an A+ in his seminary's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Dongwon Lee, *The Preaching That Awakens the Audience* (Seoul: Jordan Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Soonjin Han, Why Has the Audience Been Mesmerized by Their Sermons? (Seoul: Peter's House, 2000), 12.

homiletics class, but also it has the passion of deep faith and humane seriousness.<sup>7</sup> Also, he is receiving high marks as a talented preacher among Korean preachers.

What are the reasons he is praised by other preachers like these?

First of all, he is able to deliver an outstanding sermon because he has a clear pronunciation and an insistent tone as an excellent preacher. Also, his preaching is easy for the audience to understand because he always uses simple sentences. Second, his sermon manuscripts have theological logic and logic of thought. This logic makes his sermons well-structured. Third, another reason that makes his sermons outstanding is that he does not pressure his audience to give offerings or serve but he preaches only the Bible in depth. Nevertheless, his church has plenty of offerings. Fourth, another feature in his sermons is that they are positive and warm. Fifth, one of the most important features in his sermons is his use of excellent illustrations. He persuades his audience by using realistic and vivid illustrations. He is a preacher who can use illustrations for his sermons properly just like a martial arts master who flourishes a sword skillfully. This shows that he reads a lot of books. Sixth, his sermons are interesting, touching, and practical. 8

As his homiletic view implies, he regards today's culture as the most important thing in his sermons. The average length of his sermon is about half an hour.<sup>9</sup>

## Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types

Pastor Lee says the elements of a good conclusion are as follows. First of all, the good conclusion should be obvious and consistent with the sermon's contents. Second, it can be applied to personal life. Third, it should be positive and hopeful. Fourth, it should have a challenge urging the audience to change their lifestyle. Fifth, it should urge the audience to make a decision for change of the will. Sixth, it should be concluded

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Yongseob Jeong, *Between Preaching and Instigation* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 2009), 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid., 130-131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Soonjin Han, 19.

# inductively. 10

His sermon conclusions are greatly dynamic. He runs toward the climax from the introduction and then he concludes his sermon with an inductive method.

He usually concludes his preaching with an invitation, and he often provides a prayer time to allow the audience to make a decision.

The writer randomly selected four of Pastor Lee's sermon books in order to analyze the types of his sermon conclusions. The results are as follows:

Sermon Book: Abraham Who Become the Root of the Faith<sup>11</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	Abraham, the Root of the Faith	Genesis 12:1-3	Application
2	There Was a Severe Famine in the Land	12:10-13	Recapitulation
3	When the Beloved Quarrel	13:8-11	Quotation of Another Scripture
4	Crisis and Rescue of Sodom	14:14-16	Illustration
5	Where Justification by Faith Was First Mentioned in the Bible	15:4-7	Quotation of Another Scripture
6	When the Answer Has Been Delayed	16:1-15	Hymn
7	The Sign of the Covenant	17:9-14	Quotation of Another Scripture
8	The Spiritual VIPs	18:1-5	Prophecy
9	The Prayer of Abraham	18:22-32	Prayer
10	Sin and Grace	20:8-9	Encouragement
11	Isaac and Ishmael	21:8-13	Recapitulation
12	Sacrificing Isaac	22:1-4	Imagination

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Seongyoung Jeong, Writing the Main Idea of a Sermon (Seoul: Handyul Press, 2004), 217.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Dongwon Lee, *Abraham Who Become the Root of the Faith* (Seoul: Compass House, 1997).

Sermon Book: Enjoy Freedom in This Way<sup>12</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	The Gospel and Other Gospels	Galatians 1:1-10	Quotation of the Text
2	The Freeman through the Good News	1:11-24	Recapitulation
3	The Fellowship in the Good News	2:1-10	Application
4	The Conflict for the Good News	2:11-21	Illustration
5	Two Evidences of the Freedom	3:1-14	Recapitulation
6	The Law and the Covenant of the Grace	3:15-29	Illustration
7	The Freedom and the Restriction	4:21-31	Quotation of Another Scripture
8	Protection of the Freedom	5:1-11	Question
9	The Freedom in the Holy Spirit	5: 13-26	Quotation of the Text
10	The Fruition of Love	6:1-10	Recapitulation
11	The Trace of the Freedom	6:11-18	Quotation

Sermon Book: Jesus Tells Many Stories<sup>13</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	Story of the Famer Scattering Seed	Matthew 13:1-23	Application
2	Illustration of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	Illustration
3	Story of the Wheat and Weeds	13:24-30; 36-43	Quotation of Another Scripture
4	Illustration of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast	13:31-33	Imagination
5	I Illustration of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl	13:44-45	Illustration
6	Illustration of the Fishing Net	13:47-50	Quotation
7	Story of the Unforgiving Debtor	18:21-35	Quotation of Another Scripture
8	Story of the Vineyard Workers	20:1-16	Exhortation
9	Story of the Great Feast	22:1-14	Exhortation
10	Story of the Ten Bridesmaids	25:1-13	Illustration
11	Story of the Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37	Illustration

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Dongwon Lee, *Enjoy Freedom in This Way* (Seoul: Compass House, 1992).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Dongwon Lee, *Jesus Tells Many Stories* (Seoul: Compass House, 1990).

12	Story of a Friend Who Borrows Three Loaves of Bread	11:1-13	Question
13	Story of the Empty House	11:23-28	Invitation

Sermon Book: Sermons on Romans That Are Quite Comprehensible 14

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	Who Am I?	Romans 1:1-17	Exhortation
2	When God Forsakes	1:18-32	Invitation
3	Self-Respect, Self-Conceit	2:1-16	Invitation
4	The Circumcision of the Heart	2:17-29	Question
5	Everyone Has Sinned	3:1-18	Invitation
6	Only Jesus, Only Faith	3:19-31	Exhortation
7	The Righteousness of Abraham and David	4:1-13	Invitation
8	The Resurrection Faith of Abraham	4:14-25	Quotation
9	The Bonus of Salvation	5:1-11	Illustration
10	From the Rule of Death to the Rule of Love	5:12-21	Illustration
11	Would You Be Free from the Burden of Sin?	6:1-14	Invitation
12	The Wages of Sin and the Fruits of Righteousness	6:15-23	Illustration

According to the above analysis, Pastor Lee used fourteen types of conclusions for forty-eight sermons: Illustration (10), Quotation of another Scripture (6), Invitation (6), Recapitulation (5), Exhortation (4), Application (3), Question (3), Quotation (3), Imagination (2), Quotation of the Text (2), Hymn (1), Prophecy (1), Prayer (1), and Encouragement (1).

He did not use just a few types of conclusion but used various types of conclusion according to different texts. The types of conclusion that he most enjoys using for his sermons are Illustration and Quotation of the Bible (the text, another scripture).

Also, he often enjoys using an invitation but most Korean preachers rarely use it for their

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Dongwon Lee, Sermons on Romans That Are Quite Comprehensible (Seoul: Duranno, 2001).

sermon conclusions.

Judging by his preaching, an invitation is an effective type of conclusion in a sermon. Also, there are many illustrations and quotations among his sermon conclusions (twenty-one times of total forty-eight times). This shows that he usually reads many books as well as the Bible. Reading, therefore, is the essential requirement to make the most suitable type for a sermon conclusion for all preachers.

By analyzing the types of Lee's sermon conclusions, the author realized that Lee tries to write the most suitable type for his sermon conclusion by doing his very best right up to the end so that the main idea of his sermon can be delivered to the congregation more clearly. This is the reason why he has received a lot of praise as a great preacher from Korean preachers and congregations. He uses various conclusion types because he well acknowledges the importance of the sermon conclusion.

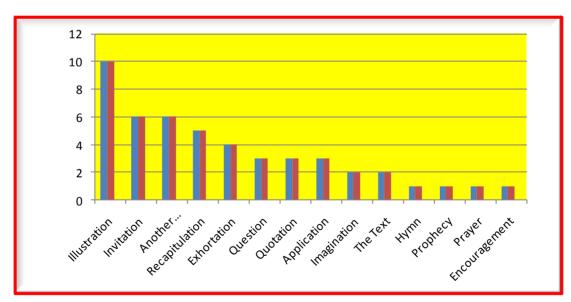


Figure 5.1 Dongwon Lee's Types of Conclusions

#### **Pastor Sunhee Gwahk**

#### His Life and Ministries

Pastor Gwahk is a preacher who has a reputation as an expert preacher whose preaching is second to none. When people speak of the model preacher of the Korean church, it is he who is surely evoked. He has not averted his eyes to some program or methodology of church growth during the forty-five years of his ministry. He has been devoted entirely to his preaching.

Pastor Gwahk was born in 1933 in Hwanghaedo, North Korea. He came to South Korea from North Korea on the January 4, 1951 retreat<sup>15</sup> and majored in English literature at University of Dankook in Seoul. After that he graduated from Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and then he received the Th.M from Princeton Theological Seminary and received D. Miss from Fuller Theological Seminary.

He began his ministry as a youth pastor at Shindang Middle Presbyterian Church in Seoul and served as a senior pastor at Incheon First Presbyterian Church for sixteen years. He has filled important posts successively, such as a professor, a chief director at Presbyterian Theological Seminary, a president at Soongeui Women's College, and a chief director at University of Soongsil.

In 1977, he planted the Church of Hope in Seoul and continued to serve at the church as the senior pastor. He finally retired in 2003. Now, there are about 40,000 registered members and about 35,000 of them regularly attend.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> In January 1951, the Chinese and North Korean forces struck again in their 3rd Phase Offensive (also known as the *Chinese Winter Offensive*). The Chinese repeated their previous tactics of mostly night attacks, with a stealthy approach from positions some distance from the front, followed by a rush with overwhelming numbers, and using trumpets or gongs both for communication and to disorient their foes. Against this the UN forces had no remedy, and their resistance crumbled; they retreated rapidly to the south (referred to by UN forces as the "bug-out"). Seoul was abandoned and was captured by communist forces on January 4, 1951.

#### His Homiletics

Pastor Gwahk emphasizes "doing righteous preaching." In his book, *Sermon Preparation of Today*, he says this:

In homiletics, there is a saying, "If a pastor's sermon leaves the Bible, believers also leave the pastor." The issue of how revivable a church is depends on whether the pastor delivers God's word truly. We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit surely comes true if the words in the Bible are correctly delivered to the congregation. Therefore, we should remove non-Christian factors and have the image of the church which is close to the essence of the church in order to get growth in the church. As a result, the church can be revived. In churches that are featuring growth, the pastor's sermon is biblical. <sup>16</sup>

He also defines in the introduction of his sermon book, *Secret of the Final Victory*: "Preaching is neither a simple religious instruction, nor research and explanation of the Bible. As the Word became flesh and lived among us, at present, the Word is incarnated through the church, Christian ceremonies, and sermons, so that the Word works among us to give life. . . . believe that the sermon is the Word of the living God given to us." <sup>17</sup>

Synthesizing his words above, he understands that preaching is the Word of God given to today's cultures. Yoontaek Lim introduces Gwahk's theory of preaching in his book, *Story of the Church of Hope*, by quoting from Gwahk's words as follows: "Good preaching makes the audience believe the Bible as the Word of the living God. It is the role of a preacher to translate the Word of God into the Word of today so that the moderns can understand it." 18

Gwahk continues his theory of preaching:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Sunhee Gwahk, Sermon Preparation of Today (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1970), 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Sunhee Gwahk, Secret of the Final Victory (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1990), 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Yootaek Lim, *Story of the Church of Hope* (Seoul: Peters House, 2001), 37.

The preacher should listen to the Word of God and when he does that, he is a needful trumpet for today. In other words, his preaching is to accommodate contemporary culture. . . . Therefore, the preacher should make an effort to be a typical modern and read the Bible with a modern's mind. The preacher who has a modern way of thinking and worldview is touched by reading the Bible. And then he comes to explain the grace presented in the Bible in modern language by dramatizing. This allows moderns to understand all. <sup>19</sup>

All his words above show Gwahk thinks that making "the biblical Word the Word for today's audience" is the most important task in preaching.

Yungseb Jeong evaluates Gwahk's sermons. His sermons make the audience comfortable. He does not make the audience tired by forcing on them the ways of church life (offering, dawn prayer meeting, evangelism, serving and so on). But he preaches by focusing on the mission of the faithful life or attitude. In his sermons, the expectation of a blessing, mysticism, and appeal to emotion are seldom found.<sup>20</sup> While serving as a preacher at the Church of Hope for twenty-six years, Pastor Gwahk wrote many sermon books.

# Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types

The outstanding distinctive feature of Pastor Gwahk's sermon is the usage of numerous illustrations. Pastor Gwahk is fully aware of the characteristics of illustrations, and he uses them in an effective and well-directed way. Typically, his sermon begins with illustrations which include general stories<sup>21</sup>, current affairs<sup>22</sup>, and life stories.<sup>23</sup> He often

 $<sup>^{19}\,</sup>$  Joongpyo Lee, ed., When the Preaching Is Full of Living Power, the Congregation Is Alive (Seoul: Qumran, 2002), 127-128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Yongseob Jeong, *Sermon's Hope and Despair* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 2008), 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> General stories are a wide-ranging variety from books, fairy tales, and other sources.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Current affairs deal with the events that occur today.

uses illustrations for the sermon conclusion as well. Further details will be addressed after analyzing the types of his sermon conclusions.

By analyzing Gwahk's sermon conclusions, it was found that the average length of his sermon is about twenty-five minutes and the average length of conclusion is about three to five minutes.

The writer randomly selected four of Pastor Gwahk's sermon books in order to analyze the types of his sermon conclusions. The results are as follows:

Sermon Book: *Please Give Me the Word*<sup>24</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Sorintura Passaga	
NO	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	The Most Blessed Person	Matthew 16:13-20	Quotation of the Text
2	The Attributes of Church	Acts 9:26-31	Illustration
3	The One Who Does Not Understand	Psalms 49:6-20	Recapitulation
4	Please Give Me the Word	Ephesians 6:10-20	Prayer
5	You Follow Me	Luke 9:57-62	Illustration
6	Open Your Mouth Wide	Psalms 81:8-16	Quotation of Another Scripture
7	The One Who Gives a Wonderful Encouragement	1 Corinthians 16:13-18	Encouragement
8	Live with Faith	Galatians 3:10-14	Illustration
9	Always Obey Your Parents	Colossians 3: 18- 24	Illustration
10	The Essence of Resurrection Faith	John 11:17-27	Quotation
11	The Joy of Love	1 Corinthians 13:4-7	Illustration
12	A Mature Christian	Ephesians 4:11-16	Contrast

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Life stories are happenings from everyday life.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Sunhee Gwahk, *Please Give Me the Word* (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1996).

Sermon Book: The Ultimate Interest<sup>25</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage (s)	The Type of Conclusion
1	The Worry of Cain	Genesis 4:1-12	Encouragement
2	The Most Helpful Gift	1 Corinthian 12:31- 13:3	Illustration
3	Before Winter Comes	2 Timothy 4:9-18	Illustration
4	The Original Attitudes of the Church	Acts 2:37-47	Application
5	The Ultimate Interest	Matthew 6:25-34	Recapitulation
6	The Righteous Will Live by Their Faith	Habakkuk 2:1-4	Encouragement
7	The Words Were Given Afterward	Mark 16:14-20	Application
8	What Do You Have in Your Hand?	Exodus 4:1-9	Application
9	What Do You See?	Jeremiah 1:11-19	Quotation of Another Scripture
10	The Worry of the Returning Person	Genesis 32:21-29	Encouragement
11	The Reasons for Feeding with Manna	Deuteronomy 8:11- 20	Quotation
12	The Confession of Unprofitable Servant	Luke 17:5-10	Application

Sermon Book: The Interests of Two Worshipers<sup>26</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	Come over Here and Help Us	Acts 16:6-10	Application
2	Heal Their Land	2 Chronicles 7:11-18	Exhortation
3	Be Prepared	Matthew 24:37-51	Recapitulation
4	I Realized It in the Sanctuary	Psalms 73:1-17	Illustration
5	I Will Give You What I Have	Acts 3:1-10	Exhortation
6	Preparation for Tomorrow	Joshua 7:6-13	Illustration

<sup>25</sup> Sunhee Gwahk, *The Ultimate Interest* (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Sunhee Gwahk, *The Interests of Two Worshipers* (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1991).

7	The Interests of Two	Luke 18:9-14	Shock
	Worshipers		
8	Do You Not Remember	Mark 8:14-21	Encouragement
	Anything at All?		
9	Mary's Song of Praise	Luke 1:46-56	Quotation
10	Repeat Them Again and	Deuteronomy 6:1-9	Quotation
	Again to Your Children		
11	Whether I Live or I Die	Philippians 1:19-25	Quotation of the Text
12	The Secret That Has Been	Philippians 3:12-16	Encouragement
	Renewed		

Sermon Book: *The Tree Planted along the Riverbank*<sup>27</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	Make Us Pure and Holy	John 17:13-19	Recapitulation
2	Determination and	Mark 14:26-31	Application
	Weakness and Strength		
3	The One Who Does Not Understand	Psalms 49:1-20	Illustration
4	Those Who Endure to the End	Matthew 24:3-14	Quotation of the Text
5	You Do Not Belong to Yourself	1 Corinthians 6:14-20	Quotation of the Text
6	The One Who Has	2 Corinthians 6:1-10	Application
	Everything		
7	The Victory of the	Exodus 17:8-16	Encouragement
	Unknown Soldiers		
8	The Tree Planted along a	Jeremiah 17:5-8	Quotation of Another
	Riverbank		Scripture
9	We Need More Faith	Luke 17:5-10	Exhortation
10	The World Was Not	Acts 4:13-22	Encouragement
	Worthy of Them		
11	You Wait for What He	Acts 1:4-8	Recapitulation
	Promised		
12	Please Forgive Us	Genesis 50:15-21	Pronouncement of Blessing

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 27}$  Sunhee Gwahk, The Tree Planted along the Riverbank (Seoul: Kemongsa, 1991).

According to the above analysis, Pastor Gwahk used twelve types of conclusions for forty-eight sermons: Illustration (10), Encouragement (8), Recapitulation (5), Quotation of the Text (4), Quotation (4), Quotation of Another Scripture (3), Exhortation (3), Prayer (1), Contrast (1), Shock (1), and Pronouncement of Blessing (1).

His favorite type of conclusion is illustration. By analyzing, the total number of illustration is ten of forty-eight. Also, he is the representative preacher who most enjoys using illustrations in the sermon. He uses them four or more times per sermon on average. The reason why is that he tries to make his sermon connect to the audience's life directly. Therefore, using an effective and appropriate illustration makes the audience concentrate on his sermon. He enjoys using illustrations to show that he is well-read. Reading is essential for the preacher collecting good and effective illustrations for his sermon.

Also, the types of conclusions relevant to the reading (Illustration, Quotation, Quotation of the Text, and Quotation of Another Scripture) are almost half, twenty-one of forty-eight. Therefore, it again shows that reading is very important in order to write an effective conclusion. Appropriately, according to his reputation as the representative preacher who most enjoys using encouragement in a sermon, he used encouragement eight out of forty-eight times so that the audience could have an opportunity to make new decisions for their lives.

By analyzing, it was found that he strove to use the most suitable conclusion for each text of the Bible. The reason he used the types of sermon conclusion which most preachers rarely use—Shock (Luke 18: 9-14 (The interests of two worshipers)), Contrast (Ephesians 4:11-16 (A mature Christian)), and Pronouncement of Blessing (Genesis 50: 15-21(Please forgive us))—is that these conclusions are the most suitable type for each

text and give the main idea of the sermon to the audience more effectively.

Also, he always pays special attention to sermon conclusion, for he well understands the importance of the conclusion which is the last chance to remind the audience of the main point of the sermon.

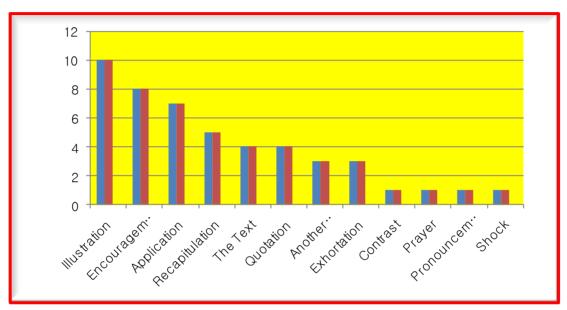


Figure 5.2 Sunhee Gwahk's Types of Conclusions

## **Pastor Hanhum Ohk**

## His Life and Ministries

When the Japanese oppression and persecution of the Korean citizens and churches reached their summit, Pastor Hanhum Ohk was born in 1938 in Geogae, Gyeongsang-Namdo. He grew up in a faithful atmosphere since he was born to a sincere Christian mother. In the fourth grade in elementary school, he experienced the love of the cross of Christ, after which he became a more mature Christian.

He read the Bible several times during his middle school days and was named by

his church's members "person who is supposed to be a pastor." However, he deserted his dream of becoming a pastor. He applied to be a naval officer and failed. Then he served a small church in the countryside with his superior faith and his extensive knowledge of the Bible for two years. This led him to confirm his calling to be a pastor once again, and he entered the Korea Seminary in Busan and studied there for two years.

In the meantime, he liked to experience the various academic fields. By the time he had prepared for the entrance examination, the 5.16 Military Revolution<sup>28</sup> broke out. So he had to go into the army. During that time, he entered the department of English in the evening session of the Sungkyunkwan University and had an opportunity to prepare for becoming a pastor. He had been serving in the army and studying at the same time,<sup>29</sup> and he finally got tuberculosis. However, he said later that sickness and poverty in his university days motivated him to understand the poor and to preach to them. After graduating from university, he entered the Chongshin Seminary and he applied himself to his studies to become a qualified pastor in good earnest.

When he was a preacher for children in Eunpeong Church, he raised the number of children in Sunday school from about 70 to 450 in several months. After that, he took charge of the college student group in Seongdo Church and raised the number of the group from one person to about 350 members, especially 200 members who attended the group regularly.<sup>30</sup> After graduating from the Chongshin Seminary, he finished the Master

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> The military coup d'état ("5.16 coup d'état") led by Major General Chung-hee Park on May 16, 1961, put an effective end to the Second Republic. Park was one of a group of military leaders who had been pushing for the de-politicization of the military. Dissatisfied with the cleanup measures undertaken by the Second Republic and convinced that the current disoriented state would collapse into communism, they chose to take matters into their own hands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Yonggui Park, Awaken the Korean Church (Seoul: Life Book, 1998), 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid., 31.

of Theology as a scholarship student at the Calvin Seminary in a year and a half. He also began the coursework of Doctor of Ministry at the Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, but he returned home early with his study unfinished due to his passion for ministry.

Pastor Hanhum Ohk planted a church with nine people in 1978 with the purpose of training lay believers, mission to youth, and mission to the Communist bloc. It was the start of Church of Love which was a cradle of the disciple training of lay believers.

He devoted his affection for ministry to establishing the church's purpose until he retired on December 31, 2003, especially raising lay believer leaders steadily through the disciple training. At the moment, the disciple training program that started from the Church of Love has become a representative training program to raise lay believer leaders in the Korean church. The Church of Love has now become one of the representative Korean churches, which has forty thousand attendees. He was granted an honorary Doctor of Theology from the Westminster Seminary in 2001. In 2003, he retired at the age of sixty-five and was active as a chairman of DMI (Disciple Making Ministry Institute).

#### His Homiletics

Given the question about what preaching is, Pastor Ohk says that "preaching is that today's audiences are made to be told the voice of God through the revelation of the Bible."<sup>31</sup> As far as he is concerned, preaching seems to be not only a special duty, but also a therapy method which could satisfy the biggest need in this world. He divides the action of preaching into good preaching and righteous preaching. So he says that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> SeongSoo Gwon, *The Sermons and Theology of Pastor Hanhum Ohk* (Seoul: Association for Research on Korean Church History, 2002), 87.

preachers should try to preach rightly rather than preach well. It means not recognizing the audience but recognizing God and preaching boldly according to the words in the Bible.<sup>32</sup>

His opinion on the "righteous preaching" is that a preacher should listen to the voice of God in the Bible first and preach only God's words as well as preach through a correct interpretation and application.

His point of view on preaching is as follows: First, preaching is the answer to this period of confusion, secularism, and relativism. Second, righteous preaching is important. Third, preaching is nut rather than shell, that is, words are important. Fourth, it is necessary to have a correct interpretation and application.

He says that a sermon which is estranged from God's words is not a sermon and a preacher should listen to the voice of God first and then preach, and a sermon includes words with vital power accompanied with the preacher's exorbitant pains that seem as if he went through labor. He, too, is the one of the preachers who emphasizes the importance of reading for preachers. Also, he stressed the importance of reading for lay believers during the disciple making training.

# **Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types**

Pastor Ohk's sermon length on Sunday morning is about forty minutes. His typical sermon is a little longer than that of the other preachers. After introducing the subject of the sermon for three to five minutes, he gets through the text of the Bible and explains it for twenty to twenty-five minutes, during which the audience is likely to feel a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>Hanhum Ohk, "Good Preaching and Righteous Preaching," *The Word*, January 1998, 21.

little bored. After explaining the text of the Bible like this, he urges the audience for the remaining time, ten to fifteen minutes, and exhorts them to surrender themselves without reservation and excuse to the voice of the Lord, who is speaking to them in the text. He appeals to the audience with a pitiful appeal by the heart of a father who stops his children from running off the edge of a steep cliff. He also excludes any escape route which the audience might try to take to resist the words of the Bible. In this way, Pastor Ohk preaches to let the audience have plentiful grace.

The writer randomly selected three of Pastor Ohk's sermon books in order to analyze the types of his sermon conclusions. The results are as follows:

Sermon Book: Self-Respect of Christians<sup>33</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	True Potential of Christians	Revelation 14:1-5	Exhortation
2	Self-Respect of Christians	Acts 26:19-29	Question
3	You Are a Kingdom of Priests	1 Peter 2:9-10	Exhortation
4	A Living and Holy Sacrifice	Romans 12:1-2	Question
5	What Are Children of God Like?	1 John 3:1-3	Exhortation
6	Children of God and Money	1 Timothy 6:7-19	Question
7	Answers to Two Questions That Christians Ask	2 Corinthians 1:15-23	Recapitulation
8	The Personality of the Spiritual Man	Galatians 5:22-23	Quotation of the Text
9	The Person Who Cannot Sin	1 John 3:4-9	Recapitulation
10	Are You Ready to Face the End of the World?	1 Peter 4:7-11	Recapitulation
11	The Grace of "But"	1 Corinthians 15:9-10	Exhortation
12	It Is Wonderful to See the Sun	Ecclesiastes 11:7- 10	Prophecy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Hanhum Ohk, *Self-Respect of Christians* (Seoul: Duranno, 1997).

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13	You Should Rather Have Mercy Than Revenge on an Enemy	Matthew 5:38-42	Application
14	We Never Give Up	2 Corinthians 4:16-18	Encouragement
15	All Those Who Want to Be My Disciples Must Come and Follow Me	John 12:20-33	Exhortation

Sermon Book: When We Live Righteously, the World Can Be Changed<sup>34</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	Your Behavior Should Show the Light	Ephesians 5:8-13	Invitation
2	The Godly	Proverbs 11:10-11	Recapitulation
3	You Shepherd, Become a Prophet	Amos 7:10-17	Application
4	National Sin	Amos 2:1-8	Exhortation
5	Tragedy and Lesson of the Age of Micah	Micah 3:1-6	Exhortation
6	Have You Ever Asked This Kind of Question Before?	Micah 6:6-8	Application
7	The Duties of a Christian to His Nation	1 Timothy 2:1-4	Invitation
8	The Lesson from Samuel's Family	1 Samuel 8:1-9	Exhortation
9	Give Me an Understanding Mind	1 Kings 3:4-15	Exhortation
10	The Blame-Shifting of Aaron	Exodus 32:21-24	Application
11	Like the Poor, Like the Rich	Proverbs 13:7-8	Encouragement
12	If Your Enemies Are Hungry, Feed Them	Romans 12:19-21	Application
13	The Cursed Ground, the Responsible Management	Genesis 3:17-19	Recapitulation
14	Saving the Environment	John 6:8-13	Exhortation

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Hanhum Ohk, *When We Live Righteously, the World Can Be Changed* (Seoul: Duranno, 1998).

Sermon Book: The Exposition of Romans<sup>35</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	Paul, the Servant of Jesus Christ	Romans 1: 1-7	Hymn
2	Roman Church Should Have Listened to the Good News Again	1: 8-17	Exhortation
3	God's Wrath	1:18	Application
4	Ungodly Sin against God	1: 19-25	Illustration
5	Wickedness	1:26-32	Exhortation
6	You Who Pass Judgment on Someone Else	2:1-16	Recapitulation
7	If You Call Yourself a Jew	2:17-3:8	Exhortation
8	Lord, I Am a Sinner	3:9-18	Illustration
9	The Newly Opened Way of Salvation	3:19-26	Exhortation
10	Where Is Boasting?	3:27-31	Application
11	The Happiness of an Undeserving Sinner Who Is Declared to Be Righteous	4:1-17	Application
12	Abraham Believed God Like This	4:1-17	Exhortation
13	Do You Have Peace with God?	5:1-11	Quotation of Another Scripture
14	You Died in Adam and Became Alive in Jesus	5:12-21	Exhortation
15	The Reasons That You Cannot Reside in Sin	6:1-11	Illustration
16	Do Not Let Sin Control the Way You Live	6: 12-23	Poem

According to the above analysis, Pastor Ohk used twelve types of conclusions for forty-five sermons. Further details are as follows: Exhortation (16), Application (8), Recapitulation (6), Illustration (3), Question (3), Encouragement (2), Invitation (2), Quotation of the Text (1), Quotation of another scripture (1), Hymn (1), Poem (1), and Prophecy (1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Hanhum Ohk, *The Exposition of Romans* (Seoul: Disciple Making Ministry Institute, 2002).

His favorite type of conclusion is exhortation. A shown by the above analysis, the total number of conclusions using exhortation is sixteen. It is used in one out of three sermon conclusions. That is because he always preached with a father's heart as if he preached to his own loved children. He actually regarded his audience as his children because he planted the church and there worked for twenty years. Also, the church is located in the district south of the Han River, where people with a high socioeconomic status in Seoul live, so he enjoyed using the exhortations in his sermons because he urged a high level of spiritual life from them according to their high status lives.

Even though he was a pastor of a Presbyterian church, he used the invitation twice in his sermon conclusions. This shows how passionate he was for the Gospel. The unique feature of his sermon conclusions is using exhortation, application, and prophecy over twenty-five times, which are the types that a preacher uses when he directly encouraged the congregation to live following the sermon. This shows well that he believed in the firm authority of the word of God as a preacher.

Compared to the above-mentioned preachers, he used exhortation more in his conclusions but he, too, put a huge amount of effort into preparing the sermon conclusions because he often used a hymn, a poem, and prophecy, which other preachers rarely used in their sermon conclusions. The most powerful part of his sermon is the conclusion because his sermon length is about ten minutes longer than those of the above-mentioned preachers, but the congregation was extremely excited by his preaching. He had the fiery passion for the Gospel of Jesus and always aimed for powerful conclusions in his sermons.

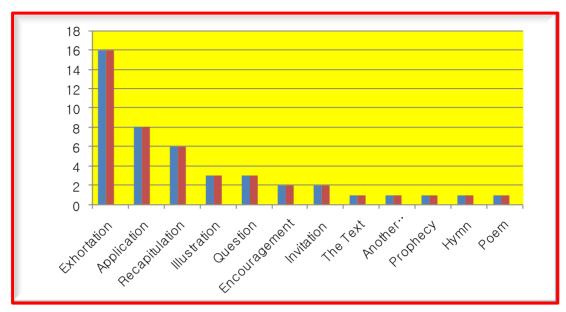


Figure 5.3 Hanhum Ohk's Types of Conclusions

# Pastor Beonguhk Jeon

# His Life and Ministries

Pastor Beonguhk Jeon was born in 1963 in Seoul and raised in a family that had been Christian for four generations. His grandfather was a pastor in Seoul and did not seek refuge during the Korean War. He died a martyr for his faith because North Korean soldiers fired their guns at him while he was protecting the church. Pastor Jeon's father, who was an elder of a Presbyterian church, strictly instructed him about the faith in God. From his youth, he attended the dawn prayer meeting every day, and if he did not read the Bible, his father did give him any food. So Jeon, who thoroughly received conservative and traditional faith training, is very proud of his grandfather who was martyred and has a strong sense of identity and self-esteem from his boyhood.<sup>36</sup> These faithful inheritances

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Gunmi Lee, *The Stories of Mega-Churches and Great Pastors* (Seoul: Monthly Chosun Press, 2005), 299-300.

have made him loyal to his family background and have had a remarkable effect on forming his pastoral ministry and growing the church.<sup>37</sup>

Pastor Jeon served as a youth minister at Banpo Presbyterian Church after graduating from the Department of Business Administration in Yonsei University and Chongshin Theological Seminary. Unlike other elite pastors who are about his age he did not study abroad, and after taking ordination at 30 years old, he became the senior pastor of the Samil Presbyterian Church in Cheongpa Dong, Youngsan Gu, Seoul in 1994. At that time, there were only about 80 attendees, but in six years, the number of attendees exceeded 3,400. He especially has an excellent skill in the young adult (20-30) ministry because this age group comprises more than 70% among members in the church. Nowadays, the number of attendees for Sunday service exceeds ten thousand.

Pastor Beonguhk Jeon, the most powerful leader in the new generation, has created a new fashion in a revival of the young adults in the Korean church by his powerful and challenging delivery of the Word and Gospel preaching. He has been concentrating his efforts on helping the Korean church, soaked with the sense of defeat, regain the wild nature of faith and the practice of Gospel preaching by his characteristic and unobstructed plain speaking. He is neither a brilliant speaker with a powerful voice, nor an intellectual preacher imbued with a desk-theology. Shouting continuously the essence of the Gospel, the essence of faith, the essence of prayer, he gives a significant challenge to many Christian young adults and pastors through his practical ministry.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid., 288.

#### His Homiletics

Pastor Jeon emphasizes the importance of pursuing the essence of the Christian faith in his preaching. The essence of the Christian faith that he preaches is only the Cross of Jesus Christ. He says in his preaching as follows:

The first thing the church must do is to restore the essence of the church. It is shouting out the Cross of Jesus Christ who rescues the world. Believers' prayers should be changed; therefore, their spirit should be changed. The movement which manifests the Word of God should be started. You need to find the lost sheep and shine in the world in the middle of the dark. The ability cannot pour out from there until the essence is perfectly recovered.<sup>39</sup>

Jeon's preaching, which aims at pursuing the essence of faith, has gained popularity because he aims at "an easily understandable preaching style." He captivates the audience with splendid rhetoric and agile comments.

He explains "an easily understandable preaching style" as follows:

There are two types of preaching, "an easily understandable preaching style" and "an incomprehensible preaching style." When some pastors preach, they are under the illusion of the "well done preaching" which has intelligent and philosophical words. No matter how hard the believers try to listen, they cannot understand what he is talking about. What on earth is he talking about? His words seem to be Korean words, but they do not quite touch the believers' hearts. <sup>41</sup>

He makes the center of preaching not the text but the context for an easily understandable preaching style. The fact that he centers his preaching on the context causes simplicity of the text and emphasis of application of the Bible. This feature makes his preaching have a strong appeal to the audience.

Jeon is the one of the preachers who emphasizes the importance of reading for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Beonguhk Jeon, *Decide Your Future Right Now* (Seoul: Kyujang, 2010), 235.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Yongseob Jeong, Between Preaching and Instigation, 223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Beonguhk Jeon, *Power Romans* (Seoul: Kyujang, 2001), 209.

preachers. He says, "If reading were a bomb, preaching would be to ignite a detonator. The spiritual leader who will lead the generation of the young should be a great reader himself and start a thirst for reading in believers."

# **Analysis of Sermon Conclusion Types**

Pastor Jeon usually begins his sermons with speaking the passages of scripture and the sermon's title. He is one of the preachers who enjoy using illustrations in their sermons. Also, he often uses illustrations for the sermon conclusion. On average, he uses them three or more times per sermon. The illustrations that he uses are general stories, current affairs, life stories, and personal testimonies.

As shown by analyzing his sermon conclusions, the average length of his sermon is about thirty minutes, and the average length of conclusion is about three to five minutes. Further details will be addressed after analyzing the types of his sermon conclusions.

The writer randomly selected two of his sermon books which are bestsellers in the Korean church in order to analyze the types of his sermon conclusions. The results are as follows:

Sermon Book: Power Romans<sup>43</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	The Person Who Was Captivated by the Purpose	Romans 1:1-17	Exhortation
2	The Love Hidden in Wrath	1:18-32	Quotation of Another

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Beonguhk Jeon, "Reading is the Essential Ministry for Pastors," *Monthly Ministry* 326 (2003), 307.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Beonguhk Jeon, *Power Romans* (Seoul: Kyujang, 2001).

			Scripture
3	The People Who are Full of Themselves	2:1-16	Quotation of Another Scripture
4	A Vain Pride and a Faithful Obedience	2:17-3:8	Exhortation
5	Salvation through Faith	3:9-31	Illustration
6	The Righteousness of Abraham	4:1-25	Quotation of Another Scripture
7	The Result of Justification	5:1-11	Exhortation
8	More Powerful Grace than Sin	5:12-21	Quotation of Another Scripture
9	The Death of the Old Sinful Self and the Victory of Jesus Christ	6:1-14	Quotation of Another Scripture
10	Old Husband and New Husband	7: 1-12	Illustration
11	The Holy Spirit Who Is with the Miserable Person	7:14-8:11	Quotation of Another Scripture
12	The Way That the Person Who Is Controlled by the Holy Spirit Walks	8:12-25	Illustration
13	The Viewpoint of the Faith	8:26-39	Recapitulation
14	The Agony for the Soul	9:1-13	Quotation
15	The Providence of God	9:14-33	Illustration
16	How Can They Believe in Him if They Have Never Heard about Him?	10:1-21	Illustration
17	Salvation through Rest	11:1-12	Illustration
18	The Fruits Are Where Branches Broke	11:13-24	Exhortation
19	Victory through Worship	12:1-2	Illustration
20	The Serving Lives of the Believers	12:3-13	Application
21	Conquer Evil by Doing Good	12:14-21	Prayer
22	All Authority Belongs to God	13:1-7	Exhortation
23	Time Is Running Out	13:8-14	Quotation of Another Scripture
24	A Speck in Your Friend's Eye and a Log in Your Own	14:1-23	Quotation
25	The Missions of the Strong	15:1-13	Exhortation

26	The Biggest Grace	15:14-21	Exhortation
27	The Visions of Evangelism and Prayer	15:22-33	Exhortation (Q)
28	The Great Co-Workers	16:1-16	Application
29	The Power of the Gospel	16:17-27	Illustration

# Power Ecclesiastes<sup>44</sup>

No	Sermon Title	Scripture Passage	The Type of Conclusion
1	The Worth of Life	Ecclesiastes 1:1-11	Recapitulation
2	Two Types of Wisdom	1:12-18	Quotation
3	Unsatisfied Thirst	2:1-11	Illustration
4	Put Seasoning in Your Life	2:12-26	Quotation of Another Scripture
5	The Surplus Life	3:1-22	Quotation of Another Scripture
6	The Contradiction of Life and Conquering It	4:1-16	Quotation
7	The Power of Worship	5:1-7	Quotation of Another Scripture
8	Stewardship	5:8-20	Application
9	Conquering the Futility of Life	6:1-12	Exhortation
10	The Values of the Wise Person	7:1-10	Quotation of Another Scripture
11	The Benefits That Wisdom Gives	7:11-29	Recapitulation
12	The War with the Evils	8:1-17	Illustration
13	Death and Wisdom	9:1-10	Illustration
14	Changing a Dull Ax to a Sharp One	10:1-20	Quotation
15	Life is an Adventure	11:1-10	Application
16	The Believer Lives This Way	11:7-12:14	Application

According to the above analysis, Pastor Jeon used seven types of conclusions for

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Beonguhk Jeon, *Power Ecclesiastes* (Seoul: Kyujang, 2002).

forty-five sermons: Illustration (11) Quotation of Another Scripture (11), Exhortation (9), Quotation (5), Application (5), Recapitulation (3), and Prayer (1).

His favorite types of conclusion are Illustration and Quotation of Another

Scripture. According to the above analysis, he uses them eleven times each—in addition
to Quotation which he uses five times. It is used in about two out three of sermon
conclusions. This shows that he regularly reads many books, as well as the Bible.

Actually, he is an avid reader who reads two books or more a week. The illustrations that
he used in his sermon conclusions have real power which encourages the congregation to
action.

He often uses the quotation of another scripture for his sermon conclusions. That is how he demonstrates that preaching is not just a pastor's words but the words of God. Also, his second most frequent conclusion style after illustration and quotation of another scripture is exhortation because his congregation consists mainly of young adults. Especially, he enjoys using direct expressions in conclusions, which make his sermon conclusions more powerful.

It looks as if the types of his sermon conclusions lack variety compared to those of the other preachers. However, the types that he uses for his sermon conclusions are the most suitable types for delivering the sermon's main idea to the congregation. His sermon conclusions are always clear and concise but have power which encourages the congregation to action.

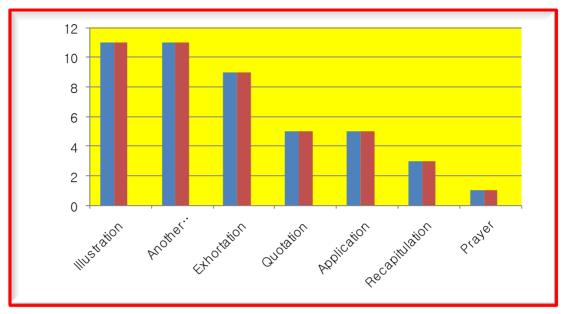


Figure 5.4 Beonguhk Jeon's Types of Conclusions

# **SUMMARY**

This chapter provided the analyses of the types of sermon conclusions of the four Korean representative preachers. According to the above analysis, Pastor Dongwon Lee used fourteen types of conclusions and his favorite type was illustration (ten of forty-eight). Pastor Sunhee Gwahk used twelve types of conclusions and his favorite type was illustration (ten of forty-eight). Pastor Hanhum Ohk used twelve types of conclusions and his favorite type was exhortation (sixteen of forty-five). Pastor Beonguhk Jeon used seven types of conclusions and his favorite type was illustration (eleven of forty-five). They used many illustrations for their sermon conclusions because they were avid readers and tried to deliver their sermons' main ideas to the audience to help them understand more clearly and easily.

They use their strengths in order to write their sermon conclusions, and use various types of sermon conclusions for their sermons as often as possible, because they

realize the importance of the sermon conclusion, which is the last moment that a preacher can deliver the main idea to the listeners for the final five minutes, so that they may apply it to their lives. The importance of the sermon conclusion for the effective sermon is established once again through the above analysis. The conclusion and suggestions will be presented in the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER 6**

# CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The sermon conclusion is the finishing part of the sermon, in which a preacher should be able to deliver the main idea and to accomplish the purpose of the sermon. As an attractive introduction leads the congregation to a sermon, an effective conclusion delivers the main ideas that inspire the congregation for a mission. Therefore, the sermon conclusion is the best opportunity for a preacher to lead his listeners to make spiritual decisions according to his spoken words. One should not neglect a well-prepared conclusion, thinking that the main contents in the sermon itself will make a good conclusion. However, an unprepared conclusion may cause to a preacher commit the following pitfalls: the broken-promise conclusion, the rambling conclusion, the furtive conclusion, and the abrupt conclusion. Obviously, unprepared conclusions make sermons less effective. Therefore, a preacher has to work on every sentence of the sermon conclusion as an artist does his best when he finishes his piece.

A preacher should first understand the purposes of a conclusion so that he can make it effective. The purposes of a conclusion are as follows: leave the central idea, carry out the aim, move the audience to action, and apply the text.

Good sermon conclusions do not automatically come out from a well-written sermon body. There are basic principles in making a good sermon conclusion. The conclusion should be prepared as soon as the main text is selected, should focus on the main idea, and should completely depend on the authority of the Bible, which can encourage and challenge each one of its listeners. In order to enhance the effectiveness of

the sermon conclusion, there should be only one conclusion, and it should be delivered powerfully so that the conclusion becomes the highlight of the sermon. The sermon conclusion always has a hopeful message, and it should be definite and concise. Preachers should never excuse their self-perceived weaknesses and failures in their conclusions, and they should not say the word *conclusion*. Writing the sermon conclusion is not limited to the final moment of the sermon, but the entire process of writing the sermon is focused on the conclusion. Therefore, writing the sermon conclusion is an important element which demands more time and effort that writing the other contents of the sermon.

The conclusion types are more various than most preachers are aware of. The types of conclusions are as follows: Recapitulation, Illustration, Exhortation, Application, Invitation, Quotation of the Text, Quotation of Another Scripture, Quotation, Shock or Surprise, Poem, Hymn, Encouragement, Question, Pronouncement of Blessing, Imagination, Prayer, Prophecy, and Contrast. A preacher can use only one conclusion type in a sermon, or he can use mixed-conclusion types. The most important thing is that a preacher seeks the most suitable type of conclusion, which can deliver the main idea of the text in a sermon. The most suitable conclusion can be a useful tool for enhancing the effectiveness of the sermon because it is the last opportunity to implant the main idea of the sermon in the congregation.

Four representative Korean preachers, Dongwon Lee, Sunhee Gwahk, Hanhum Ohk, and Beonguhk Jeon, have their favorite conclusions: Dongwon Lee prefers illustration (ten of forty-eight times), Sunhee Gwahk prefers illustration (ten of forty-eight times), Hanhum Ohk preferred exhortation (sixteen of forty-five times), and Beonguhk Jeon uses

illustration (eleven of forty-five times). By analysis, they most enjoy using illustrations in their sermon conclusions. Illustration is the most effective type of sermon conclusion which can deliver the main point of the sermon to the congregation. Although they have their favorite conclusions, they use other types of conclusions as well (Shock, Poem, Hymn, Pronouncement of Blessing, Imagination, Prophecy, and Contrast), which most preachers rarely use.

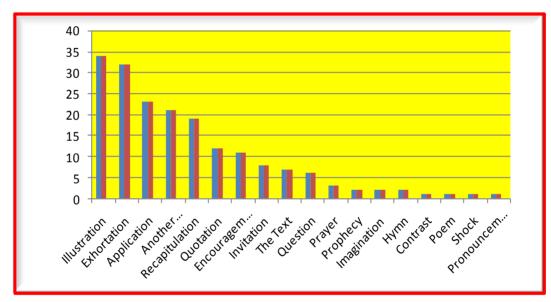


Figure 6.1 Four Representative Korean Preachers' Types of Conclusions

Those who realize the importance of the sermon conclusion use the various conclusions so that they can effectively deliver the main idea of the text to the congregation.

Therefore, the author suggests some recommendations on the basis of the results from this research for how to develop a model for writing a biblical conclusion to improve the effectiveness of preaching for Korean pastors.

First, a preacher must recognize the importance of the sermon conclusion. The last few words of a sermon conclusion leave a deep impression on listeners' hearts, and

lead them to spiritual decisions. Also, the sermon conclusion is the final opportunity to lead the congregation to personally encounter God.

Second, a sermon must have a single conclusion. This is a very important element for the listener's concentration and practice, because multiple conclusions may bring a burden and confusion to the listener's heart.

Third, the sermon conclusion must always be positive. If a preacher leaves his listeners depressed, hopeless, helpless, and broken, it is an unsuccessful sermon.

Therefore, he always should try to encourage the weakest and the wicked in the church, so that they may receive a message of hope. A positive conclusion moves the congregation to action.

Fourth, a preacher should have a rough draft of a conclusion before writing the sermon text. While writing down the sermon body concretely, a preacher can modify the sermon conclusion to deliver the contents of the sermon body more clearly. Therefore, the entire process of writing the sermon focuses upon the conclusion.

Fifth, a preacher should bear in mind that there are various types of sermon conclusions. Pastor Lee used fourteen types of sermon conclusions in his sermons. He is praised as an excellent preacher because he always tries to use various types of sermon conclusions. If a preacher uses the same type of conclusion every Sunday morning, the listeners' expectations will decline. However, if a preacher uses various types of sermon conclusions, he will realize that his listeners anticipate and respond to the change. Therefore, variety in sermon conclusions effectively delivers the main point of the sermon.

Sixth, a preacher should write the conclusion concisely. The biggest mistake for a

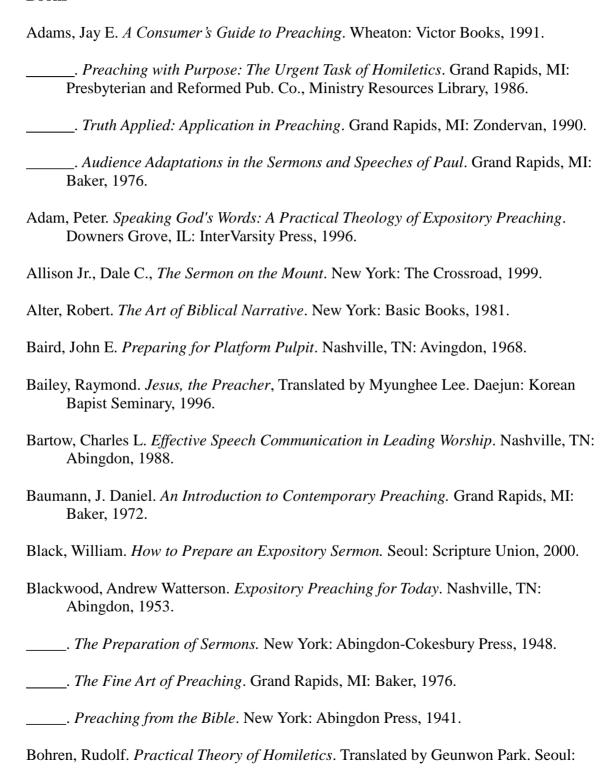
pastor in the sermon is to make the conclusion long. If a sermon is thirty minutes long, the conclusion should be about three minutes. The conclusion should be direct and concise and not longer than five minutes. The sermon length of four representative Korean pastors is three to five minutes on average.

Seventh, a preacher should remember that biblical authority is the basis of the sermon conclusion. The sermon conclusion should deliver the main idea of the biblical text, not a preacher's thoughts and words, because only the Word of God can change the whole person. The Holy Spirit illuminates the listeners' hearts to action when a preacher delivers the sermon conclusion based on biblical authority.

Eighth, a preacher should read many books. The four representative Korean preachers are avid readers because they take a profound interest in the listeners' lives. Reading is a useful tool to find and make the most suitable type for a sermon conclusion. Reading a variety of texts (novels, newspapers, magazines, Christian classics) allows the preachers to relate to the listeners, and helps them to deliver their sermons' main ideas to the listeners in a practical and appropriate way.

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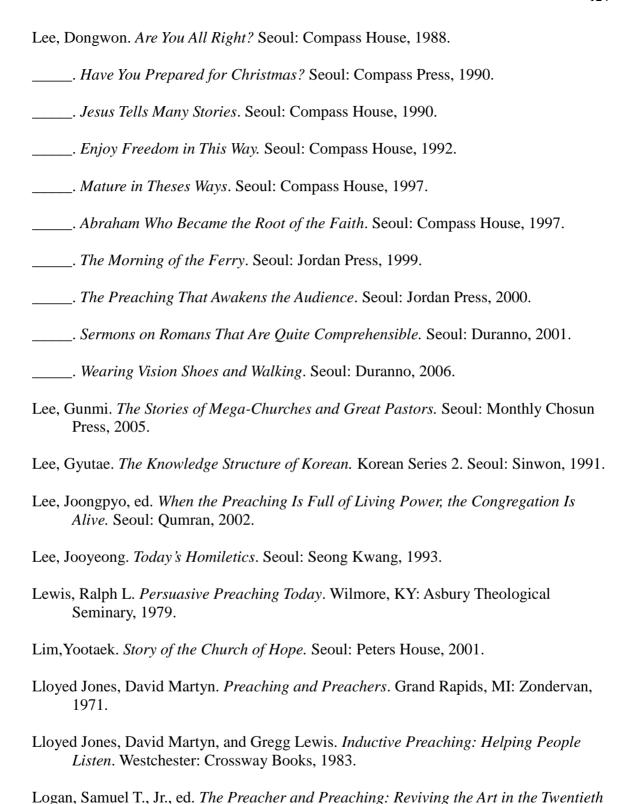


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# **VITA**

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# **EDUCATIONAL**

B. A., Kosin University, 1995.

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License: February, 1998, Korea Theological Seminary. Ordination: April 2001, Geoje Presbyterian Church.

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Associate Pastor, Jinhae Namil Church, 1993 - 1996.

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