

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Comparisons and Contrasts of Topical and Expository Preaching at the First Free Will  
Baptist Church of Tampa from 2005 – 2015**

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

by  
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Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

**Thesis Project Approval Sheet**

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Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project Abstract

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This study compares and contrasts two styles of preaching (Topical and Expository) at the First Free Will Baptist Church from 2005 – 2015. The objective of this study was to find if one method of preaching is more effective, biblical, and preferred for a congregation.

The strategy for this mixed research is to deploy multi-choice questions to capture quantitative data on the impact of the sermons on the listeners, and an open-ended question on the application aspect for qualitative data on the listeners' responses. Based on the results of the listener response questionnaire, recommendations were given based on the sermon survey responses. While many heated debates pitting topical against expository sermons within homiletical theory and practice, few authors, studies, and discourse have focused on the opinions, perceptions, and feelings of the hearers of the sermons. This project sought to weigh the hearers' views on the debate.

The findings of this study demonstrate that survey results favored both preaching styles. Whereas topical sermons appeared to be selected by participants as having an overall advantage over expository sermons based on the evaluation items, the sampled expository sermon forms possessed overall significant strengths as well.

## **Dedication**

I am thankful to my wife, Jennifer, who took over as mom and dad for Cadence and Emory, while I was away working on my Master's and Doctorate degrees. Jennifer, this doctoral degree is as much yours as it is mine.

To my children, thank you for seeking Christ in your own lives. I am very proud of you and know that Christ will shine brightly in your lives.

I am thankful for the ministry staff and the wonderful members of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa. I want to also thank Dr. Joel Breidenbaugh of Liberty University for his encouragement and tireless effort in keeping me on task.

Many great men have mentored me. Thank you, Rev. Roger Duncan, for being my pastor for over 35 years and Rev. Tom Malone, former President of Welch College, for your wisdom and counsel in the ministry. Each one of you has helped me in ways only eternity will be able to measure.

I would also like to thank my dad (Willie), mom (Susie), father-in-law (Gene), and mother-in-law (Marjorie) for being a constant source of encouragement.

Ultimately, my thanks belong to my Lord. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me, using me in your work, and giving me a home in heaven and a purpose on this earth.

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## Chapter 1:

### Introduction

#### Background of the Study

This dissertation project is an attempt to explicate that form of the Christian narrative, rhetoric, and discourse known as preaching. Specifically, this project compares and contrasts topical and expository preaching. Homileticians have, over the past several decades, made attempts to define preaching with high levels of vividness and urgency. Evidence for this claim comes from the way early authors attempted to clarify their theological and biblical understanding of preaching in their publications, and the number of chapters or paragraphs they dedicate to this topic.<sup>1</sup>

A working definition of preaching as espoused in several kinds of literature across various disciplines is that it is the delivery of a sermon, lecture, or religious discourse to an assembled group of hearers known as the congregation, typically in a church setting.<sup>2</sup> While this common definition is also acceptable among scholars and practitioners of homiletical theory and practice, the latter group would, however, prefer distinguishing preaching as the communication of the Word of God or the truth of God, voiced by man to men.<sup>3</sup> This definition, says Philips Brooks, emphasizes two elements: divine truth and personality.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Buttrick, *The Mystery and the Passion: A Homiletic Reading of the Biblical Traditions* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Siegfried Wenzel, *The Art of Preaching* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2013), xi–xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Abraham Kuruvilla, *Genesis: A Theological Commentary for Preachers* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 14; Ian Stackhouse and Oliver D. Crisp, *Text Message: The Centrality of Scripture in Preaching* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2014), 201; Literaty Zoltan, “The Paradox of the Preacher - The Great

Preaching is also about religious communication. As in other fields of communication, a religious context communication also involves the sender, the message, and the receiver. The sender is the chosen personality, and the preacher is a believer with a strong religious background. The message is the gospel or the Good News of the Kingdom of God.<sup>5</sup> The receiver may be a believer or skeptical hearer, and the preacher conveys the message to reaffirm the believer and persuade the skeptic. Thus, the preacher is the man God instructed to proclaim the Word and help hearers discover the gospel in their world and the Good News of the truth of God.<sup>6</sup>

There is widespread agreement among homileticians that the purpose of preaching is to convey and share biblical truth. There is also a sense in which some perceive preaching as both an art and a science: an art because it involves an appropriate form and pattern of delivering the message, and a science because it involves the application of various principles and techniques.<sup>7</sup> Thus, homileticians see the broad body of truth as extending far beyond its use in the pulpit. Preaching is seen as a narrative because it involves the systematic recitation of religious and biblical events. This rhetoric encompasses composition and use of language, and communication—especially public speaking—to reaffirm believers and persuade non-believers.<sup>8</sup>

Preachers from different cultures have studied preaching and written about what they have understood about the art and science of preaching. Teachers, students, and practitioners of

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Tension in Homiletics and Preaching,” in *Preaching Promise within the Paradoxes of Life*, ed. Len Hansen and Johan Cilliers (African Sun Media, 2018), 213.

<sup>5</sup> Stackhouse and Crisp, *Text Message*, 35.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Nelson Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching: A Step-By-Step Guide for Developing a One-Year Preaching Calendar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2002), 12.

<sup>7</sup> Kuruville, *Genesis*, 9.

<sup>8</sup> David Schnasa Jacobsen, *Homiletical Theology: Preaching as Doing Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 32.

preaching are generating a plethora of literature on homiletical theory and practice. Preachers are keen to derive as much information as possible about preaching from documented sources and use it to become more aware and critical. One challenge remains: to accept and use preaching that is authentic and effective in communicating with greater clarity an unadulterated Word of God, which will strengthen the preaching of the gospel.<sup>9</sup>

A sermon is composed of both content and form. There are two primary types of sermons: topical and expository. A topical sermon interprets a topic that relates to the contemporary need, issue, or situation of the congregation and delivers a sermon in light of the gospel. The origin or center is not in the exposition of a biblical text or theme.<sup>10</sup>

An expository sermon, on the other hand, uses an encounter with the biblical text or theme to interpret a congregation's needs and deliver a sermon that originates from the exposition of biblical passages.<sup>11</sup> Either topical or expository preaching may follow a pattern that is either deductive or inductive. In deductive preaching, the preacher announces the main premise, thesis, or central idea at the beginning of the sermon, then breaks it into points and sub-points, and delivers an explanation of those points.<sup>12</sup>

In deductive preaching, the hearers are already generally sympathetic to the main idea, and the preacher only enlarges upon it and relates it to their experience. Inductive preaching, on the other hand, moves the sermon from particular points and sub-points to the central idea or

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<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Arthurs, "True Preaching Is Biblical Preaching," *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 17, no. 2 (2017): 17–18.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas G. Gatzke, "The Future of Preaching? An Initial Exploration of Preaching in the Emerging Church," *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 6, no. 2 (2006): 68–69.

<sup>11</sup> Robb Moser, *Expository: Preach the Word*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Uplook Publishing, 2015), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Scott M. Gibson, "Preaching: Old and New," *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 5, no. 2 (2005): 2–3.

premise. The preacher invites hearers' participation and moves them from specific experiences, questions, examples, and observation into the awareness of aspects of life that need interpretation or explication in light of the Bible or Christian doctrines.<sup>13</sup>

When the content and pattern of both topical and expository preaching are taken into consideration, four general types of preaching can be discussed: topical-deductive preaching; topical inductive-preaching; expository-deductive preaching; and expository-inductive preaching.<sup>14</sup> Allen suggests that although these types of instruction take different routes to deliver the sermon, they all share a common purpose: to win skeptics to Christ and to strengthen believers in their faith. As indicated at the beginning of this section, the main focus of this dissertation project is comparing and contrasting topical and expository preaching.<sup>15</sup>

### **Statement of the Problem**

On any given Sunday, hundreds of thousands of men and women preach the Word of God to congregations with global memberships of hundreds of millions of congregants.<sup>16</sup> The preacher is viewed as the gifted and anointed communicator of the Word of God to faithful hearers. Preaching is ranked primarily as the most critical pastoral skill by congregations, seminarians, and church leadership.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> David Schnasa Jacobsen, *Toward a Homiletical Theology of Promise* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), 89.

<sup>14</sup> Zoë Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2018), 6–9.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 1–5.

<sup>16</sup> Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim, *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2018), 48.



Debates about preaching continue to generate confusion. Many preachers are more than ever concerned about the effectiveness of their sermons in communicating the Word of God. Preaching falls almost neatly into these same two necessary methods; topical and expository preaching.<sup>18</sup> Homiletical literature supporting either method tends to focus only on the qualities of the one being advocated over the other. However, such research mostly fails to offer empirical data based on the views, responses, and preferences of the hearers, seminary teachers, students, and practicing preachers.

Furthermore, the one-sided literature offers little argumentation for or against either method to give preaching a more balanced approach leading to confusion among seminary students and working preachers alike. Kent Hughes is of the view that the preaching of Christ and his apostles in the New Testament was predominantly expository. However, many preachers of the post-New Testament Christian church have primarily adopted a topical preaching style.<sup>19</sup>

The First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa, Florida, is a typical community where congregants are keen to hear what they consider to be good preaching. The church's pastors, missionaries, leaders, and seminary students are all eager to master the art of good preaching. It has, however, not been easy to define good teaching, and this Baptist congregation has been subjected to varied styles of sermonic offerings that differ according to the ordained pastor of the time. Baptist preachers tend to define good preaching more purposely, while hearers have instinctively focused on preaching that meets their needs, whether in a church service or radio

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<sup>18</sup> Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 176.

<sup>19</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word: New Testament Set* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2015), 25.

broadcast. However, whatever good preaching is, or is not, it is undoubtedly a significant enterprise for the church.<sup>20</sup>

What constitutes good preaching? Is it about the eloquence of the preacher or the content of the sermon? Is it perhaps about posture, fashion, or the length of the sermon? Most importantly, are the different styles of preaching that are documented in homiletical theory, theological literature, and debated by seminarians, congregants, and working ministers, varying in terms of their effectiveness? These uncertainties became a reality to this researcher when he was ordained as the Senior Pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa, Florida, in 2010. The question about the distinct styles of preaching, namely, topical and expository preaching, became more pronounced.

Being a faithful student of expository preaching, the researcher came into pastoral service at the church following the successful tenure of his predecessor, an avid topical preacher, who had firmly led the church for thirty-seven years from 1973 – 2010, earning much respect and deserved admiration from the congregation. The first few transitional months of the pastoral work there were tense. However, by the grace of God, it was a matter of time before the congregants began to appreciate the new preaching style and became attentive once more.

Even though there were reasonable strides made in delivering expository sermons for five years from 2010 – 2015, the question remains: “Between topical and expository preaching styles, is one more faithful and effective when preaching the Word of God?” This question is relevant and essential to the Free Will Baptist Church community to date as many emerging preachers

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<sup>20</sup> Robb Moser, *Expository: Preach The Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Uplook, 2015), 56.

seem to question whether the Bible is viewed today as it was a few centuries ago. Pastors must pay full attention to how they go about delivering sermons to post-modern congregations.

The conviction underlying this study is that the more the clergy and laity understand preaching as an essential process of communication, the more faithful they can be in engaging in its discourse and practice as instructed by God. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to compare and contrast these two distinct styles of homiletics in the context of the First Free Will Baptist Church from 2005 – 2015.

Two senior pastors served the congregation during the period studied. The first pastor served five years (2005 – 2010), delivering topical sermons, and the second one, this researcher, served the subsequent five years (2010 – 2015), delivering expository sermons. The study will seek retrospective listener responses to their experiences, views, and preferences between the topical and expository preaching styles produced during these periods. The inquiry will interview First Free Will Baptist Church students, teachers, clergy, and laity to explore their opinions on which preaching style is admonished in the Scriptures. The study will also seek to find support from related theological theories. An anonymous survey will be included to see what the congregation has learned biblically from each model of preaching.

Findings from this study are expected to generate a clearer understanding of communication between topical and expository preaching. The study will ascertain how the hearers of the Word at the First Free Will Baptist Church respond to different methods of instruction and perhaps the style they prefer more than the other. As a result of the design of the study, this inquiry will motivate a more active engagement in the communication process by both the clergy and laity of the First Free Will Baptist Church.

### **Statement of Limitations**

This study develops and progresses within the boundaries of specific limitations and parameters as elucidated in the following sections.

#### **The First Free Will Baptist Church**

First, this project dissertation deals specifically with the First Free Will Baptist congregation of Tampa, Florida. The unique setting of this Baptist community congregation is the context of this preaching research. While the findings of this study can be generalized beyond the gathering of this church, the efforts of this study are focused specifically and exclusively on the preaching events in the First Free Will Baptist Church between 2005 – 2015, and consequently, the conclusions of this project will apply primarily to this congregation.

#### **Liturgical Preaching**

Second, the preaching events evaluated in this study are limited only to the liturgical gatherings of the First Free Will Baptist Church congregation within the stipulated period. All other teachings, seminar, or conference events where the Word of God must have been communicated, are considered to have not been in the context of preaching and are therefore not part of an evaluation of this project.

#### **Theological Presuppositions**

The third parameter for this study is based on the fundamental premise that preaching is a dialogical event that involves the preacher and the listening congregation (the hearers), interacting with the Word of God, with the preacher as the intermediary.<sup>21</sup> Theological literature fully acknowledges that God delivers the Word, which he has spoken through the ministry of a

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<sup>21</sup> Colin Holmes and David Lindsay, “In Search of Christian Theological Research Methodology,” *SAGE Open* 8, no. 4 (2018): 1–9.

preacher, whom he gifts and commands to communicate it to his people through preaching. This man is the preacher, who communicates by reading the Scriptures and conveying the Word. No attempt is made in this study to assert or validate this presupposition concerning God and man, or the two senior pastors under research inquiry and their congregation.<sup>22</sup>

This study is anchored on the biblical teaching of salvation and on the doctrines of the First Free Will Baptist Church community, which teaches that those who call upon the Lord cannot do so without first believing in him. Furthermore, for them to believe, they must hear about him, and they cannot hear about him without an ordained man of God preaching to them.<sup>23</sup>

### **Empirical Limitations**

The fourth limitation of this study concerns the empirical methodology adopted. Homiletical and historical literature focusing on the past, theoretical, and conceptual comparisons of the topical and expository methods of preaching are not comprehensive or exhaustive.<sup>24</sup> As such, this study will attempt to review the background of topical and expository preaching. It will also extract a sufficient sample of preaching theory and establish the general trends that topical and expository preaching has been accorded.<sup>25</sup>

For the empirical study an evaluation of the congregants' responses through developed research instruments will be examined and compared using descriptive statistics (means, percentages, and standard deviations) as well as inferential statistics (correlations and

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<sup>22</sup> John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Auckland, New Zealand: Titus Books, 2014), 39.

<sup>23</sup> Romans 10:14. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the King James Version (KJV).

<sup>24</sup> Jerry Vines and James L. Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 188.

<sup>25</sup> Holmes and Lindsay, "In Search of Christian Theological Research Methodology," 1–9.

regressions). The analyses will be computed by Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS). Both qualitative and quantitative data will be analyzed. Findings from the study will form the sole basis for comparative evaluation between topical and expository preaching. These elaborated practical limitations are the last parameters perceived and considered in this study.<sup>26</sup>

### **Theoretical Basis**

This part of the project is an attempt to understand the delivery of a sermon from the theological thinking of homiletics, and to teach how such preaching impacts the listener. Preaching is supremely essential for the Christian community and the First Free Will Baptist Church congregation, as Christ Jesus, himself was a preacher. Scriptures taught that Jesus went out to preach the gospel of God's kingdom in Galilee. When Jesus saw a multitude of people, he began to preach, teach, and deliver a sermon.<sup>27</sup> According to the Scriptures, the very heart of Christ's preaching was the message of repentance, belief, and holiness.

A sermon is defined as the public discourse on a moral or religious theme delivered by a preacher during a church service.<sup>28</sup> For many centuries, sermons have reached far larger audiences than any other oral or written forms of discourse. Sermons are a form of verbal communication involving the speaker and the congregation.<sup>29</sup> In the live relationship between these two parties, the former is the speaker of the Word of God, and the latter are the hearers. By its very nature as a consecrated event, the sacred character of the message it carries, and the

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<sup>26</sup> Kevin Gary Smith, *Writing and Research: A Guide for Theological Students* (Cumbria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2016), 116.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 5:1-2

<sup>28</sup> J.D. O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1977), 114.

<sup>29</sup> Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013), 23.

unique gift of its ordained speaker, the sermon gains authority that sets it apart from non-ritualistic rhetoric and commands immense potential effect on its hearers.

There is a broad spectrum of opinion regarding what constitutes preaching?

Homileticians and preachers have continued questioning how and in what ways the Word of God can be communicated effectively.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1500s and 1600s, instruction was referred to by such terms as the “ecclesiastical rhetoric” and “sacred eloquence.” In the late 1600s onwards, it became known as “homiletics.” Many theological authors today defined preaching as the “rhetoric of the sermon.” In the Bible, preaching is described as “to herald,” “to proclaim,” or “to cry aloud.” To herald is different from teaching, though it includes teaching.<sup>31</sup> Today, homiletics is defined as the study, art, science, and practice of preaching. It consists of composing and delivering a sermon or religious homily or lecture to the public, usually to faithful congregations.<sup>32</sup>

Over time, several insights, definitions, and emphases have been added to homiletics by many different scholars, practitioners, and authors—making the theory of preaching a complex field. The word, *homiletics*, traces its origins to the pre-Christian Jewish synagogue of the nineteenth century. The Latin Church later adopted the term *homilia* to describe its analytical form of the sermon. The Latin Church also adopted the terms *sermo* and *praedicatio* for other congregational sermon forms. These two terms refer to the English derivation of sermon and preaching.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ramona Hosu, “God’s Word among Hermeneutics, Exegesis and Homiletics,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 16, no. 48 (2017): 561–565.

<sup>31</sup> Mark 1:15

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 72.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 163–202.

Today, the most common understanding of the term preaching is often made about the delivery of a sermon or religious oration to an assembly of congregants in a church. Biblically, preaching is that which is performed by one who stands in Christ's stead, proclaiming, illuminating, exemplifying, and firmly beseeching God's Word, in such a way that it is possible for congregations to accept Christ and prepare for heaven, or reject it and perish.<sup>34</sup>

Recent developments in homiletical theory have been accompanied by several advances in theological theories and preaching models. Contemporary preaching theories operate from a diversity of insights and presuppositions. Preaching in its intention and style has tended to vary across Christian denominations and individual preachers. Even within well-established denominations with defined doctrines, beliefs, and faith, such as the Free Will Baptist Church, homiletic models have been seen to differ among teachers, students, and practitioners.<sup>35</sup> For instance, some champion expository preaching, while others prefer delivering topical sermons in their preaching.<sup>36</sup>

How a preacher perceives and defines preaching, including its content, pattern, norms, and practices, as well as their role in it, is constrained by many factors. For instance, one factor is the preacher's ecclesial and familial background.<sup>37</sup>

Insights from systems theory in social sciences help explain how preachers understand they are a part and the outgrowth of the faith-based denominational system that they have grown up in, socially and spiritually. It is this researchers opinion, that denominational background

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<sup>34</sup> Zoltan, "The Paradox of the Preacher - The Great Tension in Homiletics and Preaching," 211–214.

<sup>35</sup> Buttrick, *The Mystery and the Passion*, 18.

<sup>36</sup> Walter C. Jr Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 49.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



dictates a preacher's perspective and understanding of their homiletics, theology, sermon, and liturgy. The tradition of the preacher's denomination or church influences how they conduct their church ministries; what one ought to do or not do.<sup>38</sup>

Matters that pertain to familial, ecclesial, denominational, and in some cases, demographic, origins and backgrounds, influence how the preacher conceives the gospel. This understanding is not uniform across preaching theory and practice. Every preacher has their working knowledge of theological, homiletical, and hermeneutical perceptions of communicating the gospel. This working understanding influences the preacher's perception of the ultimate message of a sermon, faith, Christianity, the Christian congregation, and God's purpose for humanity and the world. The preacher uses their sense of ecclesiology to discern what a church is, its purpose, its vision, and its mission regarding God's economy in his creations.<sup>39</sup>

The preacher formulates, delivers, and structures the liturgy in which the sermon dwells according to the inspired theological and hermeneutical force, which Andre Resner refers to as the preacher's "working understanding of the gospel."<sup>40</sup> The preacher's functional knowledge of the teaching guides the preacher's pattern of movement within each of the domains that pertain to preaching: Bible, narrative/rhetoric, liturgy, congregational/church context, and self as the preacher. This movement influences how—against the backdrop of denominational, ecclesial,

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<sup>38</sup> Andre Resner, "Do You See this Woman" (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 215–218.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 213–214.

and sociocultural contexts—the preacher conceives and uses the Bible, performs liturgy and pastorally challenges context, and at the same time tames the self as a witness of Christ.<sup>41</sup>

The preacher's devotion influences the selection of a sermon that befits appropriate uses of the Bible, rhetoric, and personality. As shown, the preacher is constrained by several familial, ecclesial, and denominational factors, but ultimately not bounded. The theological quality of preaching does not allow for the preacher to be circumscribed. The power of God, mission of Jesus Christ, and the drive of the Holy Spirit set the preacher free to be the agent of the gospel of Good News in his context. From a theological perspective, the preacher is ordained by the church to set him apart as a man chosen by God for his ministry among people.<sup>42</sup>

This last statement is the reason preaching is challenging to define conclusively, whether it is based on the historical, social, political, or psychological interpretation of any time. Preaching, by its nature, transcends any bound conditions surrounding the proclamation of the gospel. Andre Resner is of the view that the sense of a preacher's freedom—amidst all the perceived constraints of context, tradition, family, demographics, denomination, ecclesial and church polity—needs stark examination. Although the above time, cultural, communal, and personal constraints place expectations on the preacher, no one is instructing the preacher what to say or how to say it. However, there is the risk of disgraceful choices of narratives and rhetoric in a sermon.<sup>43</sup>

In summary, the theological and homiletical principle that underpins this research study are that Christian preaching must be rooted in the Word of God as instructed in the Bible. The

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<sup>41</sup> Resner, "Do You See this Woman," 215–218.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Apostle Paul lays this foundation in many of his writings, where he admonishes his followers to preach the Word and God's truth. Since preaching is a biblical instruction, a preacher's preaching style will affect how they develop and deliver their sermon. The hermeneutical approach they choose affects the design of preaching.<sup>44</sup>

This theoretical comparison commences with a definition of Christian instruction in general and Baptist teaching in particular. Although the concept of preaching, baptism, and salvation are similar in many Christian denominations, the doctrines that underpin it in the Baptist church differ as a matter of philosophy and belief. The operating definition of preaching in this inquiry is conceptualized from the disciplines of philosophy, communication, and homiletics.<sup>45</sup>

The congregation of the First Free Will Baptist Church uses preaching to teach the Bible, glorify God, reach out to sinners so that they may be saved, and communicate with believers so that they may grow to Christian maturity. The Free Will Baptist community believes preaching the gospel is the highest calling, and that it involves the communication of the truth of the Word of God by the preacher to his church. Free Will Baptists believe that Christ commissions good preaching.<sup>46</sup> It is about witnessing his goodness. Preachers come with different personalities. However, personality, whether charismatic, theatrical, or captivating, must not supersede scriptural truth.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 38.

<sup>45</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Robert E. Picirilli, *Free Will Baptist History* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2015), 155.

<sup>47</sup> Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 34.

### **Statement of Methodology**

The study will be primarily descriptive and cross-sectional to allow for the identification of the pattern of preaching outcomes and interpretations across the church population. This design is relatively cheaper, less time-consuming, and less labor-intensive. The study will adopt a mixed-methods research design, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from both secondary and primary sources.

Having examined a theoretical basis for the topical and expository methods of preaching and noted the historical development of preaching in the literature review, a field survey will be conducted. The main question driving this inquiry is, “Between topical and expository preaching styles, which is the one preferred by listeners as the more effective style of preaching the Word of God?”

In addition to establishing the preaching methodological preferences of the First Free Will Baptist Church congregation regarding topical and expository preaching, the study will also include a literature review of biblical interpretations of preaching the sermon through the question, “What are the biblical interpretations of preaching among homiletical authors and preachers?” This question will be answered through the review of the literature.

As a preacher makes use of hermeneutical tools in the process of producing a sermon; and therefore, this study will attempt to discover the possible changes or shifts that have taken place in the application of such tools and time resources in preaching. It is not the intention of this study to establish causal relationships, only to establish trends and themes that emerge in the comparison between topical and expository preaching.

As a methodology, therefore, this research study will use the preaching sermons conducted between 2005 – 2015, in which both preaching methods (topical and expository) were

demonstrated for the research sample (members of the congregation of the First Free Will Baptist Church). The sermons, all in recorded form (compact disc), will be sampled and played to the participants before being administered with a followup questionnaire. To maintain the credibility of the data collected in this research project, the questionnaire deployed will only reveal the preaching method of the recording used at the very end. A total of 30 sermons (15 topical and 15 expository) are used for analysis in this project. The participants will be asked to rate the sermons, how they were delivered, and how they were applied in their lives.

As the study will be performed *posteriori*, that is, using information and data based on phenomena or events that happened in the past (in the case of this inquiry 2005 – 2015), a retrospective study will be adopted. The project intends to look backward and examine the exposure of the target population (the Free Will Baptist Church congregation) to both topical and expository sermon forms concerning their preference, biblical exegesis, and outcomes.

There exist some varieties of retrospective studies, but the most appropriate that will be adopted in this project is the retrospective cross-sectional study, also identified as a *snapshot* study in the literature. Members of the church will form the study population, which is considered in this inquiry as a group of individuals that are exposed to the standard variable under investigation. Accordingly, the target of the study will include members of the First Free Will Baptist Church congregation who have been exposed to topical and expository preaching between 2005 – 2015, topical between 2005 – 2010, and expository between 2010 – 2015. Sampling will be randomly done so that all the members of the church who are above the age of 18 will have an equal chance of being selected.

The sampling procedure will include listing all adult church members by their full names in the surname-middle name-first name format in the sampling frame. The order of the names is

alphabetically arranged and numbered. Randomly, the selection of the names will make a sample size that represents a fourth of the church members who have been present for both styles of preaching. The sample size will total at least 100 members who attend church regularly and have attended during both pastors' tenure. These members will be invited to participate in the survey.<sup>48</sup>

Members of the sample will be informed about the study and will be assured of their privacy and confidentiality. They will, however, be informed that findings from the study may be used for both academic and practical reasons; and may be published without including any information that may be traced back to them. Participation will be voluntary, and if anyone feels unable to proceed, they can withdraw without giving any reasons. These details will be captured in a contractual consent form that will be provided to the participants (See Appendix B).

Data collection will be conducted as follows. The instrumentation to collect data will be a questionnaire developed based on the review of the literature. The questionnaire will contain both closed-ended and open-ended questions to allow for some level of flexibility in listener responses.<sup>49</sup>

Practically, however, the time needed for in-depth insights and thoughtful written responses after listening to an audio sermon on Compact Disc (CD) will be limited. To address this challenge, the design of the questionnaire will pose fifteen closed-ended questions, while one question will be open-ended. The closed-ended questions will help provide more consistency

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<sup>48</sup> Smith, *Writing and Research*, 91–93.

<sup>49</sup> Kevin Gary Smith argues that it is important for participants in a research project to be able to put responses qualitatively in their own words as much as possible, by way of filling open-ended questions in a questionnaire. Kevin Gary Smith, *Writing and Research: A Guide for Theological Students* (Cumbria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2016), 59.

in the type of information and data collected. The open-ended question will provide more in-depth insight.

Another envisaged challenge is that, given the time limitation of the project and practical reasons, it will not be possible for each of the 100 participants to listen to all the 30 sermons (15 topical and 15 expository) that are the subject of analysis in this project. It will be more practical for the participants to pick and listen to only two (2) sermons: one (1) topical sermon; and one (1) expository sermon. This allows all the 30 sermons an equal chance of being selected and listened to by the participants. The whole process of sermon-listening is expected to take a maximum of four weeks to complete.

The research strategy that is utilized in this inquiry will be mixed methods, and as such, significant attention is given to the issue of validity and reliability. There are several philosophical paradigms employed in research, including the pragmatic viewpoint, which supports mixed methods research anchored on the statement of the problem and research question.<sup>50</sup> This paradigm will be adopted in this research project. Data analysis will be conducted qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative analysis will involve the use of SPSS and Excel, focusing on descriptive and inferential statistics. It will be numerical. Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, will include categorization of responses into themes and analyzing the participants' responses textually.<sup>51</sup>

Generalizability of the study will be limited to the First Free Will Baptist Church and its clergy and laity. This church community will be the primary beneficiaries of the findings of this inquiry project. The challenges and successes of any particular preaching method will be shared

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<sup>50</sup> Smith, *Writing and Research*, 91.

<sup>51</sup> Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 38.

and considered by any other Christian church clergy. The units of analyses will be the sermons preached by two different pastors between 2005 – 2015, with topical sermons and expository sermons being preached during subsequent 5-year spans, respectively.

### **Review of Literature**

A literature review was conducted to develop knowledge and understanding of the concept of preaching, particularly relating to topical and expository forms of preaching. Some writers relegate preaching definitions to later chapters; however, preaching and related concepts are introduced earlier in most of the publications reviewed. Literature concerning itself with preaching theories, styles, and methods as well as sermon forms and types (i.e., homiletics) exists in abundance. The present study used secondary sources for the literature review. These sources were grouped into two categories: (1) scholarly references (i.e., books, past researches, magazines, and journal articles); and (2) the scriptural sources (i.e., the Bible and biblical passages).

### **Scholarly Sources and Texts**

While there was an intention to focus on the more recent sources published, some older works were also found extremely useful in clarifying the subject matter and were included in the review of the literature and the study. Homiletics is a broad field; and therefore, a review of literature covering this field in its entirety was not only impossible given the time and other resource constraints for the present project, but would also prove unnecessary as the focus was on two types of preaching methods (i.e., topical and expository preaching) experienced in the First Free Will Baptist Church within a specified period.



## Preaching and the Sermon.

Preaching and its close relative, the sermon, were briefly defined in the section of this thesis. Much is expected of the preacher, but not much is told to the preacher as to what method of preaching is appropriate or biblical. Andre Resner sees what he describes as awful freedom of making scandalous choices in the pulpit.<sup>52</sup> This is an indication that preachers can and do sometimes refract the gospel, despite not wishing to be irrelevant.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to review what constitutes biblical preaching.

In the opening chapter of his book *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*, Paul Scott Wilson attempts to illustrate what is meant by biblical preaching and observes that the starting place of preaching must be the Bible.<sup>54</sup> This book—and Wilson’s observation—is very important for this study because ministers at the First Free Will Baptist Church strive to base their preaching on the Bible because their Christian congregants seek to conform their lives in obedience with Christ’s teaching and instructions.<sup>55</sup> Wilson argues that preaching can only be biblical when a sermon uses the Bible’s texts, images, and stories in a manner that communicates exactly what the Bible says without refractions.<sup>56</sup>

Preaching is defined as the proclamation of God’s Word, not the pastor’s word. Many Christian churches adopt teachings, sermons, social, and cultural issues that have their foundation in the Bible. What a preacher picks from the Bible may not be necessarily what makes for a good sermon. This observation is very critical in the context of the First Free Will

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<sup>52</sup> Resner, “Do You See This Woman? A Little Exercise in Homiletical Theology,” 18.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2004), 7–8.

<sup>55</sup> Bryant, *The Awakening of the Freewill Baptists*, 139–141.

<sup>56</sup> Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*, 7.

Baptist Church, where the most important part of any service is the preaching of the gospel.<sup>57</sup>

According to Paul Scott Wilson, students of homiletics spend much time trying to master the art and science of exegesis so that they can, through prayer, discern what the text says and what it does not.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Gospel Traditions.**

There is no clear or conclusive definition or understanding among homileticians about what the gospel is. Edward Farley, in the book, *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry*, delves into this broad, and for many, confusing concept of the gospel. The book is helpful for this study as it provides a catalyst for discerning the concept and practice of gospel concerning the Scriptures. Farley challenges the prevailing perspective that is readily acceptable to the supposition that every passage from the Bible, when it is used by the preacher, either by the preacher's selection or by utilizing a defined lectionary, is necessarily good preaching. He challenges the readers to think about preaching the gospel, and not just the content of the biblical passages. He describes the gospel as the teaching of Christ. Christ's life centered around the mission of preaching, from which one can derive the Christian doctrines.<sup>59</sup>

Resner argues that Farley may have overstated his claim because Christian preaching is basically about preaching the gospel, but agrees that preaching may have space to do other things such as church processes, canons, and polity, which may not be interpreted as a proclamation of the Word, but constitute the beliefs of Christians and the church.<sup>60</sup> Resner concludes a preacher's

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<sup>57</sup> Gibson and Kim, *Homiletics and Hermeneutics*, 56.

<sup>58</sup> Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 71–82.

<sup>60</sup> Resner, "Do You See This Woman? A Little Exercise in Homiletical Theology," 19.

delivery of the sermon is shaped by theological, ecclesial, liturgical, and decisive biblical influences. These conscious pre-decisions influence how a preacher uses the Bible in preaching and making theological assertions.<sup>61</sup>

Religious literature is awash with attempts to define topical and expository methods of preaching. Standard references, along with major texts in theology, deal with these two methods as relating to or deriving by reasoning from rhetoric or oral communication dimensions.<sup>62</sup> There is marked consistency in the way these concepts are defined. Some evangelical ministers give primacy to expository preaching. However, some, including those in seminal scholarship, are increasingly embracing topical preaching to communicate to the post-modern Christian audience.<sup>63</sup>

A Christian community crisis emerges as a preaching dichotomy that needs exploration and explaining within the First Free Will Baptist Church deepens. Is topical preaching an error? Should preachers try and avoid topical sermons in the future? These questions will be investigated in this inquiry. The book *Preaching as the Word of God: Answering an Old Question with Speech-Act Theory* by Sam Chan, is essential to this research because it helps clarify the context and purpose of preaching as communication from God to man. This book is useful in this research as it helps to understand how preaching can be God talking to humanity. Chan examines the biblical perspective to the proclamation of the Word of God and provides texts that can help understand what is meant by faithful preaching.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>62</sup> Chan, *Preaching as the Word of God*, 216–218.

<sup>63</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 34.

<sup>64</sup> Chan, *Preaching as the Word of God*, 217.

In the following sections, I attempt to define and differentiate between topical and expository preaching styles using theological literature and biblical text.

### **Topical Preaching**

A definition of topical preaching is provided in the book, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, where Ronald J. Allen explains that topical preaching is the kind of sermon that involves the teacher choosing a biblical subject, and preaching it while supporting the sermon with the Scripture. In other words, according to Allen, topical sermons cover a single biblical topic.<sup>65</sup>

This understanding is important to this research as it provides a balanced approach to the types of preaching so that students and preachers can understand where topical preachers are coming from. The book urges preachers and critics of topical preaching to pause and reflect on the potential role honorable topical sermons can play in addressing social issues in the community. Allen educates preachers that they can occasionally use topical preaching in a humble, disciplined, theologically mature manner to address these issues.<sup>66</sup> According to Allen, the preacher prays for the Holy Spirit to guide him when choosing a topic that touches humanity, religion, and morals that relate to the Bible.<sup>67</sup>

Allen is not the only one who has attempted to define topical preaching. John A. Broadus, in his book, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, refers to topical preaching as a subject-sermon and differentiates it from expository preaching which he terms text-preaching.<sup>68</sup> *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* elucidates some of the materials and delivery

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<sup>65</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 25.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>68</sup> Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 74.

strategies that can be used in topical preaching. As such, the importance of this book in this study emanates from the desire to explore the different methods that are used in preaching, how they differ, and the theological and scriptural implications of those styles.<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, Scott Gibson and Matthew Kim, in their book *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, argue that every preacher likely has on one or more occasion utilized topical preaching, primarily when their sermon focused on a particular topic or theme expressed in any one or more scriptural passages.<sup>70</sup> The book is essential in this study as it offers a discussion of the current streams of homiletics and encourages ministers to learn to preach using alternative traditions, including topical preaching.<sup>71</sup>

Free Will Baptist ministers who elect to adopt topical sermons develop their significant subjects from their perceptions and firm convictions about Christian life, and then use biblical passages to solidify the minor points they are delivering in their rhetorical sermon to the congregation. It is often argued that topical preachers derive their practice from homiletical theory, seminary training, or mentorship.<sup>72</sup> As demonstrated, topical preachers select the sermon that is right for the lesson they want to deliver to their congregation and then connect the themes or ideas they lectured about with the Bible.

In *Preaching as the Word of God*, Sam Chan likened topical preaching to a research inquiry complete with a problem statement, objectives, the value of the sermon, a review of the biblical text, and findings supported by the text.<sup>73</sup> If the current problem is a conflict between

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>70</sup> Gibson and Kim, *Homiletics and Hermeneutics*, 11.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>72</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 30.

<sup>73</sup> Chan, *Preaching as the Word of God*, 218.

church members about a construction project, perhaps the pastor chooses to preach about conflict resolution and the sin of unresolved conflict and anger.<sup>74</sup>

According to Ronald Allen, in *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, topical preaching has its positives and negatives. It allows the preacher some level of flexibility and can allow a sermon to cover the biblical subject under consideration comprehensively. Some preachers develop some lesson plans that enable preachers to include lectures in a series format over a stipulated period.<sup>75</sup>

Topical sermons educate congregations about the current issues that affect them directly on topics ranging from family to poverty, disease, the danger of technological advancement, and entrepreneurship using sermons backed by biblical texts. The Bible has scriptures that address every facet of human existence, including God's purpose for us. Hans Malmström, in the study titled "*Engaging the Congregation: The Place of Metadiscourse in Contemporary Preaching*," ponders the role of listeners in influencing the forms of contemporary preaching. There is increasingly a call from homiletics to focus on the hearer not solely in proclaiming the gospel but also as a means of social and communicative engagement. This stance is often adopted in topical preaching. This research article is crucial as it provides more in-depth insight into the *how* of homiletics and exegesis.<sup>76</sup>

However, the topical or "bespoke" sermon, even though it may appeal to and meet the needs of the hearers within the church community, remains the most criticized sermon design and suffers a bad reputation, especially from preachers who embrace traditional instruction. For instance, Jason Meyer, in *Preaching: A Biblical Theology*, argues that topical preaching gives a

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>75</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 82.

<sup>76</sup> Hans Malmström, "Engaging the Congregation: The Place of Metadiscourse in Contemporary Preaching," *Applied Linguistics* 37, no. 4 (2016): 561–582, accessed July 7, 2019, 579.

lot of room for ministers to manipulate biblical texts to suit a message preconceived from personal prejudices or preferences.<sup>77</sup> Meyer argues that topical preaching has produced some of the most significant abuses of the Bible, both in exegesis and application. Joel Breidenbaugh, in *Preaching For Bodybuilding*, states that topical preaching begins with an idea in a preacher's mind, and for that reason, this kind of preaching is labeled as "an idea in search of a text."<sup>78</sup> Breidenbaugh's book is vital in this research as it provides important resources for helping seminary students, as well as preachers, to distinguish and embrace good preaching and use it to encounter God and be transformed by him.

Another analysis of good preaching was done by Paul Scott Wilson, who authored *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*. Wilson analyzes the quality of preaching from the perspective of homiletics and takes into consideration the recent trends in biblical, theological, and pastoral preaching, as the specific art of public teaching. This book is essential because it offers insight into the dynamic methods of instruction. It argues that preaching has not manifested as a static enterprise over the years and should be analyzed carefully from a scholarly and biblical perspective.<sup>79</sup>

### **Expository Preaching**

Advocates of expository preaching, such as Alan Hirsch have argued that inheriting new formulas to grow the Body of Christ is not tenable. In his book, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements*, Hirsch advises seminary students who have a vision for increasing the future church to harness the power of traditional expository church preaching.

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<sup>77</sup> Jason C. Meyer, *Preaching: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013), 199.

<sup>78</sup> Joel Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding: Integrating Doctrine and Expository Preaching for the 21st Century*, 2nd ed. (Orlando: Renovate Publishing Group, 2016), 44.

<sup>79</sup> Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*, 150.

Hirsch believes expository preaching was responsible for growing the number of church adherents from tens of thousands at the time of inception of the church to hundreds of millions currently.<sup>80</sup>

The significant difference between topical and expository preaching is that the latter uses the biblical text as the basis for exegesis. Topical preaching identifies a current event, issue, or situation that affects the church or congregation and uses minor points from the Bible to address it. Expository preaching identifies a text from a biblical passage and proclaims it to the congregation in such a way that members of the church hear what the Bible says, relate it with their personal lives, and make a decision to salvation and daily living based on what the Scripture admonishes.<sup>81</sup>

According to R. Kent Hughes in *Preaching the Word*, an expository sermon bases itself upon the scriptural passage it expounds, to find the main idea or theme of the passage, relate it to the context of why it was chosen, and offer a detailed analysis. This author uses his book *Preaching the Word: New Testament Set* to teach and help preachers, pastors, and anyone with a divine calling to preach the Word of God on how they can interpret and apply the Scripture in their preaching. The book focuses on and features the entire New Testament and documents insight from respected Bible preachers and scholars.<sup>82</sup>

Hughes explains that expository preachers carefully study the meaning of a scriptural passage and obtain a central thought of the text. His book is part of the many theological kinds of literature and many practicing ministers that argue that expository preaching is the most

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<sup>80</sup> Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 144.

<sup>81</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 2–3.

<sup>82</sup> Hughes, *Preaching the Word*, 11.



powerful, the gold standard, of preaching. This book offers readers a well-versed resource for expository preaching, teaching, and personal study.<sup>83</sup>

Walter C. Kaiser Jr., in *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*, perceives expository sermons as more rooted in the divine. The Word of God is a revelation of God himself to humanity. He chooses a human vessel, the preacher, as a medium to reveal him to humankind.<sup>84</sup> Kaiser proposes a method of exegesis and homiletics that involves contextual, syntactical, verbal, theological analysis, which is essential in shaping and understanding expository preaching in this study.<sup>85</sup>

Abraham Kuruvilla explores the chasm between scriptural text and life application in the book *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching*. Kuruvilla defined expository preaching as that which culminates to the glorification of God and offers a useful insight to homiletic teachers, students, and preachers interested in an exposition of the Word. This author used scriptural passages to remind preachers what God intends for them and expects them to be as his human vessels. According to Kuruvilla, the Bible should inform the preaching and not vice versa.<sup>86</sup>

According to Jerry Vines and James L. Shaddix, in *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons*,<sup>87</sup> and *Progress in the Pulpit: How to Grow in Your Preaching*,<sup>88</sup> the Scripture expounds preaching as a communication that has its roots in God's

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>84</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 168.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>86</sup> Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 28.

<sup>87</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 9.

<sup>88</sup> Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit: How to Grow in Your Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017), 12.

revelation of the truth, which can only be derived from the Scriptures.<sup>89</sup> Vines and Shaddix state that God anoints and ordains people who can help their fellow humans to understand his Word. According to them, the call to preach is the call to preach the Word of God and not topical issues. The authors recognize that times are changing and with these changes come new challenges in preaching. They give guidelines and tools that can be used by contemporary teachers, students, and preachers in delivering pure expository sermons and faithfully proclaiming the Word.<sup>90</sup>

Jerry Vines and Adam B. Dooley in *Passion in the Pulpit: How to Exegete the Emotion of Scripture* explain that expository preaching proclaims and teaches God's revelation, but they also explain that the exegete helps hearers to make meaning of the biblical text concerning their contemporary lives and make the interpretation practical.<sup>91</sup> According to these authors, the biblical passage may be interpreted and relayed as a warning, conviction, or as a way of rebuking sin, or as a means of encouragement and strength for the oppressed. The preacher addresses his congregants with the message of God and reasons with them from the Scriptures verse by verse while evoking the Bible's emotional intent.

The expository preacher chooses a book and lets it guide the content of the sermon as he moves through it from verse to verse. He sometimes receives feedback from his hearers, and may also give a testimony, confession, or profession of what he has witnessed as God's grace and love before his listeners. By doing so, expository preachers agree with what God has said and

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<sup>89</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 11.

<sup>90</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 13.

<sup>91</sup> Jerry Vines and Adam B. Dooley, *Passion in the Pulpit: How to Exegete the Emotion of Scripture* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018), 24.

sent them to say. They present the message from the gospel in the most compelling way possible.<sup>92</sup>

### **Scriptural Sources and Texts**

Practitioners of homiletics need to develop the correct understanding of the content of the Bible and understanding of the Gospel. Preaching is one of the most critical aspects of Christianity. Many examples exist in the Bible that show how different biblical personalities used God's Word and accomplished good preaching.

In biblical theology, God speaks, acts, and is encountered through his Word.<sup>93</sup> Most of the current homiletical language of preaching and styles of sermons are derived from the Bible.<sup>94</sup> Jonathan Griffiths, in the book *Preaching in the New Testament*, offers perhaps the most detailed biblical concept of biblical preaching that is adopted in this dissertation project. According to this author, many Christians share the belief that the Word of God is the lifeblood and heart of His plans for the gospel. God's Word offers vitality for the health of the church, and is the central role of the preacher, who is also the pastor and teacher.<sup>95</sup>

Griffith's book is useful in the study as it moves away from the "how-to" of preaching that characterizes the majority of books on preaching to concentrate on the character of theology, homiletics, hermeneutics, and exegetics according to the Scripture. Moreover, the book delves into the topic of post-apostolic preaching; how it relates to the preaching of the Old Testament,

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<sup>92</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 27.

<sup>93</sup> Jonathan Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 9–13.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–4.

and that of Jesus and his Apostles in the New Testament. The author introduces three different Greek words associated with preaching: *Euangelizomai*, *Katangellō*, and *Kēryssō*.<sup>96</sup>

### **God speaks through his Word.**

Paul admonishes preachers that God's Word is breathed out by God himself and instructs them to preach this word.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the Bible originates from God and contains his own words. The Scripture is a living document; God spoke in the past and continues to speak today in the same unaltered script.<sup>98</sup> In the Bible, God's Word is said to be living and active.<sup>99</sup> Griffiths observes that the Old Testament places biblical text, words spoken by God, in the contemporary context, feelings, and disposition of Jesus Christ.<sup>100</sup>

### **God acts through his Word.**

James emphasizes the power of the tongue in effecting change.<sup>101</sup> The tongue is described as a small thing that is capable of many things (James 3:5-6). If the words of humans are so powerful, then preachers must remain conscious about the power of the words of God, for it is through his Word that the heavens and the earth were created (Psalm 36:6-9). Christians are born again by his Word, according to the Gospel of the New Testament (John 3:6-7). The Word does not only bring salvation, but it also expresses God's judgment to those who hear but ignores his Word, and to the false preacher who proclaims falsehood in his Name.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 17–33; Smith, *God's Good Design*, 17.

<sup>97</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:2

<sup>98</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 9–10.

<sup>99</sup> Hebrews 4:12

<sup>100</sup> Hebrews 1:6, 8; 3:7; 2-11-12; 4:12; Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 10.

<sup>101</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 11.

<sup>102</sup> Jeremiah 23:29; John 3:6-7; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 19:15-21; Isaiah 55:10-11

### God is encountered in his Word.

God is presented in the Scripture as a God who speaks, and His Word is action. He relates to us through the Word; therefore, an encounter with the Scripture is essentially an encounter with God.<sup>103</sup> The Bible tells us that even God manifested himself to human beings physically to illuminate his presence amongst us, such as through the burning bush, the substance of his meeting with us is through his Word, a verbal engagement.<sup>104</sup> Jesus also promises to manifest himself to us through the Word. He sent us the Holy Spirit as the mediator of the Word, the medium through which the relationship between the believer and the resurrected Jesus is established and maintained.<sup>105</sup>

### Conclusion

In conclusion, a preacher must be aware that when ministering the Word, it is God meeting, relating, and speaking his living and active Word to his people through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the ministry of preaching is specially set apart from any other form of church ministry.<sup>106</sup>

The language of the Bible introduces many styles of preaching, such as *Kerygma* (proclamation), Prophecy (pastoral), and *Didache* (teaching).<sup>107</sup> This language outlines the expected roles of the preacher. The preacher is called by God to pursue his Word, perform his Word, and proclaim his Word.<sup>108</sup> According to Griffiths, the word *Euangelizomai* appears fifty-four times in the Bible with the ulterior motive and instruction to preachers to bring, announce,

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<sup>103</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 13.

<sup>104</sup> Exodus 3:3, 3:7-4; 17; 1 Kings 19:11-13; Hebrews 1:1-4; John 1:1-3, 14

<sup>105</sup> John 14:20-24; John 15:4, 7; 16:4-15; 17; 1 John 1:1-3

<sup>106</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 16.

<sup>107</sup> James I. H. McDonald, *Kerygma and Didache: The Articulation and Structure of the Earliest Christian Message* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>108</sup> Olford, Olford, and Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching*, 2-5.

and relay the Good News to God's people.<sup>109</sup> The preacher is God's messenger. *Katangellō* occurs eighteen times in the Bible and means to proclaim or announce the Word by a recognized authority. *Kēryssō* appears fifty-nine times in the Bible and means to announce, make known, or proclaim aloud—as a herald—on behalf of another. Claire Smith states that these three verbs reflect the didactic activity of the preacher of announcing the gospel and proclaiming it.<sup>110</sup> The congregation of the First Free Will Baptist church believes the proclamation of the gospel is the highest and most glorious calling. Therefore, preaching is used to declare the Word, reach out to sinners so that they may be saved, and to communicate to believers so that they may grow to Christian maturity.

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<sup>109</sup> Griffiths, *Preaching in the New Testament*, 20.

<sup>110</sup> Smith, *God's Good Design*, 163–205.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **Topical Preaching Versus Expository Preaching: A Theoretical and Historical Comparison**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this project is to compare and contrast the topical and expository methods of preaching. Therefore, a theoretical, descriptive, and historical comparison of these two fundamental methods of sermonic form, pattern, and delivery is made.

This comparison is presented as follows. First, some definitions of topical and expository preaching methods as elucidated in homiletical and theological literature are offered. Second, homiletical and theological literature relating to topical and expository preaching is reviewed and synthesized. This will help unearth any pertinent emphases and trends that are useful for describing and comparing the two methods of preaching. Third, the benefits and dangers of both topical and expository methods of preaching are compared and contrasted. Fourth, a historical comparison of the methods as they have developed throughout Christian preaching is conducted. Lastly, brief concluding remarks are given at the end of the chapter.

#### **A Comparison of Definitions**

What is topical preaching, and what constitutes a topical sermon? What is expository preaching, and what constitutes an expository sermon? Better yet, how might a preacher know if he has delivered a topical or expository sermon in his preaching? How might his hearers know if they have heard a topical or expository sermon? These questions are a bit more difficult than they might first appear. A consensus definition of what topical or expository preaching might be is stubbornly elusive with definitions differing from preacher to preacher and from author to author. The fact that different observers tend to have different conclusions about a preacher and

his type of sermon raises a possibility that the different observers may be using the same topical-expository vocabulary but with different meanings of those terms.

According to Ministry International Journal for Pastors, the term “topical” describes content and form that relates to, or focuses on, a topic that is currently, and most temporarily, in the news, trending or popular; and that is of interest and relevance today.<sup>1</sup> David Helm defines *expository* as empowered preaching that rightfully submits the shape and emphasis of the sermon to the shape and emphasis of a biblical text. To expose is to lay bare: to uncover or discover something in a way that others did not initially perceive or know.<sup>2</sup>

Whereas topical preaching may constitute delivering sermons relating to, or arranged by, topics founded on current affairs of interest; expository preaching may constitute delivering sermons that elucidate, interpret, illuminate, or explicate. The application of the words topical and expository further contrasts them when employed in homiletics. Harold T. Bryson, in his book, *Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching Through a Bible Book* provides ways that this project finds useful in contrasting topical and expository preaching based on the usage of the terms. Bryson argues that preachers use expository preaching in three fundamental ways: etymologically, morphologically, and philosophically.<sup>3</sup> These ways are, by extension, employed in this project to compare and contrast expository and topical preaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Floyd Brees, *Should You Try Topical Preaching?* (Ministry Magazine: November 1991), 26.

<sup>2</sup> David Helm, *Expositional Preaching: How We Speak God's Word Today* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2014), 42.

<sup>3</sup> Harold T. Bryson, *Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching Through a Bible Book* (Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 1995), 39.



### Etymologically

Etymology refers to the historical development of a word. Many authors and preachers use topical and expository in connection with their etymology.<sup>4</sup> Based on its root, "topical" refers to preaching that covers a current topic that concerns the hearers of the sermon. Topical preaching then is preaching a sermon that majors on a subject that is of ongoing concern to the congregation. "Expository," on the other hand, refers to preaching that exposes, explains, and elucidates the Bible.<sup>5</sup> Expository preaching, therefore, is preaching that focuses on teaching the Word, and offering a commentary on the scriptural text. Whereas the topical preacher is eager to speak to an issue outside of the Bible, the expositor is keen to unearth biblical information from the canonical text and examine it with delight from different angles.<sup>6</sup>

### Morphologically

Kerry McGonigal, a homiletics teacher, uses the analogy of a caterpillar to explain the meaning of expository, he notes that as caterpillars morph smoothly into butterflies, they change in *form*.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, a morphological use to *topical* and *expository* underlines the form of preaching the sermon and the sermon itself. Typically, the structure for topical preaching and the topical sermon is this: the preacher characteristically uses a single or several passages that relate to a topic that is currently trending in the news or local place. The preacher determines the organization and development of the sermon instead of the text, as in expository preaching.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Writers e.g., Kerry McGonigal, "Preaching and Preachers," *Preaching & Preachers*, last modified 2013, accessed October 27, 2019, <https://preachingandpreachers.com>.

<sup>5</sup> Bryson, *Expository Preaching*, 39.

<sup>6</sup> J. Kent Edwards, *Deep Preaching: Creating Sermons That Go Beyond the Superficial* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 63.

<sup>7</sup> McGonigal, "Preaching and Preachers."

<sup>8</sup> Bryson, *Expository Preaching*, 39.

The form of expository preaching and the expository sermon is this: The content, organization, and development of the sermon is typically limited to one primary passage or text of the Scripture, not multiple ones. The main point (the big idea and its main points, say I., II., III), and its sub-points (the subordinate ideas, say A., B., C.) of the sermon are developed and clarified from within the text of the Scripture and its context.<sup>9</sup>

The preacher explains the biblical passage in the context of the ancient witness and applies its inherent spiritual truths in the context of our contemporary situations and lives. To be precise, the expository sermon involves not only text selection and form, but also content and intent. In other words, the preacher explains the text and its application. The text or thought unit for the sermon may range from a single sentence to a paragraph or a whole section to the entire book in the Bible.<sup>10</sup>

For some preachers, the sermon may not just be a single message from a single unit of the Bible, but a series of sermons through a section or entire book of the Bible, a form commonly known as consecutive exposition or expository book series. Morphologically, expository preaching becomes different from textual preaching, which traditionally gets its form and structure from one scriptural text: organization and development of the main points come from one passage, but the preacher develops those main points from other scriptural passages outside the immediate text. The main points of the sermon could be “God’s Love for His People” or “God’s Gift to the World” coming from one text (e.g., John 3:16), but the development of those main points may come from outside the Book of John.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Zimmerman, “No Longer Second-Class Sermons,” 36–38.

<sup>11</sup> Bryson, *Expository Preaching*, 39.

### Philosophically

Topical and expository preaching can also be contrasted philosophically. A preaching philosophy is a worldview, reality, nature of knowledge, attitude, or stance taken by a preacher or writer concerning homiletics, theology, or biblical hermeneutics and exegesis.

Philosophically, topical preaching involves a sermon that is organized around a central thought, where the main points and sub-points of the sermon are developed by the preacher and supported by proof texts from the Scriptures. Some preachers who believe in the power of the sermon to teach, prefer to use topical sermons. Some tend to deliver a few topical sermons on occasion while others focus exclusively on topical preaching.

For the believers of exposition, expository preaching, philosophically speaking, is the only true *biblical* and Christian preaching.<sup>12</sup> In his book *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, Haddon W. Robinson defines expository preaching as the communication of a biblical concept, conveyed through a historical, grammatical, and literary exploration, analysis, and review of a scriptural passage in its context. The Holy Spirit first applies the biblical concept to the character, understanding, and practice of the preacher. Then through the preacher, the Holy Spirit applies the idea to the hearers.<sup>13</sup>

From the above definitions, it is apparent that several have attempted to offer some standard definitions of topical and expository preaching as supported by classical preachers or philosophers and the Scripture. The work of many authors, teachers, and preachers has yielded some marked consistency in the way topical and expository preaching can be defined. This

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<sup>12</sup> John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 222–223.

<sup>13</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 3–5.

consistency has helped draw a thin line between what can be defined as a topical or an expository sermon.<sup>14</sup> However, a significant difference that emerges from a critical analysis of these definitions is that a sermon can be said to be topical when its form is considered and expository when its philosophy is considered. What matters to preachers is that the text(s) employed in a sermon is handled in a manner that is as hermeneutically faithful and responsible as possible.<sup>15</sup>

### **A Comparison of Trends**

For this project, merely defining topical and expository preaching is only a beginning in explaining these two models of sermons. While the foregoing definitions offer a foundation for developing the comparisons sought in this project, a comparative description of topical and expository is necessary in order to examine how these models influence a preaching event and its receptivity by the hearers. This comparison focuses on examining the homiletical trends in topical and expository sermons from a review of theological, homiletical, and hermeneutical literature.

One major trend that emerges in homiletical literature about *topical preaching* is that this model has been both applauded and condemned by many writers and preachers.<sup>16</sup> According to Mark Barger Elliott, it is the one preaching method that has kept “falling in and out of homiletical fashion” over the years.<sup>17</sup> This indicates that at one particular time, topical sermons can be fashionable and approved of, yet in another, disapproved.

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<sup>14</sup> Bryson, *Expository Preaching*, 39.

<sup>15</sup> McGonigal, “Preaching and Preachers.”

<sup>16</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 19.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Barger Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 57.

*Expository preaching*, on the other hand, has come to be described as the model and philosophy that stands for authentic biblical preaching. The expository method of preaching stands as the most dominant method in terms of the number of authors and preachers advocating for it in homiletic texts. Interestingly, however, topical preaching remains the most practiced method by many preachers across various denominations. For a period spanning close to a century, expository preaching has been the subject of sustained calls for revival in homiletical circles. This is evidenced in the volume of literature that has analyzed and advocated exposition as the more viable and credible method for preaching today. Even in literature on topical preaching, Ronald J. Allen has advocated for both methods at the pulpit. Trends for these two methods are further described separately in the later sections.

### **Trends in Topical Preaching**

Mark Barger Elliott, in the book *Creative Styles of Preaching*, poses, “Is topical preaching a gospel or biblical sermon?”<sup>18</sup> Ronald J. Allen answers this question. He explains that, in its fundamental meaning, topical preaching is the kind of sermon that involves the teacher choosing a biblical subject and preaching it while supporting the sermon with the Scripture. In other words, according to Allen, topical sermons cover a single biblical topic.<sup>19</sup> Citing Allen, Elliott says that a topical sermon is one in which a preacher interprets a given topic from the perspective of the gospel and addresses it from the stance of the gospel itself than from the stance of the exposition of any biblical passage.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching*, 58.

<sup>19</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching*, 58.

Elliot goes on to argue that the Bible is not the only tool that is used to guide how Christians should live with each other and interact with the world.<sup>21</sup> Also, according to Allen, the Bible may occasionally be implicit on some matters and can, in some instances, hardly be used as a guide to address certain issues.<sup>22</sup> Elliot concludes that a topical sermon, therefore, may not be explicitly linked to or grounded in a passage from the Bible but critically seeks to be in harmony with the ancient biblical witness.<sup>23</sup>

Long says that a topical sermon is only one step shy of a direct encounter with the biblical text since the theological themes to which it appeals are themselves the product of a prior encounter with the biblical text and interpretation of the Scripture. According to Long, topical preaching is, in some sense, biblical preaching, the only difference being that the Scripture and its interpretation stands in front of, or behind, the biblical text.<sup>24</sup> There is legitimacy in David Buttrick's assertion that topical sermons may never mention the Bible, but many of them are "truly biblical in spirit and content."<sup>25</sup> Allen explains that *the gospel* is about the life of Jesus Christ, but also about the Christian tradition. The tradition where the preacher has an impeccable acquaintance with Scripture, contemporary doctrinal reflection, and the search for faith and development of the witness of the church.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching*, 58.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 53.

<sup>25</sup> Buttrick, *The Mystery and the Passion*, 54.

<sup>26</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 5.

Therefore, a topical sermon will entail the Bible, theology, other biblical study material, and current issues.<sup>27</sup> Charles Handren, in *Preach the Word*, notes that topical preachers build their sermon content around a general theme that does not derive from a section or a particular book of the Bible to address doctrinal issues, spiritual disciplines, ethical issues, and practical issues.<sup>28</sup> Long concludes that topical sermons are those that are generally in line with theological themes, creeds, and doctrines descending as closely as possible from the Bible.<sup>29</sup>

Preceding considerations in mind, topical preaching is the sermon whose forms develop from the narratives and concepts of the subject. The theme derives from the text but is discoursed independently of the text. After topic selection, the preacher scans the Scriptures in search of a light that can illuminate the topic under consideration. Biblical doctrines would best be preached under topical sermons as “subject-sermons.”<sup>30</sup> Some authors such as David Buttrick observe that the preacher’s choice of headings, whether on the individual, family, church, or the corporate is arbitrary. The preacher’s pre-decision is determined by his consciousness of the self-in-the-world and the world-in-the self.<sup>31</sup>

According to Allen, a topical sermon interprets the conceived topic in light of the gospel. The gospel communicated through the preacher is that God loves all his creation unconditionally and wills justice for each one of them. A topical sermon envisions and educates the congregation of what God’s world is in terms of his eternal love and justice for all His Creation.<sup>32</sup> Allen also

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<sup>27</sup> Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching*, 58.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Handren, *Preach the Word* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2012), 19–25.

<sup>29</sup> Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 53–54.

<sup>30</sup> Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 307.

<sup>31</sup> Buttrick, *The Mystery and the Passion*, 107.

<sup>32</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 7.

argues that topical preaching should never replace expository preaching as the fundamental method of sermon delivery at the pulpit. Rather, he proposes, topical preaching should be another possibility occasionally applied in support of regular expository preaching. In his own words, a topical sermon should be a “vitamin supplement to the wholesome menu of a conventional textual sermon from the Scriptures.”<sup>33</sup> Allen posits that a preacher becomes aware of a topic through many ways and life’s moments: a conversation with members of the church, peers or elders, evening news, while hiking, or after watching a movie. He concludes, if social media had been a feature in 1992 when he was writing the book, he probably would have added Twitter and Facebook. As the topical sermon is occasional by default rather than by design, the preacher does not often look for the subject for the sermon. Circumstance, issues, needs, and situations are inevitable in life, and these turn up.<sup>34</sup>

Allen states that circumstances that call for bringing together the gospel and congregation may include engaging the Bible critically when there is a doctrinal, social, human, or environmental emergency that needs addressing. Other circumstances include when the church faces a crisis of decision when the Bible is silent on these issues or offers vague similarities. When the topical is larger than a given biblical passage, or when the preacher hopes to use a biblical text as both a springboard and glue that brings the topic into unity with the hearer’s expectations.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>35</sup> Ronald J. Allen, ed., *Patterns of Preaching: A Sermon Sampler* (Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 1998), 149.



### Trends in Expository Preaching

As defined previously in this paper, expository preaching is a sermon method that details the essence and meaning of a scriptural text. The preacher prayerfully interprets and communicates what the Word of God means by what it says. Various authors have emerged attempting to define expository preaching resulting in many varied definitions.<sup>36</sup> Joel Breidenbaugh contends that the 21<sup>st</sup> century may have witnessed a blurring in definitional clarity of some terms used in homiletical vernacular, partly due to what he calls the increasing use of technology and cellphone texting in evangelicalism. Preachers engaged in this behavior, and their heavy schedules of public speaking, have contributed to somewhat vague definitions of expository preaching. Each one of the supposed expositors claims to be one, when they may not be.<sup>37</sup>

An unclear and ambiguous understanding of exposition is one of the primary reasons why many well-meaning preachers erroneously claim to have delivered an expository sermon. After being presented with one of those incorrect internet definitions of expository preaching, some preachers proclaim and celebrate having an expository homiletical approach in their sermon delivery—often wrongly.<sup>38</sup> Different descriptions of expository preaching can be found in various books, and each of them appears to be correct, creating ambiguity.<sup>39</sup>

The present project dissertation gives a synthesis of the multiple definitions by various authors by identifying the following attributes: First, all the definitions found in the literature

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<sup>36</sup> Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 307.

<sup>37</sup> Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding*, 34.

<sup>38</sup> Jack Hughes, *Expository Preaching with Word Pictures: With Illustrations from the Sermons of Thomas Watson* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2001), 44–47.

<sup>39</sup> Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding*, 42–43.

unanimously declare that the content of a sermon or preaching is the Bible, the Word of God.

The second attribute defining exposition is the homiletical and theological method. The preacher prays and then summons his hermeneutical gift in interpreting the words, images, and stories of the ancient witness of the text. The third attribute concerns the sermon quality, the accuracy of the preacher in interpreting the biblical scriptures.<sup>40</sup>

The fourth attribute is the goal of the sermon. Revealing what God, the ancient witnesses, and the authors of the Scripture meant by what they communicated in words, images, and stories becomes the purpose of the sermon. Expositors relate the biblical text to the hearers' life experiences and how the believers can apply the passage of the Scripture in their lives. Fifth, the expositor applies the sermon personally and delivers it in the power of the Holy Spirit. The sixth and last attribute appearing in the literature concerning expository preaching is the mode of delivery of the sermon, or proclamation of the Word.<sup>41</sup>

Breidenbaugh is critical of the dogmatic perspectives of what he considers extremist expositors who see any other type of preaching as not real preaching. He argues that such standpoints can only emerge from a constricted homiletic view of what preaching is as well as an error of a limited definition of expository preaching. Breidenbaugh attempts to provide a working definition of expository preaching, a description that he argues can adequately handle the details of the biblical passage, which instructs that preaching should rightly divide the word

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<sup>40</sup> Wayne McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 8–10.

<sup>41</sup> The works of various authors have produced multiple definitions of expository preaching, e.g., Hughes, *Expository Preaching with Word Pictures*; Wenzel, *The Art of Preaching*; Olford, Olford and Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching*.

of truth.<sup>42</sup> Breidenbaugh defines expository preaching as the communication of biblical text in a brief format. The communication that is foremost empowered by the Holy Spirit, and whose primary concern is interpreting this brief biblical text “in light of the historical, contextual, grammatical, syntactical, and doctrinal significance of that text.” The contents of the preacher’s message, drawn from that biblical text, are applied first to the preacher and then to the listeners of the Word.<sup>43</sup>

The value and importance attributed to these definitions are necessary. First, a preacher who lacks in exegetical skill is susceptible to misinterpreting the text, which is a recipe for the false proclamation and ungodly sermonizing in the pulpit. The Bible instructs men who are ordained to be the shepherds of his sheep to be careful of what they do to the sheep. The Bible admonishes them that they shall be held to different standards of accountability.<sup>44</sup> Thus, preachers are reminded that as conveyors of truth, they must interpret the Word accurately so as not to lead men astray.<sup>45</sup>

### **A Comparison of Rationales**

The comparison of topical and expository preaching moves from definition and description to identify a rationale for both methods as offered in the literature. The explanation provided determines what is positive (benefits) or negative (dangers) about both methods.

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<sup>42</sup> 2 Timothy 2:15; Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding*, 42–47.

<sup>43</sup> Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding*, 46–47.

<sup>44</sup> James 3:1.

<sup>45</sup> 2 Timothy 2:15.

### **A Rationale for Topical Preaching**

There is an increasing amount of theological and homiletical literature attempting to offer a rationale for adopting topical preaching. The rationale offered includes the benefits of topical preaching and an awareness of the potential risks of the method.

### **The Benefits of Topical Preaching**

Topical preaching offers certain strengths. It has been noted that as serious as the deficiencies attributed to topical sermons may be, they are not inherent to this type of preaching. Allen argues that the forms of topical preaching criticized by preachers such as David Buttrick and Ronald Sleeth were the earlier forms; those that the late Sleeth, a former American professor of preaching and homiletics, unapologetically labeled as topical preaching that has gone berserk. The advantages talked about here are concerned with topical preaching of the “revised type.”<sup>46</sup> Billy Sunday, who was the most well-known American evangelist, revivalist, and unfaltering keeper of traditional Christianity in the early twentieth century, found current thinking irresistible when he immersed himself right into preaching topics about war, gender, and race issues.<sup>47</sup>

The point here is that the preacher should remain guarded about drifting far away from the text when addressing a topical issue and that using topical sermons can be good when addressing potent matters that concern the church. Not to address compelling issues of the day could potentially break the church, the Body of Christ, right down the middle. Examples given include instances where there is a community crisis, such as insecurity, politically instigated hate

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<sup>46</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 8–9.

<sup>47</sup> Melani McAlister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 7.

speech, or even in instances where church polity, ecclesial issue, error, or sin needs to be addressed by the preacher. The preacher finds it essential to address this sin and then uses a topical sermon to affirm biblical views on the issue.<sup>48</sup>

Preachers who approve of topical preaching consider it the ideal homiletical method to deliver and argue it is more applicable in communicating on moral issues.<sup>49</sup> Supporters of topical preaching often applaud their desire to connect with their hearers and issues.<sup>50</sup>

Ronald J. Allen invites us to rethink the bad reputation often accorded topical preaching without looking constructively at its merits and demerits. He reminds us that many respectable and effective preachers have delivered honorable topical sermons for as far back as the records in the history of preaching can show.<sup>51</sup> Allen argues that topical preaching should not be considered a new idea of today's time and has been part of the church since its early years. Some authors have argued that although they may seem as unpopular, topical sermons have outnumbered all other sermon forms and types, including expository preaching.<sup>52</sup>

For instance, Thomas G. Long, in *The Witness of Preaching*, supports Allen's position and submits that through the years, really powerful sermons of the gospel have been preached that would not be said to have been linked explicitly to any particular biblical passage.<sup>53</sup> It seems that although today's trend is more toward expository preaching, the topical sermon form

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<sup>48</sup> Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Evangelistic Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Preaching Salvation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 123:135.

<sup>49</sup> Caleb Nathanael McIntosh, *Thirty-Minute Sermons: Sermon Outlines That Can Be Preached in Thirty Minutes* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2013), 1–4.

<sup>50</sup> Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching*, 57.

<sup>51</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, ix.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 9–11.

<sup>53</sup> Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 54–55.

is too strong and too important to disappear. Therefore, even the most ardent expository preacher might want to consider mastering the topical sermon. It will come in handy during a time of doctrinal or even societal turbulence that concerns the congregation and the church.<sup>54</sup>

This point is captured by Heather Joy Zimmerman, an advocate who argues for the case of redeeming topical preaching from the current attempt to relegate it completely to second-class status. Zimmerman finds that while topical preaching is not popular among many preachers and suffers from a bad reputation as the “unwelcome sub-sibling” of expository sermons in the most ecclesial preaching practices; nevertheless, it is pervasive, resilient, and thriving.<sup>55</sup> Other authors have noted that topical sermons can offer a powerful opening for present-day believers to carry their present-day burdens to the Word. Topical sermons have the potential to address, correct, and redeem a current doctrinal incongruence in the church. They accurately identify and address secular issues that potentially affect the welfare and faith of the congregation. Topical preachers do not merely command the attention of the hearers to the Word; they demonstrate that the Word cares and speaks powerfully into the worldly troubles of our time. Topical preachers claim to teach not only from the Scriptures to life but also from life to the Scriptures.<sup>56</sup>

The subject matter of the topical sermon is frequently drawn from the contemporary happenings that involve and are vital to the congregation. The preacher carefully selects and focuses on the topic, and invitingly frames the sermon to elicit the interest of the hearers. After this, the preacher then moves to the substance of the gospel. A topical sermon is, therefore,

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<sup>54</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 9–11.

<sup>55</sup> Heather Joy Zimmerman, “No Longer Second-Class Sermons,” *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 18, no. 1 (2018): 36.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

important in enlarging the experiences of the contents of the sermon and connecting them with the hearers.<sup>57</sup>

Topical sermons model the homiletical methods for the hearers and help them to understand and make meaning of life in light of the gospel. The preacher illustrates to the hearer how to identify the current need, situation, or circumstance (e.g., child molestation, terrorism, sexuality, marriage, communion, injustice, racism, police brutality, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day), how to analyze these situations from the perspective of the gospel, and how to make conclusions from the analysis.<sup>58</sup> In this regard, the topical sermon exhorts the hearers to consider making possible changes in their attitudes, perception, and behavior.<sup>59</sup>

The preacher leads the congregation to reflect deeper into the problem issue and develop alternative solutions to address and alleviate it. Listeners of the topical sermon develop a model of problem-solving from the perspective of the gospel, which they can transfer to other situations that relate to their religious and spiritual lives.<sup>60</sup> The challenges of modernity are increasingly needful of a sermon that offers to the Christian fraternity a practical, step-by-step method of reflecting and addressing personal and social issues. The preacher is obligated to ponder scriptural truths within the realm of biblical theology cautiously and to explore ways the truth of redemption is developed in the Bible and how it can be applied today.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 9–11.

<sup>58</sup> Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 30:53-54.

<sup>59</sup> Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 37.

<sup>60</sup> Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 31–32.

<sup>61</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 9–11.

Based on biblical history, the preacher is encouraged to compare, contrast, and synthesize, within the state of that biblical history, multiple texts speaking to a particular doctrine as it relates to a current issue affecting the Christian church. The preacher can raise and address regularly, the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith that may be neglected by the expositor.<sup>62</sup> With the best intention to stay true to the exposition, and deliver lengthy series on the Bible, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, the expositor may fall into the temptation of leaving some critical doctrines unaddressed longer than is safe for the church. A preacher can only deal with the Bible, one Scripture at a time, even in our intention to cover the whole counsel of the Word of God.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Dangers of Topical Preaching**

Topical preaching has taken quite a beating and has attracted many critics. A review of current literature on preaching practices reveals an attitude that firmly criticizes topical sermons and neglects its scholarship. This is elaborately captured by Heather Joy Zimmerman in the article “No Longer Second-Class Sermons,” where she quotes some scholars who have warned—or joked—that after every topical sermon, a whole year of praying, fasting, and repentance should follow.<sup>64</sup>

Zimmerman submits that this attitude against topical preaching is a reflection of the seemingly unbalanced focus on expository preaching by many authors, scholars, practitioners, and students of theology. Also, this attitude is occasioned by a lack of adequate attention to

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<sup>62</sup> Mike Graves and David J. Schlafer, eds., *What's the Shape of Narrative Preaching?* (Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2012), 76.

<sup>63</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 9–11.

<sup>64</sup> Zimmerman, “No Longer Second-Class Sermons,” 36.



topical preaching as a homiletical practice. The evidence is clear; there is a plethora of literature focusing on expository preaching and a dearth of research focusing on topical preaching.<sup>65</sup>

Even amongst some of the topical preaching advocates, there is some caution. For instance, Ronald J. Allen submits that this sermon form is only fit to be occasionally used under certain circumstances. Allen is steadfast in saying that even for the most powerful topical sermon that moves hearers and urges them to believe, the use of, and careful interpretation of, the Bible must not be neglected.<sup>66</sup> Mark Barger Elliott, in the book *Creative Styles of Preaching*, points out several critics that are cited as having charged that topical preaching push preachers out of the church's pulpit onto a small platform, a personal soapbox."<sup>67</sup>

One of the critics that Elliot mentions is Henry Emerson Fosdick, one of the most influential Baptist pastors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>68</sup> In a 1928 article published in *Harper's Magazine* titled, "What is the Matter with Preaching," Fosdick grumbles about topical preaching as being deficient. He chastises topical preachers for "starting from the wrong end," using the pulpit as a platform to lecture hearers about personal opinions on current matters of public interest instead of delivering sermons deriving from the biblical text.<sup>69</sup> In "Preaching: An Appeal to Memory," Fred B. Craddock warns that topical preachers may be tempted to forget that their call is to

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<sup>65</sup> Zimmerman, "No Longer Second-Class Sermons," 36.

<sup>66</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 19.

<sup>67</sup> Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching*, 57.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Henry Emerson Fosdick, "What is the Matter with Preaching?," in *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?*, ed. Mike Graves (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 9.

preach the Word and their right to do so is not because of what has gained currency in the news, but what they bring to their call.<sup>70</sup>

Great preachers have expected potential weaknesses in preaching the topical sermon. These preachers have long noted that the topical preachers should be careful not to bring in a non-religious approach to the topic. They warn that there may be a tendency to neglect the Scripture, which is the Word of God.<sup>71</sup> Some authors, however, observe that the blame lies more with the preacher than the method itself. The pulpiteer can deliver such pulpit content in a manner contributing to secularism. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who developed a project model preaching style, remarked that such preachers search out for topics in contemporary life and the broadcast media instead of the Bible. Fosdick admitted that the source of the sermon topic could come from anywhere, but strongly warns that it must be grounded in the biblical text.<sup>72</sup> In addition, the topical sermon tends to lack interest as topical preachers often fall into the inevitable temptation of planning too broadly or being selective in the text they use. They are not able to cover the territory before them well, use one facet of the doctrine, and end up misrepresenting it altogether.<sup>73</sup>

Topical preachers fail to properly extract doctrine from the narrative, consequently not valuing or even disregarding the biblical text, or narratives within the meta-narrative.<sup>74</sup> For example, it is one thing to deliver to hearers a sermon extract reading of the central facets of God

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<sup>70</sup> Fred B. Craddock, "Preaching: An Appeal to Memory," in *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?*, ed. Mike Graves (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 63.

<sup>71</sup> Steven J. Lawson, *The Kind of Preaching God Blesses* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2013), 23–25.

<sup>72</sup> Fosdick, "What Is the Matter with Preaching?," 8–11.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> J. D. O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching* (Randall House Publications, 1977), 31–32.

as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, leaving many hearers unsympathetic. By contrast, it is spiritually potent to present God in his greatness, lovingkindness, as the great judge of his Kingdom. It is also more powerful to walk the hearers down the road of the Israelites through Exodus to help them see God's redemptive might in action rather than outlining and lecturing on the facets of Christian redemption.<sup>75</sup>

Likewise, it is more compelling to the hearer to use the Gospel of Mark to emphasize the divinity of Jesus Christ identified through his miracles of healing and salvation, rather than merely discussing his deity in extra-narrative concepts. Some authors admonish that God has joined together both proposition and narrative in the Holy Scripture, and separating them is sinning. The topical preacher may, in their well-intended sermon to apply the gospel or biblical sermon to the immediate context of their hearers, wrongly interpret multiple biblical verses referenced.<sup>76</sup> The Word of God offers spiritual nourishment. Topical sermons, unless carefully grounded in appropriate biblical texts, provide no nourishment and will leave the congregation unfed with the latest trends that lack nourishment. Topical preachers are warned to take care so that their sermons contain labor-intensive substance rather than insight or cleverness into contemporary life.<sup>77</sup>

The weakness in topical sermons can be summarized in two important points that are the primary reasons for its criticisms: a temptation to rely too heavily on personal, societal, and “newspaper” non-biblical sources, and a tendency to misuse or misinterpret Scripture when the

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<sup>75</sup> David C. Green, *Thematic Preaching: The Practical Approach to Sermon Preparation* (Morgan Hill, CA: Bookstand Publishing, 2013), See Chapter Two.

<sup>76</sup> Lawson, *The Kind of Preaching God Blesses*, 24–25.

<sup>77</sup> Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 29.

Bible is used.<sup>78</sup> David Buttrick asserts, “If the preacher begins with a human understanding of the current circumstance, then, inevitably, the gospel will be delivered in such a manner that satisfies the circumstance as it is humanly understood.”<sup>79</sup> Analyzing this statement, Allen quips about the risk of topical preaching, “The sermon and gospel become the gospel of our stomach pain relief tablet to calm our upset religious stomachs.”<sup>80</sup> Breidenbaugh observes that topical preachers frequently risk seeing themselves as the authority instead of the Bible, as the Puritans did.<sup>81</sup>

### **A Rationale for Expository Preaching**

An excess of homiletical literature links expository preaching to biblical roots. It is now primarily considered by many scholars and preachers as the “gold standard” of preaching. A rationale for embracing exposition includes an awareness of its possible dangers and proper understanding of its benefits, some of which are traced back to biblical times. The following are the benefits and hazards of exposition.

### **The Benefits of Expository Preaching**

A major argument for preaching the expository sermon stems from the conviction among expositors that spiritual growth depends on one principle: knowing and understanding God’s truth.<sup>82</sup> One of the most important strengths of expository preaching is that it has scriptural precedent.<sup>83</sup> Reading, interpreting, revealing, and exposing God’s Word seems to have been the

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<sup>78</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 7.

<sup>79</sup> Buttrick, *The Mystery and the Passion*, 2–3.

<sup>80</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 8; O’Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 31–32.

<sup>81</sup> Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding*, 8–13.

<sup>82</sup> Edward Farley, “Preaching the Bible and Preaching the Gospel,” *Theology Today* 51, no. 1 (2016): 90–94; See in the Scriptures the books of Nehemiah 8:2-3; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:10.

<sup>83</sup> See Luke 4:16-21.

original plan, as also evidenced by apostolic messages, which were filled with the Scriptures.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, exposition is the most natural, direct, authentic, and intended method of presenting, explaining, and clarifying the truth of the Scriptures.<sup>85</sup>

Exposition builds on and expands the Scripture. Expository preaching demonstrates that the preacher is true to his commitment to the Bible by using it according to God's script. The preacher, therefore, magnifies the gospel of the Scripture.<sup>86</sup> Expository preaching demands a greater level of reading, knowing, and understanding of the Bible by the preacher. At the same time, it leads to a high level of awareness and knowledge of the Scripture in the listeners. As the preacher is inspired and thirsty for God's truth, he nourishes his listeners with knowledge of the divine truth. Moreover, by illuminating God's Word, the preacher trains a group of listeners who know the Bible, identify with the Lord Jesus, and live the Christian life.<sup>87</sup>

The expositor has the opportunity to make practical admonitions that have the authority and blessings of the Scriptures. The authority of preaching the sermon is God-given, and preachers who fill their sermons with endless anecdotes, stories, observations, and suggestions in an attempt to be charismatic lose authority.<sup>88</sup> It is the exposition that gives authority to the sermon. What exposition does, concerning authority, is that it minimizes the perception that may arise that any admonition is a personal message designed by the preacher specifically to criticize or attack the hearer(s) directly or indirectly, as is sometimes the case with topical preaching.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See Acts 8:25.

<sup>85</sup> Tony Merida, *Faithful Preaching: Declaring Scripture with Responsibility, Passion, and Authenticity* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 11–12.

<sup>86</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 40–41.

<sup>87</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 11–12.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 40–41.

The expositor shows that the content of the sermon is a recount of what, how, and why an event, situation, or personal circumstance happened to a Bible character; then he relates this to what can happen to the hearer or how it is still a concern in the contemporary world.<sup>90</sup> Expository preaching lends itself to a variety of types of exposition that the expositor may apply. In its very general utilization, the preacher uses a complete scriptural passage. However, the preacher may choose only the most relevant and needed words or phrases from the selected passage.<sup>91</sup> The preacher may design a biographical sermon when preaching about the various actors in the Bible. Expository preaching also allows the preacher to design and develop sermons or a course series that can be followed in expositing an entire book from the Scriptures.<sup>92</sup>

Exposition calls for a focus on biblical doctrines, and a sermon or course series can ensure that all, or most, of the doctrinal issues are covered utilizing the whole counsel of God. This achievement has the possibility of giving listeners theological and spiritual stability. Prophecy, teachings, miracles, or parables provided in the Scriptures can be used to develop a series of expository sermons. Applying such a variety helps avoid developing a monotonous, uninteresting pattern that can be counterproductive with the audience.<sup>93</sup>

Expository preaching also keeps the preacher from only developing sermons around his favorite themes or subjects. The Bible provides a vast amount of resources for preaching. Exposition allows the preacher to move through the Scriptures as a process that helps him avoid

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<sup>90</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 11–12.

<sup>91</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 40–41.

<sup>92</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 11–12.

<sup>93</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 40–41.

reductionism; that is, going only for themes of popular interest, such as finances, sexuality, and political power. The Scripture itself provides much more holistic topics that can produce holistic sermons leading to holistic Christians.<sup>94</sup>

Expository sermons, delivered well, have both redemptive and revival benefits to non-believers and believers, respectively. The expositor finds it natural to package and integrate the gospel of redemption into the sermon and then preaches about salvation and renewal.<sup>95</sup> The sermon sparks in the non-believer his need to repent, and helps anchor his hope in the Lord Jesus Christ; while the believer is exhorted and admonished to grow in their faith and spirituality. Exposition helps to develop and transform the listener by renewing their minds. The preacher also grows as a disciple, always seeking to nourish his mind, soul, and spirit.<sup>96</sup>

Christians are expected to practice God-centered and not man-centered, lifestyles. When preaching the sermon from the point of a felt need, popular idea, or emerging issue, and not on God's Word, then the whole truth of the Triune God is not truly presented to them, as called by the Lord Jesus to do.<sup>97</sup> Preaching a topical sermon to address listeners' felt needs, akin to dressing those needs with an adhesive bandage to protect minor wounds, while ignoring the greatest need to help them understand the nature and character of the Holy Spirit in God's Word. The greatest felt need of God's people is the desire to know him more.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Daniel Sheard, "Preaching in the Hear and Now," *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 4, no. 2 (2004): 11–15.

<sup>95</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 40–41.

<sup>96</sup> See Romans 12:2

<sup>97</sup> C. Clifton Black, "Journeying through Scripture with the Lectionary's Map," *Interpretation* 56, no. 1 (2016): 59.

<sup>98</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 40–41.

As the preacher stays close to the written word of God, the temptation to misinterpret or misapply the Word is minimized. As the preacher teaches how to study the Bible, listeners learn how to study the Bible on their own.<sup>99</sup> The preacher, therefore, teaches his congregation how to fish and nourish themselves every week. They learn how to engage the text, understand the importance of text, see how the preacher got the point in the sermons, and fully participate in the fellowship. They become expository students, and later, expository preachers.<sup>100</sup>

### **The Dangers of Expository Preaching**

One frequently cited weakness of expository preaching stem from abuses of exposition rather than the weaknesses of the exposition itself as a method of preaching. This criticism is leveled at the expositor and his exposition, not the exposition of the text that is a biblical practice. Champions of life application (topical) preaching frequently cite this weakness to criticize exposition.<sup>101</sup> The champions of exposition are aware of this danger and warn that if not careful, then the biblical or theological literacy, which is today at an all-time low in the American society, is likely to persist. In the book, *Shepherding the Church: Effective Spiritual Leadership in a Changing Culture*, Joseph M. Stowell has referred to this as the “dumbing-down of the church.”<sup>102</sup> An awareness of this weakness is fundamental; biblical illiteracy makes discipling listeners through preaching difficult.

Preachers can no longer assume that after announcing a scripture passage, most members of the congregation are holding their Bibles ready or even able to locate the text. It is shocking

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<sup>99</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 40–41.

<sup>100</sup> Malmström, “Engaging the Congregation,” 571–574.

<sup>101</sup> Shaddix, “A History of Text-Driven Preaching,” 50.

<sup>102</sup> Stowell, *Shepherding the Church: Effective Spiritual Leadership in a Changing Culture* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1997), 22.



(but not surprising against a backdrop of intensified topical preaching) that many churchgoers do not know even the most basic of Bible stories or characters. Even more devastating, many students in seminary themselves have an inadequate orientation to, and have only incomplete, selective truths of the Word. Much of what the listeners hear today is not grounded in the application of the authoritative Word of God, but they will perceive it as truth because it promises to address their felt needs and improve their lives. This is a danger of not correctly expositing the Scripture.<sup>103</sup>

One criticism leveled at expository preaching borders on the problem of dullness. Merida argues that a dull preacher prevents the Word from effectively passing through, and the effects will trickle down to a disinterested congregation. The preaching becomes irrelevant when the expositor fails to connect the text with the life implications of the listener. The expositor's role, therefore, is to transform the person, not merely to inform the person.<sup>104</sup> Expository preaching has also been criticized for the element of monotony. The hearers of the Word tend to get frustrated when they hear the same content delivered the same way sermon after sermon. The preacher becomes too predictable and ordinary. The practical solution provided is that the preacher needs to think through new strategies to keep and preach to an attentive audience. Charm should be part of the preacher's personality.<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, expository preachers have been criticized for delivering too much detail in one sermon. The hearers suffer from information overload. The preacher is urged to choose a single text-driven (Scripture itself provides the substance and shape of the sermon) theme and

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<sup>103</sup> Stowell, *Shepherding the Church*, 23–24.

<sup>104</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 13.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

expound on it to impart the truth in the mind of the hearer. Simplicity and clarity are the keywords. Topical preachers have often stated that expositors get carried away with intellectual pride, trying to excite their hearers with the level of their knowledge of the Bible, theological background, and use of sophisticated homiletical vernacular.<sup>106</sup> Critics charge that expositors tend to be too dogmatic, often attempting to drill their interpretation of truth in the minds of the hearers, from a stance that their view is the only correct one, especially when preaching on a text that may have different interpretations among the hearers. They fail to present the different views on the text before finally stating their standpoint that is text-driven or supported by theology.<sup>107</sup>

Some expository preachers have failed to discern the importance of identifying first-order (absolute core beliefs of the Christian faith), second-order (convictions among different Christian congregations and denominations), and third-order (opinions and questions about the Christian faith) tiers of theological doctrines that impact the balance between authority and humility in preaching.<sup>108</sup> They are not helping the hearers through understanding the different perspectives of these ordered theological issues and developing a Christian mind that facilitates them to learn to study on their own. As a result, the purity and unity of the Christian church are in danger. Thus, expositors are faulted for not practicing humble exegesis cognizant of the three-tier doctrines.<sup>109</sup>

One more disadvantage attributed to expository preaching is the danger of delivering sermons that fail to connect the text with the redemptive doctrine of Christianity. Simply put,

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<sup>106</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 13.

<sup>107</sup> Stowell, *Shepherding the Church*, 24.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 25–28.

<sup>109</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 13; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*.

most of their sermons do not mention the Lord Jesus. The Christian faith is anchored upon God's redemption of mankind in Jesus as vividly proclaimed in the divine writings of the Scriptures.<sup>110</sup> In Merida's own words, expositors often neglect the "forest of the Bible, who is Jesus the Redeemer and Savior, and jostle for the "trees," referring to a particular scriptural passage.<sup>111</sup> According to Merida, expositors could go through books of the Bible, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph, and end up talking about how Nehemiah was a great man of God, yet never mention the Lord Jesus, the foundational rock of Christian faith.<sup>112</sup> Topical scholars and preachers have often faulted this practice, and even among the expositors themselves, as a *Christ-less* sermon. Jesus Christ and the redemptive text offers the greater context and lifeblood of the Bible.<sup>113</sup> Merida suggests that the expository sermon should locate the redemptive position in the selected passage, despite the expected historical discontinuity that may seem apparent, and make application of its grace-filled revelation and explanation. The Bible, in its completeness, is one Christian book.<sup>114</sup> This truth is captured by Jesus when he proclaimed that the Old Testament pointed to his redemptive history.<sup>115</sup>

### **A Comparison of History**

After reviewing the theoretical comparison of the definitions, descriptions, and trends for topical and expository preaching, the research proceeds to a comparative analysis of these methods as they have appeared in the history of Christian preaching. Does the Scripture validate

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<sup>110</sup> Hosu, "God's Word among Hermeneutics," 141–145.

<sup>111</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 14; Also see Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*.

<sup>112</sup> Walter Brueggemann, "Preaching as Reimagination," *Theology Today* 52, no. 3 (2016): 313.

<sup>113</sup> Merida, *Faithful Preaching*, 14.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> See the book of Luke 24:25–27, 44–47

expository preaching over topical preaching? What are the biblical models for topical and expository preaching in sharing God's Truth? Has subsequent Christian preaching faithfully followed those models? This project samples the history of preaching to identify evident trends in topical and expository preaching.

### **A History of Topical Preaching**

Topical preaching is not a new sermonic practice. Homiletical literature reveals that the topical preaching model and its practice dates at least to A.D. 100 – 476, during the period of the early church that succeeded the post-apostolic age. This period witnessed the introduction of many views and different doctrines not taught in the text or/and not following careful exegesis. Christian preaching was secularized. Though the following preachers were more allegorical than topical: Justin Martyr (A.D. 100 – 165), Aurelius Augustinus, also known as St. Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354 – 430), Peter Chrysologus (A.D. 354 – 430), Pope Leo I, known as St. Leo the Great (A.D. 400 – 461), and Catholic Fathers Cyprian and Origen. They found freedom to analyze and explain doctrinal reflections on Christianity and Jesus Christ in their sermons.<sup>116</sup>

The protestant movement that emerged in the late sixteenth-century England and America, through theological discourse and exhortation, sought to eliminate Roman Catholic Church practices, which they believed were not rooted in the Bible. The Protestants delivered doctrinal and thematic/topical sermons that addressed this matter, relating to theology, society, and culture.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 4–5; James F. Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” *The Master's Seminary Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 12–13.

<sup>117</sup> Paul C. Gutjahr, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 79;199.

The Protestant movement paved the way for later topical preaching for the Free Will Baptists. During this period, Free Will Baptist believers, just like other Baptists, were subjected to hostility, persecution, harassment, fines, prohibitions, and in many cases jail time due to their strong belief in religious liberty, free grace, free salvation, free will, and the believer's baptism.<sup>118</sup> These beliefs were considered contravening to the religious order of the time.<sup>119</sup> Topical sermons were delivered to help address the social, human, and religious issues experienced by members, and to exhort them to strengthen their faith in what they believed was the true biblical mode to keep the church's hope alive.<sup>120</sup>

Paul Palmer, one of the founding fathers and ministers of the Free Will Baptist Church, was an evangelist in the early 1700s who ministered to homes that were open to him where he delivered passionate, revival, topical sermons. He preached about the doctrine and the gospel call for any sinner to receive Jesus. This was in contrast to the belief held by other Baptists that some people are foreordained to be saved, and others predestined to be lost, and one has nothing to do with it. Palmer preached that God calls everyone to repentance, and the decision to accept or ignore this call is out of the individual's application of their own free will. Through this teaching, the Free Will Baptist Church was born.<sup>121</sup>

Benjamin Randall, another founder and organizer of the Free Will Baptist movement, believed he had a religious duty to preach free salvation for anyone ready to use their free will to

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<sup>118</sup> Ron Rhodes, *The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations: Understanding the History, Beliefs, and Differences* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2015), 57.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>120</sup> Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Questions, Baptist Answers: Exploring Christian Faith* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 39.

<sup>121</sup> Lydia Huffman Hoyle, "Baptists," in *Religious Traditions of North Carolina: Histories, Tenets and Leaders*, ed. Glenn W. Jonas (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2018), 8–10.

repent genuinely. He delivered topical/doctrinal sermons urging people that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ provided full atonement for sin and that God was ready to fully forgive all men for sin resulting from their free will to act and repent. Randall preached that as people could be saved through repentance, it was also possible for them to choose to accept or reject the grace of God and lose their salvation.<sup>122</sup>

The above preachers used a thematic/topical approach in delivering sermons about the doctrine of salvation and divine grace. St. Augustine's preaching is considered to have offered the theological foundation for reformation by Calvinist, Lutheran, and Baptist Protestants.<sup>123</sup> The sparsity of text-driven sermons and the proliferation of topical sermons experienced during the early church age graduated to full-scale adoption of topical sermons in the medieval period or Middle Ages (476 – 1500s), as seen in the preaching of some of the most famous preachers of the time including Peter the Hermit (1050 – 1115), Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153), and Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274).<sup>124</sup> These preachers delivered sermons that were characterized by allegorical interpretation and faulty exegesis of the Scripture. Their preaching was deeply influenced by scholastic theology, philosophy, and Aristotelian logic. Their practice of ratiocination formed the basis of reasoning to interpret, explain, and understand the Scripture and to communicate the gospel. During this time, there was an excess of topical preaching literature and hardly any literature on exposition.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Bryant, *The Awakening of the Freewill Baptists*, 140–141.

<sup>123</sup> Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 4–5; Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 12–13.

<sup>124</sup> Jim Shaddix, “A History of Text-Driven Preaching,” in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned Mathews (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 42.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

During the First Great Awakening (1500 – 1648), the reformation era that succeeded the medieval period, many evangelistic preachers such as humanists Erasmus (1469 – 1536) and John Colet (1466 – 1519), who interestingly was credited for having helped lay the foundation for the revival of expository preaching in the periods to come, still preached the topical sermon. They never became faithful expositors against the backdrop of renewed commitment to renew the foundation of preaching as espoused by the then-emerging crop of reformists such as Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), Ulrich Zwingli (1484 – 1531), and John Calvin (1509 – 1564).<sup>126</sup>

The modern and post-modern periods (1600 – today) also saw the rise of some notable topical preachers such as Roger Williams (1603 – 1683), the two famous Evangelical Awakening preachers John Wesley (1703 – 1791) and George Whitefield (1714 – 1770), George Washington Truett (1867 – 1944), William Franklin Graham (1918 – 2018), and Jerry Falwell (1933 – 2007).<sup>127</sup> Today, preachers who adopt topical sermons develop their significant subjects and main issues from their firm convictions about Christian life and experiences based on their in-depth knowledge of the Bible. They then use biblical passages to solidify the minor points they are delivering in their rhetorical sermon to the congregation. They choose to move towards a more thematic, doctrinal, and subjective approach to delivering the sermon, especially directed at and speaking to the felt needs of their congregation.<sup>128</sup>

Authors such as Haddon W. Robinson, David F. Wells, and Joel Breidenbaugh observe that preachers over time viewed their roles as changing in relation to perceived authority: from evangelists to teachers, to therapists, to helpers. Breidenbaugh notes that this has changed not

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<sup>126</sup> Shaddix, “A History of Text-Driven Preaching,” 42.

<sup>127</sup> Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, and Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 11, 115, 213.

<sup>128</sup> Elliott, *Creative Styles of Preaching*, 113.

only the authority in preaching but the sermon form, content, and pattern as well.<sup>129</sup> Topical preaching and sermons have become popular and dominated mainstream evangelicalism in the pulpits of American churches as they are seen as appropriately addressing life problems or situations.<sup>130</sup>

### **A History of Expository Preaching**

Homiletical literature reveals that the preaching model founded in the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Jewish synagogue system was text-driven preaching.<sup>131</sup> The massive tradition of preaching the expository sermon in church history stems from a relatively small number of preachers who understood and committed themselves to this type of sermon delivery, of expounding the Scriptures.<sup>132</sup> The profound outcomes of their ministries produced both inspiring and thought-provoking results to the ministry of preaching. Their work began with an attempt to understand the type of communication the Word of God recounted in the Bible.<sup>133</sup> These men sought to understand and interpret the biblical text correctly, then expose and apply the text's purposed meaning to their listeners.<sup>134</sup>

Such proclamation has been the essence of the Free Will Baptist church throughout its history. James F. Stitzinger, in the article "The History of Expository Preaching," asserted that the current crop of preachers whose history is still developing could learn from the past

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<sup>129</sup> Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding*, 8–13.

<sup>130</sup> Leah D. Schade, *Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 83.

<sup>131</sup> James Shaddix and Jim Shaddix, *The Passion-Driven Sermon: Changing the Way Pastors Preach and Congregations Listen* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 72.

<sup>132</sup> James F. Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 5.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Shaddix, "A History of Text-Driven Preaching," 37.



expositors whose history has been written. Stitzinger is optimistic that there is still time to “refocus, change, improve and move exposition to even greater accomplishment.”<sup>135</sup> Jim Shaddix asserts that a renewed focus on the history of exposition can help preachers to distinguish between what is short-lived excitement and what is long-term. This focus, according to Shaddix, can perhaps motivate an expository preacher to build greater confidence in interpreting biblical text and proclaiming it faithfully in its proper context as done by its champions throughout history.<sup>136</sup> The history of expository preaching begins with the Bible. The Scripture gives a clear record of preaching. Homiletical literature details two basic forms of expository preaching: revelatory and explanatory preaching – revealed in the Scripture, both in the Age of the Law (The Old Testament) and the Church Age (The New Testament).<sup>137</sup>

Preachers in the Bible, from the prophets of the Old Testament to Jesus and the Apostles in the New Testament, were revelatory preachers. God revealed to them directly new information never revealed before, and they proclaimed it for the very first time. They also practiced explanatory preaching in the sense that they often explained and applied what God had already revealed to be written and accepted as the Scripture.<sup>138</sup> Moses’ sermons are given as the best examples of revelatory and explanatory sermons.<sup>139</sup> Moses’ previously recorded and accepted sermons are also provided in the book of Joshua.<sup>140</sup> David and Solomon revealed, explained and instructed, in poetic and proverbial form, the nature and character of God, as well as the nature of

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<sup>135</sup> Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 7.

<sup>136</sup> Shaddix, “A History of Text-Driven Preaching,” 38.

<sup>137</sup> Shaddix and Shaddix, *The Passion-Driven Sermon*, 69–73.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 71–72.

<sup>139</sup> Moses’ sermons are detailed in the book of Deuteronomy (Read Chapters 33-34).

<sup>140</sup> Joshua 23:2-16; 24: 2-27 Shaddix, “A History of Text-Driven Preaching,” 38.

preaching as revealed to them by God as interpreted from the written Scripture.<sup>141</sup> The Old Testament prophets such as Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Samuel, Jeremiah, and Malachi not only prophesied the future and clarified prophecy, but also explained, exposed, and clarified the written text.<sup>142</sup>

The New Testament is characterized by expositors of the Word in the form of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The preaching of John the Baptist was expository in nature. He based his sermon on repentance on the written text of the Old Testament prophecy that revealed the coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>143</sup> The proclamation of ministry by Jesus Christ was filled with text-driven sermons. He made several references to the text recorded by prophets in the Old Testament, referenced what his listeners had been taught, and explained, interpreted, and clarified those teachings. Examples of Jesus' text-driven expository sermons include the Sermon on the Mount and the sermon he delivered on his way to Emmaus, where he interpreted to his listeners the things revealed about himself by the Old Testament prophets.<sup>144</sup>

After the ministry of Jesus, his apostles continued practicing text-driven expository preaching in the early church. The messages of Peter, Paul, James, and Stephen are revelatory and explanatory in form, and largely expositions designed to teach various principles.<sup>145</sup> The early synagogue worship that involved the foundational exposition of the text in the Old

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<sup>141</sup> As seen in the books of Psalms and Proverbs: Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," 8–9.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 39–40.

<sup>143</sup> Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," 39–40; John 1:15,29.

<sup>144</sup> Matthew 5:21–48; Luke 24:24–27.

<sup>145</sup> Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," 11; 1 Timothy 4:13; Acts 2:14–36; Acts 7:2–53; Acts 17:16–31; Acts 15:14–21.

Testament preceded the text-driven exposition of the early church that focused on reading, interpreting and expositing both the Old Testament text and the Apostolic text.

The closing of the New Testament canon marked the end of God's direct revelation of new truth, and as text-driven exposition had become the norm in preaching, sermon delivery became exclusively expository and explanatory in form. The mandate of the new preacher was not to reveal new untold revelation but to read, interpret, and apply biblical text that combined the written text of the Old Testament and the New Testament, as well as to exhort the listener to embrace the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>146</sup> Before the early Christian church, Jewish teachers sought to interpret, make plain, and expose the meaning of a passage from the Torah.<sup>147</sup> This was seen by the scribe and priest Ezra in the book of Ezra.<sup>148</sup>

After the biblical period, during the periods of the early Christian church (AD 100 – 476), text-driven preaching diminished largely due to the influence of Greek rhetoric, philosophy, scholastic theology, and Aristotelian logic in the concept of biblical interpretation. Only a handful of faithful expositors, such as Basil of Caesarea (330 – 379), Gregory of Nazianzen (329 – 390), Gregory of Nyssa (335 – 395), John Chrysostom (349 – 407), Aurelius Ambrose (340 – 397), and Theodore of Mopsuestia (350 – 429) are mentioned in the literature during these periods.<sup>149</sup>

During the Middle/Medieval Ages (AD 476 – 1500s), expository preaching faced perhaps the scarcest moments in the history of preaching. A faulty allegorical interpretation and exegesis

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<sup>146</sup> Shaddix and Shaddix, *The Passion-Driven Sermon*, 72; Also see; Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," 12; Shaddix, "A History of Text-Driven Preaching," 40.

<sup>147</sup> Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned Mathews, eds., *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 3.

<sup>148</sup> Ezra 7:10.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 40–49.

of the Bible were dominantly employed. A few independent groups such as the Paulicians, Waldenses, and Albigenses attempted to revive exposition but were dismissed as heretics.<sup>150</sup>

Towards the end of this period, several pre-reformation preachers such as John Wyclif (1330 – 1384), William Tyndale (1494 – 1536), John Huss (1373 – 1415), and Girolamo Savonarola (1452 – 1498) rekindled the passion, spirit, and enthusiasm for expository preaching.<sup>151</sup>

During the reformation period of 1500 – 1648, events following abuses committed by the indulgence system led to the comeback of text-driven preaching and exposition of the Scripture. The emerging Protestant reformation led by Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) applied text-driven sermons in their movement. There were calls to revive and strengthen biblical exposition by other preachers such as Ulrich Zwingli (1484 – 1531), Balthasar Hubmaier (1485 – 1528), John Calvin (1509 – 1564), Henry Bullinger (1504 – 1575), John Knox (1513 – 1572), John Jewel (1522 – 1571), Hugh Latimer (1485 – 1555), and Thomas Cartwright (1535 – 1603) who used Scripture as the only authoritative source of preaching and applied to the text considerable grammatical, historical, literary, linguistic, contextual, and exegetical accuracy.<sup>152</sup>

The modern (AD 1649 – 1970) and post-modern (1970 – present) times saw an even stronger effort towards a revival of expository preaching. The Puritans of the modern era, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as William Perkins (1558 – 1602), Joseph Hall (1574 – 1656), Thomas Goodwin (1600 – 1680), Richard Baxter, (1615 – 1691), and John Owen

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<sup>150</sup> Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 16.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 16–17.

<sup>152</sup> Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 18–21; Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 12–20.

(1616 – 1683) championed text-driven expository preaching as true preaching and proclaimed it as the only true foundation for Christian worship.<sup>153</sup>

The teaching of the church was considered as dogma. The exposition of the Scripture and faithful explanation of text was true preaching. The topical evangelistic preaching of the eighteenth century did nothing to shake the resolve of many great men such as Thomas Manton (1620 – 1677), John Bunyan (1628 – 1688), and Stephen Charnock (1628 – 1680). The later nineteenth century also produced faithful expositors such as James H. Thornwell (1812 – 1862), John A. Broadus (1827 – 1895), Andrew Fuller (1754 – 1815), Robert Hall (1764 – 1831), and Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910).<sup>154</sup> The twentieth century produced expositors such as Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895 – 1960), James Denny (1856 – 1917), and John Robert Walmsley Stott (1921 – 2011).<sup>155</sup>

The expositor of today proclaims exposition of the text as the only legitimate form of sermon delivery. Expository preaching is commanding careful and renewed attention.<sup>156</sup> The post-biblical expository preacher has derived its core foundation from the preaching recorded in the Scripture. Preaching must have the backdrop of its root source, the Bible.<sup>157</sup> The seeker-sensitive movement sparked by Donald McGavran pushed the present-day evangelistic preacher to focus on corporate worship, exhorting the unrepentant hearer to come and listen to the Word,

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<sup>153</sup> Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 22–23.

<sup>154</sup> Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 46; and Akin, Allen, and Mathews, *Text-Driven Preaching*, 46, 52 provide a list of great men who championed and practiced expository preaching during the modern and post-modern eras.

<sup>155</sup> Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 27.

<sup>156</sup> Arthurs, “True Preaching Is Biblical Preaching,” 17–18.

<sup>157</sup> Stitzinger, “The History of Expository Preaching,” 8.

although effective, has drifted away from the true worship of God that requires the preacher to go out and fish for men.<sup>158</sup>

The present-day corporate worshiper has embraced the idea that preaching must be responsive to, relevant to, and address the needs of the hearers. The result has been the de-emphasis of the Christian doctrine of exposition of the biblical text and the emphasis of the practical application of preaching that speaks to the felt needs of the hearers using Scriptures.<sup>159</sup> Preaching acclaimed as verse-by-verse is just veiled topical preaching where a series of biblical texts are used to provide practical life applications to address a felt need of the hearers.<sup>160</sup>

While some preachers of the Free Will Baptist Church today may find occasional preaching of the topical sermon necessary, the general movement is toward taking up the mantle from the forerunners of expository preaching who have successfully, albeit with many challenges, handed over the baton with great resilience, inspiration, and encouragement.<sup>161</sup>

Faithful expositors are called to remember that the root of biblical, text-driven delivery of the sermon is Jesus Christ, the one anchor for the Christian faith. His ministry is the heritage of expository preaching from ages past. The mandate of preaching given to the contemporary preacher is rooted deeply in the person and work of Jesus Christ.<sup>162</sup> He is the Word, and he is the ultimate teacher and preacher. He is also the ultimate exegete who provides an explanation of God, and at the same time, the Word in the Scripture that expository preachers seek to interpret

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<sup>158</sup> Akin, Allen, and Mathews, *Text-Driven Preaching*, 49.

<sup>159</sup> John Bowlin, "Proclaiming the Gospel, Preaching the Public," *Theology Today* 70, no. 1 (2013): 9–11.

<sup>160</sup> Hosu, "God's Word among Hermeneutics," 141–145.

<sup>161</sup> William H. Willimon, "Time Made Strange: Preaching In Ordinary Time," *Interpretation* 67, no. 3 (2013): 256–257.

<sup>162</sup> Arthurs, "True Preaching Is Biblical Preaching," 17–18.

and explain. This very nature of Jesus Christ demands that preachers need to be expositors of who God is and what the Scripture says he is.<sup>163</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This comparison of topical and expository preaching has defined these two methods of sermon delivery. Theological, homiletical, and hermeneutic literature alike define the two methods according to form (etymology, morphology, and philosophy). *Topical preaching* interprets and addresses a topical issue, need, event, or situation that is important to the congregation in light of and from the perspective of the gospel. Topical preaching does not originate or center the sermon in the exposition of a scriptural text or passage from the Bible.<sup>164</sup>

*Expository preaching*, on the other hand, centers the sermon in the exposition of a scriptural text, or passage from the Bible. The text offers a window through which the gospel is addressed or interpreted concerning the congregation. The exposition helps to address the particular topical issue, need, event, or situation in light of the gospel from the perspective or standpoint, of the biblical text.<sup>165</sup>

A review of homiletical, theological, and hermeneutical literature reveals that the dominant trend advocated in preaching theory has been the expository method. Topical preaching has, however, been widely practiced, although it has not been advocated to the same

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<sup>163</sup> Shaddix and Shaddix, *The Passion-Driven Sermon*, 168.

<sup>164</sup> Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

extent as expository preaching.<sup>166</sup> The increase in the prevalence of homiletical literature on expository preaching cannot be said to reflect a significant shift in actual preaching methodology. Both methods have their benefits and dangers, and either can be used poorly or abused. Careful and prayerful use of either technique at the pulpit is recommended.

In terms of the two method's histories, both topical and expository methods are shown to have been used biblically in communicating the Word of God in writing and preaching. However, the expository method was dominantly used by the ancient witness, particularly in the New Testament and teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. In successive post-New Testament Christian preaching, topical preaching dominated under the influence of ancient Greek rhetoric, the currency of the pulpit's authority, and the pronouncements of doctrine.

An important conclusion is that either method biblically does not invalidate the other's practical value, or relegate it to a secondary level of communicating the Word of God. Both methods, although different in form and philosophy, share a common purpose: to help hearers discover the teaching and revelation of Christ in their world. Nevertheless, if one method were to be preferred over the other, expository preaching would be that method. Such would be the conclusion of many homileticians and preachers. However, what would be the interpretations of the clergy about this conclusion? What would be the preference of the congregation at the First Free Will Baptist Church concerning one method over the other? This project aims at establishing answers for these questions by comparing two preachers, one topical and the other expository.

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<sup>166</sup> See Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*; Joel Breidenbaugh, *Preaching for Bodybuilding: Integrating Doctrine and Expository Preaching for the 21st Century*, 2nd ed. (Renovate Publishing Group, 2016); Scott Bryant, *The Awakening of the Freewill Baptists: Benjamin Randall and the Founding of an American Religious Tradition*, 1st ed. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2011); Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2012).



### **Chapter 3:**

## **The Topical Preacher and the Expository Preacher: A Comparison of Two First Free Will Baptist Preachers**

### **Introduction**

The main objective of this project is to compare the written and spoken sermons of two First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa Senior Pastors: Roger Duncan and Will Beauchamp. One of the principal ways in which Pastor Duncan and Pastor Beauchamp manifested their desire to be men of God was through their passion and commitment to preaching the Word of God. Roger Duncan's proclamation of Christ as the redeemer of humanity led him to topical preaching that distinguished his pulpit oratory from Will's expository preaching style.

However, Roger Duncan and Will Beauchamp seemed to share much else in their calling to proclaim the gospel. For instance, their love for the Scriptures and faithful service was evident. Roger and Will alike considered themselves to have been commissioned to fulfill the church's preaching mission and felt emboldened to pursue pulpit preaching under their different circumstances.

The primary purpose of this project is to solicit clergy and listener responses towards topical and expository preaching delivered by Roger Duncan and Will Beauchamp to establish the two methods' receptivity, particularly within the circles of the First Free Will Baptist church. This requires a lot of sensitivity, which calls for paying particular attention, not to the individual character of the two preachers, but their style, delivery, and rationale for topical preaching on the one hand, and expository preaching on the other. Thus, this project will only seek to compare the two preachers within the narrow confines of their particular preaching methods.

Various aspects of the two preachers' sermons will be compared as they appear in audio recording, video recording, or printed manuscripts. This will include how their sermons reflect the way they applied and interpreted the Bible. The period of comparison is between 2005 – 2015; 2005 – 2010, when Roger Duncan was the Senior Pastor, and 2010 – 2015 when Will Beauchamp was the Senior Pastor.

### **Introducing the Two Preachers**

#### **Roger Duncan**

Pastor Roger Duncan is a faithful servant of God. He has preached the Word of God as the Senior Pastor and served the congregation of the First Free Will Baptist Church in Tampa for over four decades. Pastor Duncan retired as Senior Pastor in 2011 and took over the role of Pastor Emeritus. Under his leadership, the church was blessed with tremendous growth spiritually and numerically. He also oversaw the church's development, which included the church's school, Seffner Christian Academy, the annual Camp meeting, and other improvements at the church's property in Seffner.

Pastor Duncan is best remembered for his commitment to the church despite periods of turbulence in his personal life. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1991 at the age of 44; however, he continued to lead the church faithfully. Once the disease started affecting his speech, he decided on Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery for relief. Deep Brain Stimulation surgery was first approved in 1997 to treat Parkinson's disease tremors, then in 2002, for the treatment of advanced Parkinson's disease symptoms.

The DBS procedure provides an electrical impulse to a part of the brain that is involved in motor function. The surgery was a success, and the noticeable shaking from his head altogether stopped. However, DBS effects only last for ten years in patients with Parkinson's

disease. The tremors were not as bad, but the disease and newer treatment procedures caused hoarseness in his voice. Pastor Duncan was also diagnosed with Leukemia at this time. Even though continuing to preach every week was becoming more problematic, he continued to faithfully stand behind the sacred desk and did his best to share God's Word. After 37 years of shepherding the church, he decided to step down as Senior Pastor in 2011.

Pastor Duncan (now *Emeritus*) still occasionally stands to preach, and although he can barely speak, the power of God is evident upon his life. He has lived 2 Corinthians 12:9 for all his members, and the church is privileged to have had such a leader. Pastor Duncan is best recognized for his conservative preaching and declaring the truth with God's anointing. During the last five years of his service as Senior Pastor (2005 – 2010), Pastor Duncan focused more on delivering sermons with topics derived from recent events, church doctrines, and the church's family.

During the five years of preaching (2005 – 2010), Pastor Duncan delivered hundreds of powerful topical sermons. He always helped his listeners to interpret the circumstance they found themselves in from the framework of the teaching and revelation of Jesus Christ. Duncan was a staunch believer in conservative preaching. He aimed to connect them with the Word of God and to exhort and disciple them to a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Some of the sermons powerfully delivered by Pastor Duncan delved deeply into salvation, spiritual growth, faith, the Church, and Christian doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Pastor Duncan, a great storyteller, often used real-life or imaginary characters to narrate turbulent circumstances that afflicted his listeners, whether or not the hearers were conscious of

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to sermon series in Table 1 below.

the importance of the issues. In preparing his sermons, Pastor Duncan first familiarized himself with a topic that was important to the church and needed to be addressed from the perspective of the gospel. Pastor Duncan was a blessed analyst of contemporary topical issues and an experienced preacher with the ability to discern what was, or was not, suitable to be dialogued with the congregation.

The pastor knew which theological method to apply and what to say about the topic. The pastor was always keen to put together a sermon that he prayed would be of divine help to his congregation. Pastor Duncan employed a variety of distinct designs, forms, patterns, and models in using, interpreting, and applying the Bible to deliver his topical sermons.

### **Will Beauchamp**

Will Beauchamp is the current Senior Pastor at the First Free Will Baptist Church in Tampa, Florida. He has held this position since October 5, 2011. Before being named Senior Pastor, Will Beauchamp served as the Associate Pastor at the church for eight years. He answered the call to preach on July 25, 2002. Pastor Beauchamp is an ardent follower and student of expository preaching. As an expositor, Pastor Beauchamp is committed to using homiletical techniques to provide sermons that proclaim biblical content as it appears in the text. The preacher prayerfully exposes the original meaning of a biblical text in the purest essence of the gospel. He loves the Scriptures and enjoys expositing the Word of God.

Pastor Beauchamp succeeded an anointed predecessor, Pastor Duncan, a prayerful man of God who, despite all odds (sickness), had led the church successfully. How would the congregation respond to a different style of preaching? Pastor Beauchamp answered the call to preach in July 2002 and was included on the pastoral staff of the First Free Will Baptist Church

in 2003. When he was named the Senior Pastor on October 5, 2011, he reflected deeply on this new God-given responsibility of leading the church (as did his predecessor) towards Christ.

Pastor Beauchamp knew that any effort to take the church down the expositor's route would not be easy and would require some serious preparation and prayerfulness. Being an expositor, any misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the Bible would constitute a bigger sin of inaccuracy in the presentation of God's truth regardless of how charismatic the preacher turned out to be. Other dangers of expository preaching are failing to be creative, original, and preaching other people's sermons because they were successful preachers. Another danger, in this context, was appearing to contradict the previous pastor's preaching style to a congregation that still remembers him (the predecessor) as the man of God who blessed them greatly and was continuing periodically to preach as their Pastor Emeritus. In doing so, Pastor Beauchamp determined to preach a style that would be the complete opposite of the style of his predecessor, who consistently delivered topical sermons.

In this dissertation project, an analysis was done on several of Pastor Beauchamp's sermons. This exercise revealed a pattern; a pattern that is determined to be typical of the most effective models and processes advocated in the field of homiletics for preaching expository sermons.<sup>2</sup> Pastor Beauchamp's method for delivering his expository sermons, through which he proclaimed the Word of God and provided the good news of redemption to his audience, is outlined below.

First of all, by its very nature, the intricate journey to exposition begins with a thorough exegesis of the text. This involves discovering what the Holy Spirit intends for us to learn from

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<sup>2</sup> See Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 32.

the scriptural passage, interpreting and explaining the meaning to help the hearers understand it.<sup>3</sup> Exegesis itself is derived from the Bible and taught by the Lord Jesus.<sup>4</sup> This is not *eisegesis*, where the preacher interprets the text from a personal viewpoint. Jesus was the master of all exegetes. Pastor Beauchamp's prayer is that his exegesis has been anchored in the teachings of Jesus.

For instance, in any typical sermon, the pastor reads and re-reads the complete biblical text of the selected passage for exegesis and often writes it down. Through prayer, the pastor generates the thesis of the biblical text: the central proclamation about the meaning of the passage. The pastor then conducts a careful analysis of the literary and historical context of the biblical book and passage. This is followed by a detailed chapter by chapter, verse by verse analysis of the passage.

The pastor then develops a theology of the scriptural passage in light of other texts from both the Old and New Testament. The pastor then explains what the biblical text teaches hearers today, and interprets it in light of the Christian life or event in which it applies. As a student of exposition, Pastor Beauchamp's thorough exegesis of the text naturally directs him to another expositor's practice—hermeneutics. The pastor translates, expounds, interprets, and exposes the meaning of the scriptural text selected for use in the sermon. The pastor then determines the deeper meaning of the text and not merely what is stated in the sentence. Pastor Beauchamp then applies the full meaning of the text to the context of the church congregation.

Another practice Pastor Beauchamp utilizes is homiletics. The pastor is always keen to use theological training in the art and science of homiletics to communicate the same message

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<sup>3</sup> Hosu, "God's Word among Hermeneutics," 141–142.

<sup>4</sup> see Luke 24:35; John 1:18; Acts 10:28; 15:12, 14; 21:19; John 1:18.

the scriptural text did. This practice ensures that the meaning of the sermon message is the same one on which the text is based. He attempts to use the understanding of the text to deliver a message of redemption and revival to the congregation. The pastor applies the principles of exegesis and hermeneutics (that form the art and science of homiletics) to prepare his sermons.

The next typical step is exposition. In this process, the pastor delivers (reveals) the message that culminates from the careful processes of exegesis, hermeneutics, and homiletics. Through much prayer, the pastor attempts to reveal what the Holy Spirit is saying in the biblical text and how the message relates to contemporary life. The culmination of this entire process is the expository sermon.

Pastor Beauchamp expects to use his love for the Scripture faithfully, to investigate the biblical text, to interpret its meaning, and deliver it through an expository sermon to the listeners. The pastor emphasizes the application of his sermon in the context of his audience. The Bible is God's revelation to man, which is revealed to other men by an anointed preacher. As one church member commented, "Pastor Will makes plain what God is telling us, and gives a clear application to our lives."

The pastor prays for the Holy Spirit to guide him as he attempts to reveal God's truth to his church congregation in a language they can understand. In the stated period (2010 – 2015), Pastor Beauchamp always made genuine efforts to reveal the linguistic, ancient, circumstantial, and scriptural meaning of the selected biblical passage. He then sought to determine the applicability of that biblical text in the personal, social, spiritual, and Christian life. The pastor achieved this by adequately organizing, illustrating, and forcibly applying the expository sermon's message.

There is a consensus among scholars of the Word that preparing and delivering an expository sermon is by no means an easy feat. The challenges include choosing a relevant scriptural passage, making an application to the hearers' lives, and interpreting the passage in light of relevant criticism.<sup>5</sup> J. D. O'Donnell in *The Preacher and His Preaching*, observes that preachers who excel in delivering expository sermons have five main qualities: an intelligent conviction in the revelation of the Scriptures, the authority of text selection, a rational mind, an authentic preaching power, and a reflective practice that must always be upheld.<sup>6</sup>

### **A Comparison of the Two Preachers' Sermons**

Preaching occupies a special place in the ministry of Roger Duncan and Will Beauchamp. Both used their sermons as an indispensable vehicle for proclaiming the gospel. Both preachers used the Bible to justify the dimension of their sermons and preaching ministry. This section includes a comparison of the content, the pattern of arrangement, delivery (video and audio), style, and description (where any, or all of these are possible) of Pastor Duncan and Pastor Beauchamp's sermons. The comparison also includes a description of how the two preachers used, interpreted, and applied the Bible. The descriptions provided are derived from the proclamations of the preachers themselves, and the comparisons are made through a thorough homiletical analysis of the two preachers' sermons by the author.

An acknowledgment that must be made this early is that what both preachers said in their preaching (sermon content), how they said it (rhetoric strategy, pattern, format, and style), and their behavior in the pulpit (individual homiletical tendencies and preferences). Also, the level of pastoral care between the preacher and congregant is expected to have exerted some level of

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<sup>5</sup> Arthurs, "True Preaching Is Biblical Preaching," 17–18.

<sup>6</sup> O'Donnell, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 41.



influence on their congregation, with the rate of conversion, redemption, revival, and size of church membership being some of the potential direct or indirect outcome variables. As stated in the previous section, the content of the sermon is either topical or expository, while its pattern of arrangement is either deductive or inductive.<sup>7</sup>

As will be demonstrated in the next section, Pastor Duncan's sermons, fit comfortably within the topical "coordinates of the homiletical map," while Pastor Beauchamp's sermons, by his own description and homiletical design, were expository in design and style.<sup>8</sup> To avoid a biased selection and maintain fairness, sermons from the two pastors were randomly selected, and a list of the preachers' sermons was made chronologically.

### **Roger Duncan's Topical Sermons, 2005 – 2010**

This section provides selected topical sermons, totaling fifteen that Pastor Duncan preached between 2005 – 2010. For this project, Pastor Duncan's sermons were transcribed, summarized, and categorized into divisions. Later on, after introducing Pastor Beauchamp's sermons, critical analysis and evaluation of the content were conducted. Table 1 provides a list of Pastor Duncan's topical sermons, arranged chronologically and presented by the message title, including illustrations, propositions, and application, that were selected for analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> See Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1, explanation on locating the topical sermon on the homiletical map.

Table 1: Selected Topical Sermons by Roger Duncan, 2005 – 2010

Sermon	Date	Title/Theme	Scriptural Text (KJV) <sup>9</sup>
1.	March 6, 2005	The Goodness of God	James 1:17
2.	April 10, 2005	Forgiveness	Genesis 50:15-21
3.	March 12, 2006	God's Promises	2 Corinthians 1:20
4.	November 19, 2006	Respectable Worldliness	Isaiah 5:20
5.	February 11, 2007	Some Remove the Landmarks	Job 24:2
6.	July 22, 2007	We All Need a Nathan	2 Samuel 12:1-12:14
7.	December 16, 2007	The Eagle	Deuteronomy 32:9-12
8.	January 27, 2008	The Conie	Proverbs 30:26
9.	February 10, 2008	Repentance	Mark 1:15; Revelation 3:3
10.	June 7, 2009	The Love of God	1 John 4:8;16-21
11.	August 16, 2009	The Backslider	2 Peter: 20-22
12.	November 22, 2009	What Trees Teach Us	Psalms 1:3
13.	March 7, 2010	Say So	Psalms 107:1-2
14.	May 9, 2010	The Perfection of God	Matthew 5:48
15.	July 07, 2010	The Ministry of Refreshing	2 Timothy 1:16-18

Excerpts from Pastor Duncan's topical sermons selected for the analysis are provided next.

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<sup>9</sup> King James Version (KJV).

“The Goodness of God”<sup>10</sup>

Date: March 6, 2005		Sermon Content <sup>11</sup>	Sermon Pattern <sup>12</sup>	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	The Wonderful Goodness of God	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> Today, the Holy Spirit tells us...  <b>Prayer:</b>	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> When I was growing up, religion taught me about the wrath and punishment of God. I was scared. Anytime I did something, I always looked up to check whether He was watching, with a hot rod to burn me. I thought of God as an angry God who would not hesitate to throw me in hell to burn in eternal fire. That is what I was made to believe! But one day, I felt the urge to read the Bible for myself and a revelation was made to me: Our God is a God of Goodness!...  The Bible tells us in...John 10:10; James 1:17; Malachi 3:6  ... "God does not change like shifting shadows. His goodness is not wavering, inconsistent, and unpredictable like us...
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	James 1:17 <sup>13</sup>			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. God gifts us only good things II. God's Goodness is Eternal III. The Bible shows us God's good plan for us. IV. He sent Jesus, His only begotten son, so that we can have life in abundance	
<b>Proposition:</b>	Our God is a Good God			<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Let us turn to Christ today. He has promised to heal our wounds. He tells us no one is good, except God alone B. What Jesus did to a hapless leper, He will do to us. He will gift us what He promises – only good things: joy, happiness, comfort, and love	

<sup>10</sup> Roger Duncan, “The Goodness of God,” Sermon, March 6, 2005; CD.

<sup>11</sup> The content of a sermon, as demonstrated in homiletical literature, is typically either topical or expository, see Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>12</sup> The sermon pattern is the format of arrangement, or shape of the sermon, employed in its overall development; and it is typically either deductive or inductive, see *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> James 1:17 reads, “very good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (NIV).

“Forgiveness”<sup>14</sup>

Date: April 10, 2005		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Forgiveness	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> We have all, at one point or another, been sinned against by others and sinned against others. What do we do those who sin against us? What do we expect from those we sin against? Today, we are going to speak about the very important issue of forgiveness...	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> An old man was dying in hospital. He had problems with his son. The son never visited him. The old man was bitter with his son. His son was bitter with him. The man died. The son did not attend the funeral. He was left behind a bitter man...  The Bible teaches and admonishes us in Matthew 6:14-15; 18:34-35; Romans 4:7-8; John 3:16 that... to be forgiven, we must also forgive.  I think forgiveness is not excusing or condoning wrongdoing. We seek forgiveness, and are asked for forgiveness to help us let go. Psychologists tell us forgiveness helps us to heal and find peace. Forgiveness holds the Church of Christ together; repairs, mends, restores, and strengthens relationships and brings peace between brethren and with God and man
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	Genesis 50:15-21				<b>Prayer:</b>	
<b>Proposition:</b>	Jesus commands us to forgive and let go				<b>Body of the sermon:</b> I. What is forgiveness? II. God's command about forgiveness III. How to seek for forgiveness in our lives IV. Purpose of forgiveness V.	
				<b>Conclusion/Application:</b>	A. God's love manifests in us all B. Forgiveness requires the initiative of both the offender and the offended C. Forgiveness is conditional. One must repent, ask for forgiveness, first D. God has commanded us (Christians) to forgive, as we are forgiven, we must forgive too	

<sup>14</sup> Roger Duncan, “Forgiveness,” Sermon, April 10, 2005; CD.

“God’s Promises”<sup>15</sup>

Date: March 12, 2006		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	The Reliability of God’s Promises	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> Today we are going to learn about God’s Promises...	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> Politicians always give promises during election time. But do they keep them after being voted? Parents make promises to their children. Do they always fulfill them? Do we always fulfill our promises?  The Word of God is filled with promises which He Himself has promised to provide and deliver. Does He keep them? When we read 1 John 1:9; Romans 10:9-10 Philippians 3:4-11; Psalm 1:3; John 4:13-14...we find evidence that God fulfills all His promises when we believe, pray and ask...
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	2 Corinthians 1:20 <sup>16</sup>				<b>Prayer:</b>	
<b>Proposition:</b>	God faithfully fulfills all His promises			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. His General Promises (to save us from sin and destruction) II. His particular Promises A. To certain people; the Biblical Israelites and today’s Christians) B. To certain families (Abraham) C. To certain men (Mary, King Solomon, and Paul) III. What God promises us: eternal life; to save us from our troubles; to fight for us, and to give us the desires of our hearts. <sup>17</sup>	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. God fulfills his promises. B. But you must be willing to live according to His commandments	

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<sup>15</sup> Roger Duncan, “God’s Promises,” Sermon, March 12, 2006; CD.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:20 reads, “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so, through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.” (KJV).

<sup>17</sup> Read Revelation 3:20; Luke 2:35; 1 Kings 9:5; Acts 13:47; Genesis 12:1-3; Read John 3:36; Read Mark 11:24; Psalm 34:17; Ecclesiastes 5; Exodus 14:14; Isaiah 40:31; Exodus 20:12; John 3:16;36; Mark 11:24; Psalm 34:17; Exodus 14:14; Psalm 34:17 (KJV).

“Respectable Worldliness”<sup>18</sup>

Date: November 19, 2006		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Respectable worldliness does not mean respectable with God	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> We all have different life philosophies about life. There is the Christian's, philosophy that is Bible-centered and world philosophy that is man-centered...	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> In the beginning, the world was beautiful and attractive. When man sinned, it became bad and ugly... what exactly do we mean by respectable worldliness?  The Bible tells us in: 1 John 2:16; 1 John 2:16; 2 Corinthian 1:12; 1 John 4:5 that...we should transform, but not conform to worldliness. The Bible warns us against being caught up in a respectable, but worldly and ungodly living.
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	Isaiah 5:20 <sup>19</sup>					
<b>Proposition:</b>	Worldliness compromises the life of a Christian			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. What is respectable worldliness? A. Everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life B. Worldly behaviors, desires, affection. <sup>20</sup> C. Respectable worldliness can lead to sin	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Respectable worldliness is not respectable with God B. It is a cheap and temporary human substitute for Godliness C. It compromises our relationship with Christ	

<sup>18</sup> Roger Duncan, “Respectable Worldliness,” Sermon, November 19, 2006; CD.

<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 5:20 reads, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.” (KJV).

<sup>20</sup> 2 Corinthian 1:12; James 3:15; 2 Corinthian 1:17; Titus 2:11-12; 1 John 2:15; 1 John 2:16; 1 John 4:5; Isaiah 5:2 (KJV).

“Some Remove the Landmarks” <sup>21</sup>

Date: February 11, 2007		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Rise Up and Speak Against the Things of this World	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> There is a danger in removing landmarks which is not limited to ancient landmarks that we are told in the Bible, <sup>22</sup> or those of our nation’s history. For Christians, there is a danger too: removing the spiritual landmarks that are have since the beginning formed the core of our Christian doctrines. <b>Prayer:</b>	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> In the recent past, we have continued witnessing the removal of cherished ancient landmarks established by the forefathers of our nation; either through acts of violent protests against those landmarks or through acts of terrorism... Sadly, the standards and convictions that were once the staple of our Christian doctrines and practice are being removed by Christians, sometimes unknowingly. And that means drifting toward eternal confusion, sin and destruction.... In the Bible, Proverbs 22:28; Proverbs 23:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, we learn that we remove landmarks when the desire to worship, fellowship and minister is replaced by peer pressure, popular trends, humanism, modernism, liberalism, denominationalism, and apathy. <sup>23</sup>
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	Job 24:2 <sup>24</sup>			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. What is a landmark: It is a permanent physical feature, by which a locality or boundary can be known...? II. Removing the landmark requires no effort III. It is an ignorant process IV. Its results are dangerous V. Common signs of removing the landmark VI. What can we do as believers?	
<b>Proposition:</b>	Don’t Move the Landmarks			<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. The church has a distinctive Christian obligation for speaking against things of this world that are distracting its members from seeking the Kingdom of God. B. The Church is the Body of Christ, the human body is the temple of God and must be guarded against ungodly things.	

<sup>21</sup> Roger Duncan, “Some Remove the Landmarks,” Sermon, February 11, 2007; CD.

<sup>22</sup> Job 24:2; Proverbs 22:28; Proverbs 23:10-11 (NIV).

<sup>23</sup> Read also Colossians 2:6-7; Ephesians 4:14-15; Hebrews 6:18-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Matthew 24:42-44 (KJV).

<sup>24</sup> Job 24:2 reads, “There are those who move boundary stones; they pasture flocks they have stolen.” (KJV).

“We Need A Nathan” <sup>25</sup>

Date: July 22, 2007		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Nathan both encouraged, advised and rebuked David	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic: ...</b> Like David of the Bible who is always eager to learn the Word of God and eager to act according to His will, we all tend to have our down time, when we get ourselves in trouble. We lust and covet just like David did to Bathsheba, Uriah's wife... <b>Prayer:</b>	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> a hit and run couple who are stopped down the road. It so happens that they also have committed a flurry of other traffic offences previously for which they were never caught. The police officer asks them, “You know why I stopped you?” Their response, “Well, Sir, that depends on how long you have been following us.” Sometimes we do things and feel we are not accountable to anyone. We have this attitude of “If no one saw it, it did not happen!”...  The Bible teaches us that We lust and covet just like David did to Bathsheba, Uriah's wife. At all times, we need someone in our lives, like Nathan, to encourage us, but to also rebuke us when we go astray.
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	2 Samuel 12:1-12:14 <sup>26</sup>			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. No matter how strong we may feel spiritually, we are corrupt. II. We all tend to have our down time. III. We need someone to encourage us IV. “A Nathan” can be anyone, a preacher or church member.”	
<b>Proposition:</b>	We all need someone to help us account for our deeds			<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. A Nathan” can be anyone, a preacher or church member B. secret sins always come to light	

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<sup>25</sup> Roger Duncan, “We Need a Nathan,” Sermon, July 22, 2007; CD.

<sup>26</sup> 2 Samuel 12:1-12:14 reads, “The LORD sent Nathan to David ... Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. <sup>14</sup> But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die.” (KJV).



“The Eagle”<sup>27</sup>

Date: December 16, 2007		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	There is a Mighty God	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> The Bible regards the action of the eagle toward her eaglets as an emblem of the dealings of God with His people. He shelters, feeds, protects, comforts and corrects us.  <b>Prayer:</b>	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> The eagle is the king of birds. It is a fierce bird of prey that scours the plains for food for its young. It delivers food to nests that are built in the most unapproachable areas. Its nest is built rough, but the bird lays soft feathers that comfort the young ones. The eagle is aggressive to other birds but very tender to its eaglets. The eagle can see its prey from very far. The eagle shelters its young with her wings and protects them from the enemy with her ruthless talons.  The Bible regards the action of the eagle toward her eaglets as an emblem of God's dealings with us. He shelters, feeds, protects, comforts and corrects us. He teaches us, in His wisdom and grace, by “stirring up our nests (worldly comforts)”; so that we can begin to think less of earthly gold and more on the heavenly God.  He carries us and our burdens. He shelters, teaches and protects us. <sup>28</sup>
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	Deuteronomy 32:9-12 <sup>29</sup>				<b>Body of the sermon:</b> I. God corrects us II. God is compassionate to his people III. God trains his people IV. What we learn from the eagle	
<b>Proposition:</b>	God shelters, feeds, protects, comforts and guides His people				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b> A. The severest storms in our lives strengthen our faith B. We secure salvation, form our character, but win heaven itself by striving	

<sup>27</sup> Roger Duncan, “The Eagle,” Sermon, December 16, 2007; CD.

<sup>28</sup> Pastor Duncan asks the congregation to read Psalms 91:1; 18:8.

<sup>29</sup> Deuteronomy 32:9-12 reads, “Like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft.” (KJV).

“The Conie”<sup>30</sup>

Date: January 27, 2008		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	The Rock of Ages	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> The most common name is the rock hyrax or badger. It's full of surprises. They like to hang out in rock formations and cliff faces where they make their homes. They live in colonies and come out when the sun is high in the morning; they stay 'indoors' in cold, rainy weather... <b>Prayer:</b>	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> A family was out on a picnic when the youngest child who had wandered further from the rest to explore the surroundings came running back shouting, "I saw a tiny little animal. He saw me and ran up the rocks and disappeared in there. Did I scare him?" The mom said, "That's a conie." "A conie?" asked the child, "Why did he run up the highest point and into the rock crevices?" The mom answered patiently, "When he perceives a threat, or sees the enemy, he runs to his home in the rocks" ...  The Bible teaches us that we are feeble and defenseless, against the enemy. When we seek shelter in Jesus, the Holy Spirit protects and strengthens us. We become as strong as The Rock shielding us. <sup>31</sup>
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	Proverbs 30:26 <sup>32</sup>					
<b>Proposition:</b>	Make our homes in the Rock of Ages, Jesus and run to Him			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. Fun facts about the conie (full of surprises, hang out in rock formations and cliff faces, live in colonies, they are feeble, defenseless, against all their predators but are exceedingly wise) II. The conie seeks shelter in the rocks III. Seek shelter in god	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Strengthen our faith in the Lord, and run to Jesus, The Rock of Ages, and hide in Him. B. Just like the conie finds refuge in the rocks, we too find refuge in Christ C. We are called as Christians to make our home in the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ	

<sup>30</sup> Roger Duncan, "The Conie," Sermon, January 27, 2008; CD.

<sup>31</sup> Pastor Duncan asks us to read Psalm 62:5-8.

<sup>32</sup> Proverbs 30:26 reads, "The conies are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the rocks." (KJV).

“Repentance”<sup>33</sup>

Date: February 10, 2008		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
Message Title:	Repentance	Topical	Inductive	Opening of sermon:	Introduction of topic: Prayer:	<p><b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> When repentance is mentioned, many of us immediately start thinking of God’s judgment and death. We are filled with negativity and fear.</p> <p>Repentance is the most fundamental doctrine to the life of the Christian believer... The doctrine of repentance means different things to different Christians. Biblically, repentance is the reflective change of heart, or turn of mind in man toward his Creator...as shown in Revelation 3:3; Matthew 27:3, 21:29; John 3:5 Luke 13:1, 5, 9; Psalms 30:11, 12)</p> <p>As sinners, we should acknowledge that we are fallen, sinful creatures, and see reason and truth in God. Sinners should seek conversion (to Christianity), after receiving the Gospel. This should be followed by getting baptized in water and spirit for the new converts.<sup>34</sup> The repenting sinner is humbled at heart and reformed in character. The nature of repentance is that it is a choice; God gifted us with the free will. When we repent, our actions and words should change, and we should focus on doing right even if the situation our sin caused doesn’t change.</p>
Scriptural Text:	Mark 1:15 <sup>35</sup>					
Proposition:	Why must we repent all our sins?			Body of the sermon:	I. What is repentance? II. The nature of repentance III. The necessity of repentance IV. The results of repentance	
				Conclusion/ Application:	A. We are all sinners B. Unless we repent, we are still embracing our sin C. Un-repent sins are unforgiven sins and unforgiven sin will destroy us D. When we repent, our desires of the heart should change and be more concerned with doing right.	

<sup>33</sup> Roger Duncan, “Repentance,” Sermon, February 10, 2008; CD.

<sup>34</sup> Read John 3:5; Matthew 3:2; Acts 2:38; Matthew 27:3, 21:29; Revelation 9:20, 21, 16:9, 11; Luke 17:3,4; Hebrews 12:17; 2 Corinthians 7:8; Read Joshua 7:13; Leviticus 6:1-7; Luke 19:8; 1 Kings 21:27 (KJV).

<sup>35</sup> Mark 1:15 reads, “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (KJV).

“The Love of God” <sup>36</sup>

Date: June 7, 2009		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	The Love of God	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> Do we ever feel that God has failed our love when we needed Him most? Do we sometimes wonder if God still cares for, and loves, us? I have good news for you; God loved us since the beginning, and has never, and will never stop loving us. Today, I will talk about...	<p><b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> On very special days and occasions such as Valentine’s Day, many of us suddenly become aware of this thing called love. We write letters and say beautiful things. This day is no doubt a beautiful one when someone says to another, “I love you.” A few days later, someone experience a serious betrayal. They are abandoned or cheated on. Some are stood up at the altar after several hours of painful waiting. They feel devastated. This can happen to anyone. Love can fail terribly in human relationships.</p> <p>According to the Bible, God is the starting point when talking about love. Love is the nature and character of God. Love is essential to His being. We can expect that God will act in a loving way. We are assured that God’s love is everlasting. He will always love because He is love. It was because of love that he sent Jesus to us; to show us love, to preach love, to die for our sins, and to resurrect in victory.<sup>37</sup></p>
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	1 John 4:8 <sup>38</sup>				<b>Prayer:</b>	
<b>Proposition:</b>	There is surety in God’s love for us. God is Love				<p><b>Body of the sermon:</b></p> <p>I. God is Love            II. Knowing the Love of God            III. Relying on the Love of God            IV. Living in the Love of God</p> <p><b>Conclusion/ Application:</b></p> <p>A. When we believe in and rely on His love, we love Him, we love our brethren, we love the church, and we love the lost            B. We rely on the love of God            C. God tells us that whoever lives in love lives in Him            D. We should pray that we are helped to live in the love of God</p>	

<sup>36</sup> Roger Duncan, “The Love of God,” Sermon, June 7, 2009; CD.

<sup>37</sup> As supporting scripture, Pastor Duncan reads from 1 John 4:16; Psalm 23:4; 1 John 4:8;16-21.

<sup>38</sup> 1 John 4:8 reads, “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” (KJV).

“The Backslider”<sup>39</sup>

Date: August 16, 2009		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	The Process of Backsliding	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> The Bible warns us of the real danger of turning back on the sacred command after having known and lived the way of righteousness. Backsliding is a slow process. Peter’s story shows us the process of backsliding. And how to prevent it. <b>Prayer:</b>	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> When a couple dates, they first begin as friends. Expectations are still low. They are beginning to know each other. The relationship grows, love blossoms and they get married. They have by now known a lot about each other, and expectations are very high. Then one betrays the other! The other partner is deeply hurt and wishes he or she never met the betrayer in the first place. If they parted ways just as they were beginning to know each other, I bet it would have been easier to move on. This is the story of Peter. He fell in love with Jesus. But then denied Him! When penning the dangers of backsliding, he knew it all firsthand.  Backsliding begins with pride and boasting that we would never deny Jesus. Pride lead to lose of humility and apathy. Fear creeps in when the backslider realizes his mistake. The backslider now is ashamed of Jesus. This we are told in the Bible <sup>40</sup> ... If we realize that we have turned our backs on our once steadfast ways, we should repent immediately and seek God’s times of refreshing
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	2 Peter: 2:20-22 <sup>41</sup>			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. The process of backsliding We should guard ourselves against backsliding	
<b>Proposition:</b>	There is real danger of turning back on the sacred command			<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. We should guard ourselves from backsliding B. We should guard ourselves against backsliding by: Guarding ourselves from pride, apathy, fear, worldliness, and Always pray that we do not deny Jesus but instead defend Him <sup>42</sup>	

<sup>39</sup> Roger Duncan, “The Backslider,” Sermon, August 16, 2009; CD.

<sup>40</sup> Pastor Duncan makes scriptural references to Mark 14:27-31; Timothy 2:25; 1 Peter 5:5-6; Proverbs 16:18.

<sup>41</sup> 2 Peter: 2:20-22 reads, “If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud.” (KJV).

<sup>42</sup> Read 1 Peter 5:5-6; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 Peter 4:16; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:15.

“What Trees Teach Us”<sup>43</sup>

Date: November 22, 2009		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
Message Title:		Topical	Inductive	Opening of sermon:	Introduction of topic: Today, I want to explore some of the trees talked about in the Bible and what they can teach us... Prayer:	<p><b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> I have always loved trees. Everything about trees is refreshing. God loves trees too. He created them. Trees have always been one of the most important parts in human existence. Humans have depended on trees for survival. Trees have been mentioned in the Bible severally.</p> <p>Pastor Roger preaches about two important trees mentioned in the Bible. Using the analogy of the palm tree and the cedar of Lebanon, reading from the book of Psalm 92:12 (NIV) which states, “the righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon”, Pastor Roger preaches to his hearers that they should be like these trees. He tells us that these trees are strong and flourishing and are God’s creation. The trees are symbolic of our Christian faith. In Pastor Roger’s own perspective, the Cedar and Palm trees symbolizes longevity, sweetness, peace, eternity, and holiness. It symbolizes the need for us to be stable, majestic and incorruptible as Christians.<sup>44</sup></p>
Scriptural Text:	Psalm 1:3, 92:12 <sup>45</sup>			Body of the sermon:	<p>I. Two important trees are mentioned in the bible:</p> <p>A. Palm tree</p> <p>B. Cedar in Lebanon</p> <p>II. We should be like these trees</p> <p>III. We should serve as vivid symbols of the Christian faith</p> <p>IV. We should serve as vivid symbols of the Christian faith</p>	
Proposition:				Conclusion/ Application:	<p>A. For us to have longevity, sweetness, peace in Christ, we are called to represent Him and serve Him with our hearts, minds, and soul</p> <p>B. We should seek to stay righteous for the righteous shall flourish and grow like the trees</p>	

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<sup>43</sup> Roger Duncan, “What Trees Teach Us,” Sermon, November 22, 2009; CD.

<sup>44</sup> Supporting scripture: Psalm 92:12; Hosea 14:6; Psalm 92:13,14; John 12:13; Matthew 21:8; Revelation 7:9,10.

<sup>45</sup> Psalm 1:3 reads, “That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.”

“Say So” <sup>46</sup>

Date: March 7, 2010		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Say So; Proclaim the living and powerful gospel of Christ that saves us from humanity’s past sin, today’s life’s tribulations, future judgment,	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> Have we personally shared the gospel with a friend, neighbor, those in your community? Do we hold regular gospel meetings? Do we evangelize to the lost? Are we ashamed of doing all these? <b>Prayer:</b>	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> Some of us would rather be silent followers of Christ. But we are called to share our testimonies. We are told of a man named Joseph of Arimathea in John 19:38-42. He was a silent follower of Christ. But he “said so” when he asked to bury Jesus...  Pastor Roger preaches that when Jesus bestowed upon His disciples the Great Commission to preach the Word of God and make disciples of all nations, they lived by this mission, proclaimed the gospel even when they faced persecution. It is because of them that the message of the gospel reached us all. Our generation is sinful and blasphemous. It questions the validity of the gospel.  Pastor Roger poses, “the scientifically and technologically advanced world, where most of those devices are developed by non-believers, sees the gospel as foolishness, does this make us feel out of place, foolish and ashamed of Christ, whom we are called to stand for?” He preaches, “the message of the gospel is foolishness to non-believers; but it is the Power of God to believers. We should remain steadfast in our belief in Christ.” <sup>47</sup>
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	Psalms 107:1-2 <sup>48</sup>			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. Ashamed to proclaim his gospel?	
<b>Proposition:</b>	We should not be ashamed of proclaiming Jesus’ gospel; When believers in Jesus Christ stand solely on His Word there is a confidence and boldness in the midst of adversity. He calls to “say so” to others.			<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. We must be willing and committed to stand up and speak up for the Lord Jesus Christ as instructed by God B. We should never be ashamed of the Gospel because the gospel is the love of God. C. Jesus is not ashamed of us; his second coming is not something to be ashamed of.	

<sup>46</sup> Roger Duncan, “Say So,” Sermon, March 7, 2010; CD.

<sup>47</sup> Pastor Duncan gives a list of verse to be read later: Romans 10:16-18; Colossians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 1:18,22-23; John 12:42-43; Luke 8:14; Hebrews 3:12; Romans 1:15-16; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 5:8-9; Hebrews 2:11; 11:16; 1 John 2:28 (KJV).

<sup>48</sup> Psalm 107:1-2 reads, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe.” (KJV).

“The Perfection of God”<sup>49</sup>

Date: May 9, 2010		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	The Perfection of God	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> Every account of God in the Bible depicts a God who is perfect in both His nature and His ways...	<b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> A mother once told me, “as my child grew up, I saw miracles. From crawling to walking to talking. God was revealing His perfection to me...As we too grow up in God, he reveals more of His perfection to us. The more we see His perfection, the more we see the light, and the more we continue to seek redemption and revival...We feel comforted and cleansed. We have hope for an everlasting life...  Pastor Roger preaches that God exists eternally. His existence transcends endlessly into the past and into the future. <sup>50</sup> He is omnipotent; God is all-powerful. He has absolute power over His creation. His power is endless. <sup>51</sup> God omniscient. He is all-knowing. He knows the past, the present, and the future. He knows all that is unknowable and knowable. His wisdom surpasses human comprehension. <sup>52</sup> God is omnipresent. He is all-present; He is everywhere at once. His divine presence embodies the entire cosmos. <sup>53</sup>
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	Matthew 5:48 <sup>54</sup>				<b>Prayer:</b>	
<b>Proposition:</b>	Our God is Supreme and Absolutely Perfect			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. God exists eternally II. He is omnipotent III. He is omniscient IV. He is omnipresent	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Our God is perfect. B. God’s perfection is in relation to us. C. We should be comforted that He is always in our midst. D. His timing to redeem, save, and restore us is perfect	

<sup>49</sup> Roger Duncan, “The Perfection of God,” Sermon, May 9, 2010; CD.

<sup>50</sup> Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Hebrews 2:10 (KJV).

<sup>51</sup> Ephesians 1:19; Daniel 4:35; Luke 1:37 (KJV).

<sup>52</sup> Psalm 44:21, 147:4; John 3:20.

<sup>53</sup> Pastor Duncan provides a long list of verse to support the sermon, that will be read by the congregation later: Jeremiah 23:24; Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13; God is omnipotent, read Revelation 19:6; Ephesians 1:19; Daniel 4:35; Luke 1:37; God is omniscient, read Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 44:21, 147:4; John 3:20; God is omnipresent, read Psalm 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:24; Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew 5:48 reads, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (KJV).



“The Ministry of Refreshing” <sup>55</sup>

Date: May 9, 2010		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Scriptural Support/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Paul, through the humble servant, Onesiphorus, demonstrated that we need others to refresh us, when we need it. Paul shows us how important it is for us to serve God and be in His ministry, the ministry of refreshing.	Topical	Inductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Introduction of topic:</b> Many things exist that we call refreshing: A cold drink, laughter, singing, fishing... <b>Prayer:</b>	<p><b>Short Story/Testimony:</b> A couple was kidnapped. They kept preaching to an uninterested gang of kidnappers. One of the kidnappers one day came and released them and said, “just go and keep telling those foolish stories of yours about Jesus to people who can actually listen. I may be one of those people you never know.” The fate of this one person who betrayed his gang remains unknown. But the story of Jesus softening the hearts of man, even non-believers is known...</p> <p>Pastor Roger preaches that no refreshing experience can compare to the refreshing experience of body, mind and spirit that is found in the presence of the Lord. God chooses to refresh others through us; He refreshes those who believe and commands them to refresh others. We are called as Christians to refresh others. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit stirs us up, gives us the ability, and sends us to reach out to, and give encouraging words and comfort to refresh one another. No one is super-human because of the marvelous work they do. All human beings are made of flesh and blood and we are all subject to the same trials and temptations that allows us all to have a story to tell.<sup>56</sup></p>
<b>Scriptural Text:</b>	2 Timothy 1:16-18 <sup>57</sup>			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	<p>I. The presence of the Lord is refreshing</p> <p>II. God chooses to refresh others through us</p> <p>III. God chooses to refresh us through others</p> <p>IV. The Holy Spirit stirs us up</p> <p>V. We are called to offer one on one ministry to others</p>	
<b>Proposition:</b>	The Holy Spirit works through us to refresh others			<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	<p>A. We all need refreshing</p> <p>B. God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to refresh those that need us. We should pray, encourage, and share the Word with others.</p>	

<sup>55</sup> Roger Duncan, “The Ministry of Refreshing,” Sermon, July 07, 2010; CD.

<sup>56</sup> Also read: Fellowship: Romans 15:30-33; Giving: I Corinthians 16:15-18; Witnessing: Philemon 1:1-7; Ministry: Philemon 1:17-20; Exhortation: 2 Corinthians 7:13-16; Reconciliation: Romans 5:10-11.

<sup>57</sup> 2 Timothy 1:16-18 Reads, “May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.” (KJV).

### Will Beauchamp's Expository Sermons, 2010 – 2015

This section provides selected expository sermons, totaling fifteen, that Pastor Beauchamp preached between 2010 – 2015. For this project, Pastor Beauchamp's sermons are transcribed, summarized, and broken down into divisions. Later on, critical analysis and evaluation of the content will be conducted in comparison with Pastor Duncan's topical sermons. Table 2 provides a list of Pastor Beauchamp's expository sermons arranged chronologically. This is followed by sermon excerpts presented by message title, including illustrations, propositions, and applications that were selected for the purpose of analysis in this project.

Table 2: Selected Expository Sermons by Will Beauchamp, 2010 – 2015

Sermon	Date	Title/Theme <sup>58</sup>	Scriptural Text (KJV) <sup>59</sup>
1.	May 2, 2010	God's Great Power	Isaiah 26:4
2.	May 23, 2010	The Apostles – Bible Series	Acts
3.	June 6, 2010	The Church – Bible Series	Acts
4.	May 8, 2011	The Salvation of Israel – Bible Series	Revelation
5.	June 13, 2011	The Victorious Church – Bible Series	Revelation
6.	July 15, 2012	He Has Risen!	1 Corinthians 15:1-21
7.	October 28, 2012	Reconciliation Between Believers – Bible Series	Philemon
8.	June 23, 2013	Jonah Lives Today	Jonah 4:10, 11
9.	July 7, 2013	The Raising of Jairus' Daughter – Miracle Series	Mark
10.	July 28, 2013	Jesus Heals the Paralytic – Miracle Series	Mark
11.	October 19, 2014	Healing of the Nobleman's Son – Miracle Series	John
12.	December 10, 2014	A Miracle of Leftovers – Miracle Series	John
13.	February 15, 2015	The Greatest of All	1 Corinthians 13
14.	March 8, 2015	A Time of Trials – Bible Series	James
15.	July 12, 2015	Visiting the Sick – Bible Series	James

The following are excerpts from Pastor Beauchamp's sermons.

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<sup>58</sup> See Appendix for a full list of Miracle and Bible Series sermons by Pastor Will Beauchamp.

<sup>59</sup> King James Version (KJV).

“God’s Great Power”<sup>60</sup>

Date: May 2, 2010		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
Message Title:	God’s Great Power	Expository	Deductive	Opening of sermon:	Prayer: <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> God holds the whole world in His hand. He created the oceans, the land, and the whole universe. God avails this same power to us today! By this power, we are protected from the enemy and liberated from the sin that dwells amongst us...	In this sermon, Pastor Will elucidates the meaning of God’s great power using the exposition of the Bible. God is the power that separated night from day, the heavens from the earth. He is the power that separated the Red Sea. He broke walls of Jericho without a single blow and can command the sun and the moon to stand still. <sup>61</sup>
Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:	Isaiah 26:4 <sup>62</sup>				Body of the sermon:	
Proposition:	With God, nothing is impossible			Conclusion/ Application:		

<sup>60</sup> Will Beauchamp, “God’s Great Power,” Sermon, May 2, 2010; CD.

<sup>61</sup> Read Genesis 1; Exodus 14:21; Joshua 6:20; Joshua 10:13; Ephesians 1:19; Isaiah 40:28-29; Ephesians 1:17-18; Jeremiah 29:11.

<sup>62</sup> Isaiah 26:4 reads, “Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal.” (KJV).

“The Apostles – Bible Series”<sup>63</sup>

Date: May 2, 2010		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>		Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b> <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> How would it feel like attending a preaching seminar and listening to a sermon being delivered by Apostle Paul or Peter? ...We can learn from their preaching, what it means to preach, and how to preach the crucified and resurrected Jesus...	Proverbs 17:3 2 Corinthians 5:10 2 Timothy 4:2 1 Corinthians 2:2) Romans 13:11–14)  Jesus enlisted His disciples to a life of service, not one of leisure. They all had the same calling and mission – to fulfill the Great Commission in their time, which was to spread the gospel of Jesus, and Christianity, to all people
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	Acts 1: 9-14					
<b>Proposition:</b>	We should serve the Lord faithfully, as what we do for Him is important for the Holy Spirit			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	<p>I. The motivation of Christ’s ministry (Acts 1: 9-11)</p> <p>A. The Lord’s resurrection and ascension</p> <p>B. The Apostles on the Mount of Olives (Luke 24:50–51)</p> <p>II. The Gracious Promise (Zechariah 14:4; A. Members of the church (Acts 1:12-13)</p> <p>A. The Apostles gathered according to God’s power (Acts 10:39–42)</p> <p>B. The Apostles were obedient (Acts 1:4)</p> <p>III. The apostles were patient Acts 1:14)</p> <p>A. Perseverance</p> <p>B. Unity</p> <p>C. Prayer</p>	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	<p>A. We should always seek to see God’s mighty work</p> <p>B. We serve the same resurrected Jesus as the apostles did</p> <p>C. God uses ordinary people like us</p> <p>D. We should wait in perseverance, unity, and prayer for His power and blessings</p>	

<sup>63</sup> Will Beauchamp, “The Apostles – Bible Series,” Sermon, April 11, 2010; CD.

“The Church – Bible Series”<sup>64</sup>

Date: June 6, 2010		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
Message Title:		Expository	Deductive	Opening of sermon:	Prayer: <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> The early church had a clear purpose, and they knew it, and they were unified by it – to give testimony to the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus. The book of Acts 4: 32, 33	Colossians 1:28 1 Corinthians 2:2  The church keeps God’s unity. We examine ourselves, acknowledge that we are not perfect
Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:	Acts 4: 32, 33			Body of the sermon:	I. Unity in the church of God (Acts 4:32) A. Family in relationship B. Friends in fellowship C. Partners in Christ II. The Church experiences the power of God (Acts 4:33) A. The growth of the church manifests God’s power B. The ability of the church to defy the enemy manifests God’s power C. Diversity in church manifests God’s power III. The church experiences God’s favor (Acts 4:33)  IV. The church is one flock with one shepherd (John 10:16)	
Proposition:	Jesus commands the church to keep the unity			Conclusion/ Application:	A. We need to be unified in the unity of purpose – God’s purpose	

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<sup>64</sup> Will Beauchamp, “The Church – Bible Series,” Sermon, June 6, 2010; CD.

“The Salvation of Israel – Bible Series”<sup>65</sup>

Date: May 8, 2011		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
Message Title:		Expository	Deductive	Opening of sermon:	Prayer: <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> Last week we looked at the book of Revelation...We will begin today's sermon by continuing with the same book, but focusing on another passage, Revelation 7:1-17	John 4:22 Matthew 10:6, 15:24 Acts 14:22 Romans 8:31-39 Ephesians 2:3
Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:	Revelation 77:1-17			Body of the sermon:	I. Heavenly worship before the throne (Revelation 77:1-17) II. The sealed (Revelation 77:9-12) III. The decree of the sealed (Revelation 77:1-8) IV. The destiny of the sealed (Revelation 77:13-17)	
Proposition:	Let's thank Our Lord Jesus Christ for the seal and the eternal life that He has guaranteed us			Conclusion/ Application:	A. God has sealed our fate and is promising to keep us safe	

“The Victorious Church – Bible Series”<sup>66</sup>

Date: June 13, 2011		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
Message Title:		Expository	Deductive	Opening of sermon:	Prayer: <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> This morning, we continue our study of the book of Revelation by looking at what it tells us about the victorious church...The Bible tells us that in the last days, there will emerge a victorious church...	John 14:12 John 5:20  The book of revelation reveals the power, purity and the intimacy that the Savior will have with the church in the end times
Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:	Revelation 7:9, 13-14			Body of the sermon:	I. Unsurpassed power II. Unsurpassed purity III. Unsurpassed intimacy	
Proposition:	Jesus Christ loved the church and gave His life to it. We are also called to love the church and give ourselves and service to it			Conclusion/ Application:	A. We should begin preparing our hearts for God's victorious church	

<sup>65</sup> Will Beauchamp, “The Salvation of Israel – Bible Series,” Sermon, May 8, 2011; CD.

<sup>66</sup> Will Beauchamp, “The Victorious Church – Bible Series,” Sermon, June 13, 2011; CD.

“He Has Risen!”<sup>67</sup>

Date: February 15, 2015		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	He Has Risen!	Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b>	In this sermon, Pastor Will prayerfully chooses to interpret and reveal to his congregation the greatness and power of Christ’s rising from the dead.  The pastor preaches to his hearers that no matter what they face, and have passed through, or what uncertainties they may have in their lives and about the future, Christ is risen and is their hope. Christ conquered death; He will make our lives new. He will breathe a new life of redemption and revival for us.
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	1 Corinthians 15:1-21				<b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> The resurrection of Jesus has brought us complete comfort and tranquility. He has conquered death. He bore our sins, was crucified because of them, but He arose victorious from the grave.	
<b>Proposition:</b>	You must seek redemption and revival according to Jesus				<b>Body of the sermon:</b>  I. Christ’s resurrection is the bedrock of our Christian faith and the true gospel through which we are atoned, redeemed, reconciled, and saved.	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Christ’s resurrection is the Good News that we are called to spread as Christians. The good news is the gospel of redemption and revival, that by faith, sinners are saved, and believers are strengthened. Those that accept this good news by faith are transformed.	

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<sup>67</sup> Will Beauchamp, “He Has Risen,” Sermon, July 15, 2012; CD.

“Reconciliation Between Believers – Bible Series”<sup>68</sup>

Date: October 28, 2012		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/ Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	We need to forgive, as we are also forgiven in faith	Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b> <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> Today, we are going to begin studying yet another book in the Bible, in the New Testament; the Book of Philemon. Let us please turn to the Book of Philemon. It is one of the briefest books with only one chapter, 25 verses. The background of the book <sup>69</sup> ...	1 Corinthians 13:5 Matthew 6:14–15  Our society today is selfish and ego-centered and cares little about forgiveness and reconciliation. When I read the Bible, the Holy Spirit reveals to me the main points Paul is making in his letter to Philemon: the need for Christians to forgive each other and reconcile.
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	Philemon 1:17-19			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. The need for forgiveness II. The encouragement to forgive A. A chance to reconcile (Philemon 1:10-14) B. An opportunity to do good (Philemon 1:15-16) C. An opportunity to receive those who wrong us as to please Jesus (Philemon 1:17-22) III. Forgiveness is divine IV. The character of one who forgives	Forgiveness is rarely something easy given our human nature. We want to see revenge for those who have hurt us. But as Christians, Paul tells us that we should forgive because we owe our own lives to the forgiveness that Jesus gifted us on the cross
<b>Propositions:</b>	Forgiving is a Christian character				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b> A. Jesus gave us His forgiveness freely. We are to forgive as Christ forgave us B. As our relationship with God changes, so do our human relationships	

<sup>68</sup> Will Beauchamp, “Reconciliation between Believers – Bible Series,” Sermon, October 28, 2012; CD.

<sup>69</sup> Pastor Beauchamp provides a summary of the book of Philemon including the title, authors, brief overview, and an outline of the chapters. The book starts with Greetings (1-1; 1-3), Thanksgiving and Prayer (1-4; 1-7), Paul’s plea for Philemon’s slave named Onesimus, (1-8:1-21), and Final Request, Greetings and Prayer. Philemon is a slave owner, and one of his slaves, Onesimus, has stolen from him and run away; an offense punishable by death under Roman Law. Paul (who is serving time in prison for his Christ’s ministry) meets Onesimus and ministers to him. A new convert in Christ, Onesimus is willing to return to his master; and Paul is writing to his Christian brother, Philemon, appealing to him to accept Onesimus back and forgive him. This Bible Series is an exposition of what we can learn from the story of these biblical characters, all who are Christians.



“Jonah Lives Today”<sup>70</sup>

Date: June 23, 2014		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Jonah Lives Today	Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b> <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> Pastor Will begins the sermon by giving the context and historical setting of the book of Jonah. He details who Jonah was and what God’s purpose was for him. The book was written by the prophet Jonah. The sermon follows with reading the content of the book and making meaning of the text...	Pastor Will’s exposition of this scripture is that God is not pleased when we disobey Him, when we make excuses, to get out of our comfort zones, and use our God-given gifts to tell others about Him. Our first instinct when faced with hardship, when we have erred, or when we have sinned is to hide. However, our God is a forgiving God. He sent Jesus, His only begotten son to die for our sins. He forgave Jonah and preserved him to tell others about Him.  The permanent message revealed by the ancient witness is that we, the postmodern Christian, sometimes fail to learn from our hard situations in society. As a church, we sometimes frantically try to run and hide from what God has called us to do. Our church mission is to reach others for Christ.
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	Jonah 4:10, 11 <sup>71</sup>					
<b>Proposition:</b>	We are Repentance					
				<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. The content of the book reveals God’s sovereignty and forgiving nature, even to sinful and disobedient people.	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Our church mission is to reach others for Christ. B. God demands us to love others, believe in Him, and to be obedient to His call and purpose for our lives	

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<sup>70</sup> Will Beauchamp, “Jonah Lives Today,” Sermon, June 23, 2014; CD.

<sup>71</sup> Jonah 4:10, 11 reads, “But the LORD said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?” (KJV).

“The Raising of Jairus' Daughter – Miracle Series”<sup>72</sup>

Date: July 7, 2013		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/ Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	God cares about all our needs	Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b> <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> This morning we are going to learn about two people in the Bible who approach Jesus with needs that they believe only He can perform a miracle. The first person is Jairus, the other a sick woman...Let's turn to our Bibles and read from the book of Mark 5:21	For context, Pastor Will asks his congregation to read Mark 11: 22-24, and try and memorize verse 24. <sup>73</sup> Other supporting scriptures include: Hebrews 11:6  Jesus is a crowd puller (Luke 8:42)  After prayer, we should be patient. God answers in His own time, the right time. Jairus waited his turn even as Jesus healed the sick woman and addressed the crowd.  Jesus is the Great Physician
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	Mark 5:21–42					
<b>Propositions:</b>	We should pray in complete faith that God will hear and answer our prayers, through Jesus Christ our Savior; Jesus always hears and answers our prayers. We can feel the presence of Jesus when alone and speaking quietly with him			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. When Jairus, a respected ruler of the synagogue, approaches Jesus, he falls at His feet and pleads with Him to heal his one and only child, who is dying II. As Jesus follows Jairus, a crowd follows them. In the crowd is a woman who has been sick for 12 years. The woman, fearful that she may be reprimanded and embarrassed to share her problems with everyone, touches His clothes in faith and is healed III. Meanwhile, Jairus waits for his turn of God's miracle IV. Jesus arrives at Jairus' house and raises his daughter who had succumbed to her illness	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Jesus is worthy of our praise and respect no matter who we are B. When we believe and have faith that God can do something for us, He fulfills our need.	

<sup>72</sup> Will Beauchamp, “The Raising of Jairus' Daughter – Miracle Series,” Sermon, July 7, 2013; CD.

<sup>73</sup> Mark 11: 22-24 reads, “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

“Jesus Heals the Paralytic – Miracle Series”<sup>74</sup>

Date: July 28, 2013		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/ Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	Jesus Christ is the Lord above all laws	Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b>	Mark 2:1–12 Mark 9:14–29  Jesus liberates people and performs miracles on the Sabbath – a day expected to be a rest day by the Pharisees and the laws of the land, demonstrating that Christian church service without a heart is not blessed. The church is meant to serve humanity and not vice versa
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	Mark 3:1–6				<b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> Jesus heals the man on the sabbath, a day designed for rest by the Pharisees. They do not see His mission or miracle, which he performs to challenge their laws. They are interested in laws made by man...	
<b>Propositions:</b>	We have freedom in Christ; Jesus has the authority and power to forgive our sins; miracles happen when we have faith and are prayerful.			<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. Jesus demonstrates his purpose and mission for humanity: To heal the sick and free the downtrodden II. Jesus is demonstrating that He is the ultimate church, and He is God. He restores what He intended the church to do III. The purpose of the Pharisees is to test Him: His purpose is to reveal the truth to them	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. Jesus is the Lord of the church B. Missing the purpose of the law misleads us out on the Lord’s favor, and the purpose Jesus has for us C. Jesus prefers a pure heart that is compassionate for God’s creation over church rituals that purport to exalt Him D. We have the freedom to do what is righteous and pleasing to God regardless of what the world and its laws thinks about us – in the name of Jesus Christ	

<sup>74</sup> Will Beauchamp, “Jesus Heals the Paralytic – Miracle Series,” Sermon, July 7, 2013; CD.

“Healing of the Nobleman’s Son – Miracle Series”<sup>75</sup>

Date: October 19, 2014		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
Message Title:		Expository	Deductive	Opening of sermon:	Prayer: <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> For the past few sermons, we have focused on the miracles of Jesus. Today, I would like us to focus on yet another of His miracles that is elaborately documented in the book of John 4:46-54...	Jesus’ miracles provide us with abundant testimony He is Lord. He has the power to heal our sicknesses and soothe our pains.
Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:	John 4:46-54			Body of the sermon:	I. The noble man’s concern II. Christ’s first response (John 4:48) III. The Noble man’s faith IV. Christ’s final response V. The miracle VI. The servant’s confirmation	
Proposition:				Conclusion/ Application:	A. When we believe and have faith that God can do something for us, He fulfills our need.	

“A Miracle of Leftovers – Miracle Series”<sup>76</sup>

Date: December 10, 2014		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
Message Title:		Expository	Deductive	Opening of sermon:	Prayer: <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> Brothers and sisters in Christ, I tell you this morning that there is a miracle in everything the Lord does. He takes what we consider leftovers, adds His grace and mercy, and turns it to a brand-new product for His glory...	We should allow Jesus to use us to bless others by bringing forth our God-given gifts, just like those that brought forth fish and bread
Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:	John 6:5-14			Body of the sermon:	I. Jesus feeds the hungry multitude II. The man who comes to Jesus	
Proposition:	Our God’s power is not constrained. Little becomes more when we entrust it with our master			Conclusion/ Application:	A. Jesus redeems his people so that they will not be wasted B. We should manifest God’s great miracle by transforming our lives and living according to His will.	

<sup>75</sup> Will Beauchamp, “Healing of the Nobleman’s Son – Miracle Series,” Sermon, October 19, 2014; CD.

<sup>76</sup> Will Beauchamp, “A Miracle of Leftovers – Miracle Series,” Sermon, December 10, 2014; CD.

“The Greatest of All”<sup>77</sup>

Date: February 15, 2015		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>	The Greatest of all is God's love	Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b> <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> The Apostle Paul admonishes us to learn to love while enjoying the spiritual gifts and union with each other...	In this sermon, Pastor Will looks at how Paul unpacks all the characteristics of the manifestation of the love of Jesus Christ. Jesus is patient and kind. He is the only one who satisfies this picture of what love really is. He personifies a love that is greater than the gifts of tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, and giving. Jesus is perfect love. We are called to meditate the beauty of the loving character of Jesus, accept Him in our lives, and let God work his miracles for us. We should pray to God that He transforms us into the likeness of Christ and that we shall grow in love with each other according to the will of the Holy Spirit.  The Bible reveals the character of love: Love is essential (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) Love is effectual (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) Love is eternal (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	1 Corinthians 13				<b>Body of the sermon:</b> I. The context of the text in 1 Corinthians is that of a community that is experiencing great difficulty trying to stay together.	
<b>Proposition:</b>	God's love is the greatest of all			<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. As Christians, without love, we yield nothing of value, are nothing of value, profit nothing of value, and are empty.	

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<sup>77</sup> Will Beauchamp, “The Greatest of All”, Sermon, July 28, 2013; CD.

“A Time of Trials – Bible Series”<sup>78</sup>

Date: March 8, 2015		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
<b>Message Title:</b>		Expository	Deductive	<b>Opening of sermon:</b>	<b>Prayer:</b> <b>Introduction/reading of the text:</b> We are often faced with temptations that threaten to compromise our Christian faith and commitment, and lead us to relapse into an accommodation to the life of worldliness. James speaks to us as a prophet and pastor urging us to revitalize our spiritual strength and confess God’s mighty power...	We face trials because God wants us to test our faith, and develop more perseverance .
<b>Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:</b>	James 1:2					
<b>Proposition:</b>	Christians should have the courage and strength to serve him obediently because of His love and faithfulness					
				<b>Body of the sermon:</b>	I. How to face trial (James 1:2-4) II. Having genuine faith (James 1:19-5:20)	
				<b>Conclusion/ Application:</b>	A. We should have the correct attitude toward trial and temptation (James 1:2-4) B. We should avoid worldliness	

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<sup>78</sup> Will Beauchamp, “A Time of Trials – Bible Series,” Sermon, March 8, 2015; CD.

“Visiting the Sick – Bible Series”<sup>79</sup>

Date: July 12, 2015		Sermon Content	Sermon Pattern	Sermon Components		Supporting Text/Illustrations
Message Title:		Expository	Deductive	Opening of sermon:	Prayer: Introduction/reading of the text: Today, we look at the scripture in the book of James 5:14-28...	Matthew 25:36
Scriptural Text Driving the Sermon:	James 5:14-18					
Proposition:	Christians have a God-given duty to visit the sick			Body of the sermon:	I. Who are the sick? II. What does the Bible imply in visiting the sick? III. What is the nature of visiting the sick? IV. How does the Bible instruct this is to be done? V. By whom is this to be done?	
				Conclusion/ Application:	A. The Lord calls us to visit the sick	

### Comparative Analysis of Roger Duncan’s and Will Beauchamp’s Sermons

This section analyzes comparatively Pastor Duncan’s and Pastor Beauchamp’s sermons that have been outlined in the foregoing section. The content and critical analysis of the sermons are conducted based on criteria derived from the literature provided in Chapters 2-3.

#### Sermon Forms

The form is the pattern or movement taken by a sermon; it is either deductive or inductive. In the inductive sermon, the preacher moves his sermon from particular details before moving to the general point that he wants to make. The sermon moves from particular observations, questions, examples, experiences, or conclusions to a general one.<sup>80</sup> In deductive sermons, the preacher begins with the general point as he starts at the prologue and then develops

<sup>79</sup> Will Beauchamp, “Visiting the Sick – Bible Series,” Sermon, July 12, 2015; CD.

<sup>80</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 11–14.

the particular points derived from the general point. In other words, the preacher moves the sermon from a general statement to a particular one. To deduce is to arrive at a logical conclusion, to lead down, by reasoning.<sup>81</sup>

The majority of Pastor Duncan's sermons seem to take the inductive route. As his sermons are topical in homiletic content and design, it appears that he finds induction especially useful in introducing his topics. Induction eases hearers into the topic, enabling them to relate easily. The congregation becomes more attentive to the entertaining viewpoints that directly affect them in their day to day lives. Pastor Duncan tends to offer his listeners an opportunity to enter into the experience of the topical issue he is preaching about from the beginning, as opposed to trying to make a biblical point at the start. In other words, he raises a prevailing issue that is of interest to his hearers, takes them on a journey analyzing it theologically, and arrives at a conclusion.

For example, in the sermon "The Backslider," Pastor Duncan begins the sermon, "The Bible warns us of the real danger of turning back on the sacred command after having known and lived the way of righteousness. Backsliding is a slow process. Peter's story shows us the process of backsliding and how to prevent it. Other sermons begin with the introduction (story), followed by the theme or proposition, then the main and sub-points he wishes to deliver (e.g., "What Trees Teach Us" and "The Eagle"). The sermon "Say So" reveals the main point of preaching near the end of the sermon. The pastor's sermons become like narrative stories that unfold gradually from scene to scene.

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<sup>81</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 11–14.



The majority of Pastor Beauchamp's sermons are deductive in form. The pastor introduces the theme, uses points that capture the attention of his hearers, and invites them to journey together as they move through the sermon. Pastor Beauchamp tends to reveal the main preaching point at the introduction or prologue of the sermon and then follows this up with sub-points and incidental points. An example of how the pastor points out to the congregation the main point he is trying to make is found in "God's Great Power." In this sermon, the main preaching point is Isaiah 26:4. After introducing the main point, the pastor develops the following sub-points: I. Who is God? II. God is eternal, III. God enlightens us, IV. God's power is sufficient.

The inductive and deductive movement is the major point of departure between Pastor Duncan's and Pastor Beauchamp's sermons that share the same subject or topic of preaching. For instance, in the Bible series sermon "Reconciliation between Believers," Pastor Beauchamp preaches forgiveness and reconciliation (Philemon 1:17-19), while Pastor Duncan preaches the sermon "Forgiveness (Genesis 50:15-21)." Pastor Duncan also preaches the sermon "Repentance" (Mark 1:15) and "The Love of God" (1 John 4:8), while Pastor Beauchamp preaches "Jonah Lives Today" (Jonah 4:10, 11) and "The Greatest of All" (1 Corinthians 13)." Each pair of sermons by the two preachers have similar messages. While the two preach about the same topic, the difference is noted in the movement of the sermon. For instance, Pastor Duncan introduces the sermon topics inductively, highlighting personal stories and testimonies, and allowing the hearers to experience the gospel and its main consequent points at the end. Pastor Beauchamp uses a biblical text and focuses on how the ancient biblical witness such as Paul unpacks the reality of the gospel.

## Sermon Content

The content of the sermon is either topical or expository. Pastor Duncan's sermons are topical, while Pastor Beauchamp's are expository. Pastor Beauchamp's sermons such as "The Victorious Church" originate in the exposition of Revelation 2:8-11. Pastor Beauchamp, in this example, uses the Book of Revelation with his congregation. Pastor Beauchamp demonstrates to his hearers how the passage in Revelation can enhance their consciousness about the victorious church. Beauchamp is led to interpret Christianity in its contemporary context in light of the gospel through the encounter with Revelation 2:8-11. On the other hand, Pastor Duncan's sermons are topical; they do not originate from a theme or text deriving from the Bible but interpret a topic the pastor chooses to preach about in the sermon. For instance, the sermon "Some Remove the Landmarks" derives from his audience, who are the Christian community and the larger social community.

Pastor Duncan appears to have a full-bodied grasp of the topics that he preaches (e.g., "The Conie," and "The Perfection of God"). Several literature sources on topical sermons emphasize that the need to have such an understanding of the topic to be preached is crucial.<sup>82</sup> There are many dangers in topical preaching, which may include misrepresentation and even abuse of the text. However, Pastor Duncan demonstrates his prayerful intention not to mislead his congregation and puts the integrity of his sermon and Christ's church on the line. For instance, in the sermon "What Trees Teach Us," Pastor Duncan uses an analogy to indicate the purpose of the passage of the Scripture in Psalm 1:3 and Psalm 92:12. Pastor Duncan's sermons

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<sup>82</sup> e.g., Thoma H. Troeger, "Topical Preaching," in *Patterns of Preaching: A Sermon Sampler*, ed. Ronald J. Allen (Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 1998), 88; Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 5; Tony Merida, *Faithful Preaching: Declaring Scripture with Responsibility, Passion, and Authenticity* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 19.

tend to take the subject or topic from the biblical text. Duncan, according to his knowledge and desire, designs the divisions, both the main points and sub-points. The majority of Pastor Duncan's selected sermons begin with a biblical reference but tend to be completely based upon his theological perspective; sometimes, the pastor deduces the subject and topic of his sermons from the text, but he also tends to preach the subject independent of the text. The Bible is Pastor Duncan's ultimate tool to communicate the Word of God, and he used it faithfully as a springboard to launch his sermons. As diverse as they are, in terms of both design and form, Pastor Duncan's topical sermons tend to have three main components: The introduction, main body, and conclusion.

Pastor Beauchamp's preaching are instances where the source of the sermon ideas is from the Scriptures. Pastor Beauchamp appears to deliver two types of expository preaching: general exposition and systematic exposition. In general exposition, Pastor Beauchamp selects and ties together, in a series, distinct or unrelated Bible texts that do not fall consecutively relative to each other in the Scriptures and do not offer exhaustive treatment to the selected book of the Bible. The preacher does not preach through the text chapter by chapter, verse by verse. This is depicted in the "Bible Series" sermons.

In systematic exposition, homileticians have argued that going through the books of the Bible, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, in a systematic manner, is the most effective method an expositor can use to interpret and lay bare what the Holy Spirit is saying and how it applies to the context of interest.<sup>83</sup> The essence of expository preaching is the consecutive and exhaustive

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<sup>83</sup> Bo Rice, "Sermon Preparation in the Small Church," in *Small Church, Excellent Ministry: A Guidebook for Pastors*, ed. Jeffrey C. Farmer (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 53–54.

interpretation and actual application of a book of the Bible.<sup>84</sup> An example of such sermons is Pastor Beauchamp's "Miracle Sermons."

Citing F. B. Meyer, Vines and Shaddix stated that the preacher weeps, prays, and pays full attention head, heart, body, soul, brain, and brawn, until the Holy Spirit reveals its inner mind to him, and passes itself into his spirit so that he can reveal this mind to other men.<sup>85</sup> Both Pastor Duncan and Pastor Beauchamp pray at the beginning and end of their sermons. While the two pastors tend to take different routes in delivering their sermons, they both share a common God-given calling and purpose: to help their hearers discover the gospel of Jesus Christ in their world.

## **Content Analysis**

### **Sermon Introduction**

The sermon introduction consists of all parts of a sermon that prepare hearers for the main body, by putting them in sync with the idea being projected by the preacher. It relates to the main subject but is not the main subject itself. It leads to the beginning of the discourse. The introduction is as good as the sermon. A bad introduction will lose the attention and sympathy of the hearers such that the sermon will not be delivered effectively.<sup>86</sup> Pastor Duncan's introductions appear to begin from the direct perspective and needs of his audience, while Pastor Beauchamp's introductions show that his sermons begin directly from the text. Pastor Duncan uses a variety of stories related to the main topic, intellectual knowledge, and philosophical thought. Pastor Beauchamp develops introductions around theology.

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<sup>84</sup> Sune Fahlgren, "Preaching and Preachership as Fundamental Expressions of Being Church," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6, no. 2 (2006): 182.

<sup>85</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 33–36.

<sup>86</sup> Gibson and Kim, *Homiletics and Hermeneutics*, 54.

The difference is depicted, for instance, in the sermon “Some Remove the Landmarks” by Pastor Duncan, where he begins, “There is a danger in removing landmarks which is not limited to ancient landmarks that we know of in the Bible, or those of our nation’s history. For Christians, there is a danger too: removing the spiritual landmarks that have from the beginning formed the core of our Christian doctrines.” This topic speaks to the needs of the people. Pastor Beauchamp’s sermon “A Time of Trials,” begins, “We are often faced with temptations that threaten to compromise our Christian faith and commitment, leading us to relapse into an accommodation to the life of worldliness. James speaks to us as a pastor urging us to revitalize our spiritual strength and confess God’s mighty power...” This introduction starts from the point of a need that is supported by theology.

The source of Pastor Beauchamp’s sermon introductions is the text, while Pastor Duncan’s source is the subject, time, place, occasion, or condition of his audience at that moment. The major similarity between the two pastors’ introductions is that they both focus on brevity, unity of idea, simplicity, pertinency, and variety. These elements are well outlined in homiletical literature.<sup>87</sup> Both pastors have good introductions that surface the need and introduce the sermon idea. Pastor Duncan’s introductions are inductive, so he tends to state only the theme, while Pastor Beauchamp tends to introduce the big idea, as his sermons are deductive.

#### Sermon Proposition

The proposition of a sermon is its theme, main point, big point, or central idea of the text. Some homileticians call it the essence of the whole sermon presented in one sentence.<sup>88</sup> When a

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<sup>87</sup> e.g. Zoë Bennett et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2018), 66; David Schnasa Jacobsen, *Homiletical Theology: Preaching as Doing Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 89; Siegfried Wenzel, *The Art of Preaching* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2013), 47.

<sup>88</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 130.

congregant missed the sermon and asked another, “What did Pastor Roger preach about last Sunday?” The congregant will be able to answer, “God faithfully fulfills all His promises, from 2 Corinthians 1:20.” An analysis of Pastor Duncan’s and Pastor Beauchamp’s sermons reveals that while the former tends to use declarative and interrogative propositions, the latter is more inclined to hortatory and exclamatory propositions.<sup>89</sup> Pastor Duncan tends to declare the subject of his sermons, which is the declarative form; for example, “Jesus commands us to forgive and let go” in the “Forgiveness” sermon. Another example, in the “Repentance” sermon, Pastor Duncan uses an interrogative proposition, “Why must we repent all our sins?” Pastor Duncan’s propositions aim to address the needs of his hearers.

An example of Pastor Beauchamp’s hortatory proposition is, “You must seek redemption and revival according to Jesus,” in the “He Has Risen Sermon.” Hortatory means to exhort according to the commands of Jesus.<sup>90</sup> Pastor Beauchamp tends to admonish or exhort his hearers to be both hearers and doers of the Word, according to the text. An example of Pastor Beauchamp’s exclamatory proposition is “God’s love is the greatest of all,” in the sermon, “The Greatest of All.” This proposition both declares God’s power and exhorts the hearers to believe in his great power.<sup>91</sup>

### Sermon Transitions

Both pastors tend to have propositions and transitions in their sermons. The transition refers to where the sermon is shifting from a previous division to the next one. Both pastors use masterful transitions to move through the parts of the sermon. Pastor Duncan uses short stories,

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<sup>89</sup> See Lee J. Gugliotto, *Handbook for Bible Study* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 2000), 203–206.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 130.

while Pastor Beauchamp moves through the text. They use such words as “next we look at...,” “let’s read the verse together,” “firstly,” “in conclusion.” Moving between parts of the sermon, both pastors pause, restate their points or propositions, and state their next point or sub-point. The pastors use transitions both to unite and distinguish divisions and subdivisions of their sermons.<sup>92</sup>

### Sermon Illustrations

The preachers use illustrations to throw light upon their sermons. Pastor Beauchamp tends to use biblical illustrations and textual examples while Pastor Duncan tends to use non-biblical ones in the form of analogies, stories, and split-stories (begins a story, preaches his big idea, and continues with the story). However, he does use biblical illustrations when illuminating his topic in light of the gospel. Both pastors’ sermons have sufficient illustrations to explain or clarify the ideas they are trying to put across in the discussion. Both pastors demonstrate that they are good students of Christ, whose sermons and public discourses abounded with parables and stories.<sup>93</sup>

### Sermon Main Body

Both pastors seem to share a similar trait in preaching their sermons. They take time to prepare the texts, as well as their souls and, are prepared to serve. The bodies of their sermons depict a concerted effort, one sermon at a time, to give guidance to their listeners in achieving their God-given destiny. The exegetical and homiletical outlines of their sermons show good planning in preaching. It is like the two preachers ask themselves, “Where do we take our congregation (spiritually) with this sermon, after the previous one, and before the next?”

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<sup>92</sup> Dever and Gilbert, *Preach*, 36.

<sup>93</sup> Refer to the sermons provided in the previous section.

Although the content and pattern of their sermons take different routes, they both consider the biblical texts, homiletical practices, and spiritual truths in delivering the main body of their sermons.

One more similarity that emerges is the way they balance the Good News from the Old and New Testaments, as demonstrated in their illustrations. They are also both masters of balancing the narrative and didactic texts in teaching their audience the wise counsel of the Holy Spirit. While Pastor Beauchamp's sermons are more focused on explaining and amplifying the text, Pastor Duncan's sermons appear to be more focused on exploring the needs in the congregation that should be addressed in light of the gospel.

As demonstrated in the main body of the sermons, the outlines of the preachers' sermons are as follows. Pastor Beauchamp tends to use an exegetical outline, following the text exactly and only summarizing his thoughts at the end. His sermons are mostly in the third person and past tense. For example, in the sermon "Jonah Lives Today," Pastor Beauchamp deductively offers the chronology of events outlined in the third person, past tense, what happened first before the next. Pastor Duncan, on the other hand, delivers his sermons in the present tense, using the first- or second-person address. He applies his thoughts or perspectives to the congregation, mostly using a logical order in the homiletical outline, unlike Pastor Beauchamp, who tends to use the textual order.<sup>94</sup>

For example, Pastor Duncan's sermon outline in "The Perfection of God" (Matthew 5:48): I. God exists eternally; II. He is omnipotent, III. He is omniscient; IV. He is omnipresent. This body outline demonstrates Pastor Duncan's flow of thought, as well as the theological flow

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<sup>94</sup> See Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 116–118; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Sermon: Its Homiletical Construction* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), 90–95.



of thought and its relevance. The sermon uses present tense and flows inductively with the introduction, transitions, and illustrations, paving the way for the big idea, which is the perfection of God. In comparison, Pastor Beauchamp's sermons take his hearers through the Bible text by text and tend to order the main body of his sermon deductively, a logical approach that is known to reflect the thought process of most people. Some homileticians argue that deductive outlines are clearer and more effective psychologically than inductive ones.<sup>95</sup>

In his Bible series, for example, "A Time of Trials," Pastor Beauchamp outlines an argument-proof<sup>96</sup> sermon body format where he helps his listeners to understand the "what, why and how" of the biblical text. In his miracle series, he expresses why his listeners need to have faith, fear, worship, and trust in Jesus Christ through the "Miracles of Jesus" sermons. The "what, why and how" outline that Pastor Beauchamp used in the sermons was intended to lead his hearers into applying lessons from the miracles; by first understanding "what miracles happened" and then "why miracles happened." Pastor Beauchamp often interrogates: Why should miracles be an encouragement to the postmodern Christian? What does God look like? How does he respond to human need and suffering?

Expository sermons on miracles appear to be Pastor Beauchamp's call to preach, a staple on his preaching menu. In his sermons, one can see that God is faithful and spontaneous. He asserts that "When we are prayerful and cry to him to alleviate our human suffering, he does not plan or calculate how to do it; many times, he just performs a miracle." McDill posits that the interrogative is the third part of the interpretive sermon where the "sermon idea is to translate

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<sup>95</sup> e.g., Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 12.

<sup>96</sup> Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 116–119.

into a question” by use of who, how, what, and where. The expositor then investigates and organizes the text to treat the main theme.<sup>97</sup>

### Sermon Conclusion

Lastly, Pastor Duncan’s and Pastor Beauchamp’s sermons differ at the conclusion. While Pastor Duncan uses the conclusion to drive home the big idea or main preaching point, having preached his points and sub-points in the body of the sermon, Pastor Beauchamp uses the conclusion to explain the big idea that he introduced at the beginning of the sermon. For Pastor Duncan’s sermons, the conclusion brings application to emphasis, while for Pastor Beauchamp’s, the application is emphasized throughout the sermon.

### Conclusion

This chapter compared the sermons delivered by Pastor Roger Duncan (topical) and Senior Pastor Will Beauchamp (expository) at the First Free Will Baptist church. While Pastor Duncan’s sermons focused on a selected topic and used the scripture to illuminate the topics from the point of view of the gospel, Pastor Beauchamp’s sermons focused on exposition of the text to develop topics that related to the spiritual and life needs of his hearers. Another differentiating factor between the two is that Pastor Duncan’s sermons tend to focus on need-solution outlines that are characteristic of topical-inductive sermons, while Pastor Beauchamp’s focus is on the exposition of the text in a manner that is characteristic of expository-deductive sermons.

A homiletical analysis of the sermons has revealed that both pastors have a God-given gift in delivering the message from God according to their personal, homiletical, and experiential

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<sup>97</sup> McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 65.

predispositions. However, do their sermons have the ability to help their hearers engage, memorize, and find a useful application of the gospel? That is what this project aims at establishing.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Topical Preaching Versus Expository Preaching: Report and Analysis of Survey Results**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the listeners' responses to the topical and expository sermons preached at the First Free Will Baptist Church between 2005 – 2010. In Chapter 1 we defined the problem, the theoretical basis for topical and expository sermons, the statement of methodology, and a review of the literature. The project then moved to Chapter 2 where topical preaching was compared with expository preaching in terms of definitional trends, rationales, and history. Chapter 3 included an analysis of the different topical and expository sermons delivered by Pastor Duncan and Pastor Beauchamp, respectively.

The main question driving this inquiry was: Between topical and expository preaching styles, which is the one preferred by listeners as the more faithful and effective style of preaching? The sub-questions deriving from this primary research question were: How did the participants at First Free Will Baptist Church respond to the topical and expository sermons delivered between 2005 – 2010 and 2010 – 2015, respectively? Do the responses favor the topical sermons or the expository sermons? Do the participants seem to have a clear preference for one method over the other? For better analytical comparison, similar questions were asked for both topical and expository sermons. The software programs MS Excel and SPSS were used in data organization and analysis.

The methodological procedures that were taken to compare listener preference and receptivity of either preaching method at the First Free Will Baptist Church were described in Chapter 1. A preaching response questionnaire (See Appendix A) was used to capture listener

responses to sermons preached using the topical and expository methods. The survey contained sixteen (16) questions, including fifteen (15) closed multiple-choice response questions to collect quantitative data and one (1) open-ended question on sermon application to collect qualitative data for this mixed research.

Data were collected from participants who listened to two sermons (one topical and one expository, CD format) preached between 2005 – 2015. These 30 sermons were selected as follows. A list of 30 sermons, 15 topical and 15 expository, delivered by Pastor Duncan and Pastor Beauchamp respectively, were provided. The 30 sermons were divided into two lists: List A containing Pastor Duncan's 15 topical sermons and List B containing Pastor Beauchamp's 15 expository sermons.<sup>1</sup> The topical sermons were given code numbers TS1-TS15, and the expository sermons were given code numbers ES1-ES15 as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Sermon Lists

<b>LIST A: TOPICAL SERMONS</b>		<b>LIST B: EXPOSITORY SERMONS</b>	
1	TS1_The Goodness of God	1	ES1_God's Great Power
2	TS2_Forgiveness	2	ES2_The Apostles - Bible Series
3	TS3_God's Promises	3	ES3_The Church - Bible Series
4	TS4_Respectable Worldliness	4	ES4_The Salvation of Israel - Bible Series
5	TS5_Some Remove the Landmarks	5	ES5_The Victorious Church - Bible Series
6	TS6_We All Need a Nathan	6	ES6_He Has Risen!
7	TS7_The Eagle	7	ES7_Reconciliation Between Believers - Bible Series
8	TS8_The Conie	8	ES8_Jonah Lives Today
9	TS9_Repentance	9	ES9_The Raising of Jairus' Daughter - Miracle Series
10	TS10_The Love of God	10	ES10_Jesus Heals the Paralytic - Miracle Series
11	TS11_The Backslider	11	ES11_Healing of the Nobleman's Son - Miracle Series
12	TS12_What Trees Teach Us	12	ES12_A Miracle of Leftovers - Miracle Series
13	TS13_Say So	13	ES13_The Greatest of All
14	TS14_The Perfection of God	14	ES14_A Time of Trials - Bible Series
15	TS15_The Ministry of Refreshing	15	ES15_Visiting the Sick - Bible Series

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Chapter 3 for the 30 sermon outlines (15 topical and 15 expository).

### Sermon Selection

The 100 participants were asked to randomly choose and listen to only one sermon from List A and only one sermon from List B. This was done because it would not be practical for the participants to listen to all the 30 sermons given the time limitations. The sermons were selected and listened to, as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Selected and Listened to Sermons

	<b>LIST A: TOPICAL SERMONS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>LIST B: EXPOSITORY SERMONS</b>	<b>N</b>
1	TS10_The Love of God	19	ES6_He Has Risen!	17
2	TS1_The Goodness of God	12	ES13_The Greatest of All	14
3	TS2_Forgiveness	11	ES9_The Raising of Jairus' Daughter - Miracle Series	12
4	TS9_Repentance	10	ES7_Reconciliation Between Believers - Bible Series	11
5	TS5_Some Remove the Landmarks	8	ES1_God's Great Power	10
6	TS15_The Ministry of Refreshing	8	ES12_A Miracle of Leftovers - Miracle Series	9
7	TS14_The Perfection of God	7	ES8_Jonah Lives Today	8
8	TS8_The Conie	6	ES14_A Time of Trials - Bible Series	8
9	TS11_The Backslider	5	ES5_The Victorious Church - Bible Series	5
10	TS13_Say So	4	ES11_Healing of the Nobleman's Son - Miracle Series	1
11	TS3_God's Promises	3	ES2_The Apostles - Bible Series	1
12	TS7_The Eagle	3	ES4_The Salvation of Israel - Bible Series	1
13	TS6_We All Need a Nathan	2	ES10_Jesus Heals the Paralytic - Miracle Series	1
14	TS4_Respectable Worldliness	1	ES15_Visiting the Sick - Bible Series	1
15	TS12_What Trees Teach Us	1	ES3_The Church - Bible Series	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

NOTE: N refers to the number of participants that picked the specified sermon.

These 100 participants were administered a questionnaire. In the following sections, the results and findings of the survey are presented. The purpose and rationale of the questions are presented alongside the findings. The possible responses for the closed-ended questions were: 5 = To a very great extent; 4 = To a great extent; 3 = To a moderate extent; 2 = To a small extent;

1= To a very small extent. The average/mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for all the responses are also provided in the analysis.

### **Statistical Comparison of the Sermons**

The project conducted several analyses that were aimed at comparing topical and expository preaching. The first analysis involved a frequency distribution analysis of the responses, with results presented in cross-tabulation response data tables. The cross-tabulation analysis enabled side-by-side comparisons for those who responded positively (that is, “To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent”), with those who responded moderately (that is, “To a Moderate Extent”), and with those who responded negatively (that is, “To a Very Small Extent” and “To a Small Extent”).

### **Statistical Comparison of the Methods**

All the response variables for each of the sampled sermons were computed into a single mean and standard deviation. As such, two groups of means and standard deviations (one for topical and one for expository) can be compared. The means gave the average responses per sermon method and helped answer the question: On average, which sermon method scored better? The standard deviation, on the other hand, depicted how participants’ responses varied and helped answer the question: Which sermon method had more consistent responses? Lower standard deviations depicted more consistency in responses.

### **Report and Analysis of Participants’ Responses**

The following sections present the results from the survey conducted with members of the First Free Will Baptist Church regarding the topical and expository sermons preached by two pastors between 2005 – 2015.

### Engagement Level with the Sermon

The first item on the questionnaire focused on the engagement level of listeners with the sermon. Questions in this category assessed whether the sermons were able to engage the respondents well, and to what level. The main question was: Which method of sermon delivery, between the topical and expository sermons, engaged listeners better than the other? The following sub-section summarizes the results of responses to the first six survey questions.

#### Question 1: The Sermon Content Captured My Attention

This first question intended to find out from the participants which sermon content was able to capture more clearly their attention. Do topical sermons capture and sustain the interest of listeners more than expository sermons? Or do expository sermons perform better in this regard? To answer these questions, participant responses were tallied, as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Q1 Listener Responses.

Q1: The Sermon Content Captured My Attention			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	40	33
4	To A Great Extent	33	37
3	To A Moderate Extent	27	30
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

As the tallies in Table 5 show, a greater proportion of responses (40%) indicated that the listeners found the content of the topical sermons more captivating and more effective in capturing their attention “To a Very Great Extent” compared to the expository sermons (33%). Table 5 shows that overall, topical sermons had a higher score (73%) of positive responses (that is, combined with “To a Great Extent”), 27% moderate responses, and no negative response (that is, “To a Very Small Extent” combined with “To a Small Extent”).

While the tabulations indicated which sermon method received more positive or negative responses, and therefore giving a hint on which method was perceived as more effective in



capturing listener attention in terms of its content, those analyses only revealed part of the story. They did not conclusively indicate which sermon method performed better than the other when the overall responses were considered. To determine which sermon delivery method performed better in light of how their content captured listener attention, the overall means and standard deviations of topical and expository sermons were compared, as shown in table 6.

Table 6: Q1 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q1: The Sermon Content Captured My Attention			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.13	4.03
B	Std. Deviation	0.80815	0.81372

Topical sermons had a higher mean score of 4.13 compared to that of expository sermons, which were 4.03. This indicated that, overall, topical sermons performed better in capturing the attention of listeners than expository sermons. The topical sermons also had a lower standard deviation indicating that the responses were more consistent and not spread out. However, as indicated by the means, the sermon content of both preaching methods captured listener attention to great levels, somewhere between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent” (between 4 and 5).

### Question 2: The Delivery Style Captured My Attention

This question sought to find out which delivery style of the sampled sermons, topical versus expository, would emerge as the most effective in capturing the attention of the listeners. Did the participants in this project perceive the topical-inductive sermons as more effective in capturing their attention compared to the expository-deductive sermons, or was it the other way around? How did the participants in this project perceive the preaching events? Were the preachers good in delivering their sermons? The following sub-sections attempted to answer these questions by analyzing participant responses.

From the results presented in table 7, the sermon methods that received a bigger overall proportion of positive responses were the topical sermons, which scored 72% (combined with “To a Great Extent”). Expository sermons received lower positive responses with a score of 68%. No sermon method received a negative review.

Table 7: Q2 Listener Responses.

Q2: The Delivery Style Captured My Attention			
	<b>N=100</b>	<b>Topical Sermons (TS)</b>	<b>Expository Sermons (ES)</b>
5	To A Very Great Extent	32	38
4	To A Great Extent	40	30
3	To A Moderate Extent	28	32
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

At face value, these results seemed to suggest that the delivery style of the topical sermons was more effective in capturing listener attention compared to the expository sermons. However, what was the effect of moderate responses? Which preaching style, topical versus expository, was more effective considering overall responses? To answer this question, the combined means and standard deviations for all topical sermons and those for all expository sermons were computed and compared side-by-side. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Q2 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q2: The Delivery Style Captured My Attention			
	<b>N=100</b>	<b>Topical Sermons (TS)</b>	<b>Expository Sermons (ES)</b>
A	Mean	4.04	4.06
B	Std. Deviation	0.77356	0.83451

The above results indicate that the delivery style of the expository sermons scored a higher mean score of 4.06 compared to the delivery style of the topical sermons, which had a mean score of 4.04. The results indicate that overall, expository sermons performed better than topical sermons in capturing listeners' attention by their delivery style. However, topical sermons had more consistent responses.

However, the difference between the mean scores of expository sermons and topical sermons was small, indicating that the delivery style of both sermons had practically the same strength in capturing listener attention. The means indicate that both sermons had responses ranging somewhere between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.”

### Question 3: The Sermon Stirred My Emotions

A descriptive analysis of the participants’ responses yielded the results shown in table 9.

Table 9: Q3 Listener Responses.

Q3: The Sermon Stirred My Emotions			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	35	34
4	To A Great Extent	36	37
3	To A Moderate Extent	29	29
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

Overall, the topical sermons and the expository sermons received an equal proportion of positive responses (71% each), when response items “To a Very Great Extent” were combined with “To a Great Extent,” although on the response item “To a Very Great Extent” alone, topical sermons scored higher. However, what was the overall average response? Did all the participants agree in their responses – given the above results? To paint a clearer picture of the overall answers, mean scores and standard deviations were computed. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Q3 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q3: The Sermon Stirred My Emotions			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.06	4.05
B	Std. Deviation	0.79775	0.79215

As shown in table 10, topical sermons had a higher mean score compared to expository sermons, indicating that they stirred the emotions of listeners more. However, expository

sermons had more consistent answers per response items, given their relatively lower standard deviation. The differences between the means of the two preaching styles were, however, very small, and for the purposes of this project, considered negligible. These results indicate that both sermons were perceived to have stirred listener emotions somewhere between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.”

However, that topical sermons scored relatively higher was not surprising given observations made in the homiletical literature. One author points out that topical sermons have become a popular method of delivering the sermon because they allow the preacher to use textual references for support, stories to stir the emotions of their audience, and achieve a more positive outcome from the sermon. Topical sermons use emotion to “fire up the congregation.”<sup>2</sup>

#### **Question 4: This Sermon Really Made Me Think**

Asked about whether a sermon really made them think, and to what extent it did so, the participants responded as shown in table 11.

Table 11: Q4 Listener Responses.

Q4: This Sermon Really Made Me Think			
	<b>N=100</b>	<b>Topical Sermons (TS)</b>	<b>Expository Sermons (ES)</b>
5	To A Very Great Extent	32	32
4	To A Great Extent	38	36
3	To A Moderate Extent	30	32
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

Topical sermons scored higher (70%) than expository sermons (68%) based on the total proportion of participants who gave the “To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent”

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Kris Doulos, *Nourished by God in the Womb of Time* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2010), 108.

responses. Responses for the moderate answer scored 32% for expository sermons and 30% for topical sermons.

However, these numbers do not give an account of the participants' overall answers for each sermon method. This was seen by computing the mean scores and standard deviations of all topical sermons and comparing it with similar outputs for expository sermons. The results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Q4 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q4: This Sermon Really Made Me Think			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.02	4.00
B	Std. Deviation	0.78715	0.80000

With a mean of 4.02, topical sermons appeared to perform better than expository sermons (with a mean of 4.00) regarding how they made the listeners to really think. However, the difference was very small, practically negligible, indicating that both sermon types really made the hearers think almost equally. Looking at the means, responses for both sermons were somewhere between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.” With a slightly lower standard deviation, topical sermons had more consistent answers.

#### **Question 5: This Sermon Kept Me Thinking About How It Applies to My Own Life**

Participant responses for this question reveal which of the sermon methods were effective in helping listeners to meditate on God's truth, think about what was said in the sermon, ponder why it is good Christian wisdom, and discern how it operated in their own lives. The findings were as follows.

As shown in table 13, topical sermons received more positive responses, with 78% of the listeners selecting the “To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent” response options combined, compared to the score of 71% for expository sermons.

Table 13: Q5 Listener Responses.

Q5: This Sermon Kept Me Thinking About How It Applies to My Own Life			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	34	39
4	To A Great Extent	44	32
3	To A Moderate Extent	22	29
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

The mean and standard deviations of all their respective answers were computed to compare topical and expository sermon methods more conclusively. The results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Q5 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q5: This Sermon Kept Me Thinking About How It Applies to My Own Life			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.12	4.10
B	Std. Deviation	0.73865	0.81854

Topical sermons recorded a slightly higher mean score of 4.12 compared to that of expository sermons, which was 4.10. These means indicated that although topical sermons scored higher, the differences were not significant. The means of over 4.00 indicated that participant responses ranged somewhere between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.” These results suggest that both the topical sermons and the expository sermons were effective to a very/great extent in helping the listeners to keep thinking about how the sermons applied in their own lives. However, with a lower standard deviation, the topical sermons received more consistent answers.

### Question 6: Overall, I found The Sermon Engaging

This question aimed to find out which sermon method, topical preaching or expository preaching, engaged the listeners more? The results in table 15 give an indication.

Table 15: Q6 Listener Responses.

Q6: Overall, I found The Sermon Engaging			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	36	36
4	To A Great Extent	30	29
3	To A Moderate Extent	34	35
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

According to the above findings, topical sermons received more positive responses (66%) than expository sermons (65%) regarding their perceived engagement level with the listeners. With these results in focus, the respondents seemed to say that both sermons “To a Very Great Extent” engaged them effectively. A clearer picture of these findings is painted in Table 16, where the means and standard deviations are presented side-by-side.

Table 16: Q6 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q6: Overall, I found The Sermon Engaging			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.02	4.01
B	Std. Deviation	0.83642	0.84256

Topical sermons scored better on average with a mean score of 4.02 compared with expository sermons with a mean score of 4.01. Topical sermons also received more consistent answers, as demonstrated by their relatively lower standard deviation. However, the difference between the two mean scores was small, indicating that both sermons had effective, engaging qualities. The means indicate that the overall average answer to both sermons was somewhere between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.”

### Ability to Memorize the Word of God

The following questions sought to find out which sermon method, between the topical preaching and the expository preaching, was more effective in helping listeners at the First Free Will Baptist Church to memorize the Word of God – and to what extent.

### Question 7: The Sermon Helped Me Better Understand the Word of God

The aim of any sermon, as indicated in the preceding explanation, is to help hearers understand the Word of God. In the previous chapters, it was discussed that some homileticians argue that topical sermons often fall into the trap of failing to communicate the Word of God, instead of communicating the word of the preacher.<sup>3</sup> Some homileticians have equally argued that expository preaching often faces the risk of not correctly expositing the scripture, making it difficult for hearers to understand the Word of God.<sup>4</sup> What would listeners say about the topical sermons and the expository sermons in this regard?

According to the project participants' responses, as shown in table 17, topical sermons scored more positive responses (70%) compared to expository sermons (68%). This analysis was done by combining the "To a Very Great Extent" and "To a Great Extent" responses of topical and expository sermons.

Table 17: Q7 Listener Responses.

Q7: The Sermon Helped Me Better Understand the Word of God			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	33	41
4	To A Great Extent	37	27
3	To A Moderate Extent	30	32
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

However, as the tally shows, expository sermon scored higher on "To a Very Great Extent" response item, with 41%. This cross-tabulation did not give a clear indication regarding which sermon performed better in helping listeners understand the Word. Computation of the means

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<sup>3</sup> Lawson, *The Kind of Preaching God Blesses*, 23–25.

<sup>4</sup> Stowell, *Shepherding the Church*, 22.



and standard deviations gave a clearer picture of the overall response as to which preaching style performed better. The results are shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Q7 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q7: The Sermon Helped Me Better Understand the Word of God			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.03	4.09
B	Std. Deviation	0.79316	0.84965

The above results show that, on average, the expository sermons were more effective in helping the listeners to understand the Word of God, as they scored a higher mean. However, the respondents were divided in their responses compared. The topical sermon did not do much worse, as shown by the mean, which was nearly the same as that of expository sermons save for a few points. Respondents for topical sermons gave more consistent answers. The means indicate that responses for both sermons, on average, ranged between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.”

#### **Question 8: I Specifically Recall Some of the Biblical Text and Passages**

As a follow-up to the previous question, this question sought to find out whether the participants could specifically recall some of the biblical texts and passages from the sermons. Which sermon method, between the topical sermons and the expository sermons, was more effective in helping listeners to recall the main or supporting scripture of the sermon?

A cross-tabulation of the responses, as shown in Table 19, indicated that the sampled topical sermons were more effective in helping the listeners to recall biblical texts and passages compared to expository sermons. Expository sermons had a combined positive response score of 72% (combining “To a Very Great Extent” with “To a Great Extent”) compared to the 73% scored by topical sermons.

Table 19: Q8 Listener Responses.

Q8: I Specifically Recall Some of the Biblical Text and Passages			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	28	32
4	To A Great Extent	45	40
3	To A Moderate Extent	27	28
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

These results were not clear. Which sermon method was preferred in this question item? A clearer result was given by adding up all the answers for topical sermons and averaging them, doing the same for expository sermons, and comparing the outputs, as shown in table 20.

Table 20: Q8 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q8: I Specifically Recall Some of the Biblical Text and Passages			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.01	4.04
B	Std. Deviation	0.84965	0.77356

The overall average responses favored expository sermons with a mean of 4.04 compared to that of topical sermons, which was 4.01. Participants were also more consistent with their answers in expository sermons compared to topical ones, which indicated that they were more divided when responding to the latter method, as depicted when the standard deviations were compared.

### Question 9: I Recall the Main Biblical Point(s) of the Sermon

The main point pursued by this item was: Which sermon method, topical versus expository, was more effective in helping listeners recall the main biblical points of the sermon?

Table 21: Q9 Listener Responses.

Q9: I Recall the Main Biblical Point(s) of the Sermon			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	39	40
4	To A Great Extent	30	30
3	To A Moderate Extent	31	30
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

As shown in table 21, expository sermons scored more positive responses (70%) compared to topical sermons (69%). Looking at the positive (“To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent”) responses, expository sermons performed better in terms of the proportion of participants who recalled the main biblical points. When overall answers were averaged and compared, expository sermons scored slightly better on average, as shown in Table 22.

Table 22: Q9 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q9: I Recall the Main Biblical Point(s) of the Sermon			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.08	4.10
B	Std. Deviation	0.83283	0.83066

### Question 10: Overall, I Remember This Sermon Quite Well

This question sought to find out which sermon method, topical versus expository, was remembered quite well by the participants. This question was interesting given that some of the sampled participants had previously heard the sampled topical sermons and the sampled expository sermons in the church between 2005-2015. The only difference was that this time, the participants were listening to the sermons on CD for evaluation. The responses are given in Table 23.

Table 23: Q10 Listener Responses.

Q10: Overall, I Remember This Sermon Quite Well			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	39	36
4	To A Great Extent	31	32
3	To A Moderate Extent	30	32
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

Topical sermons scored higher compared to expository sermons in terms of the preaching styles that were remembered quite well. This is demonstrated by the above results, where they scored 70% of the positive responses compared to expository sermons that scored 68% of the positive responses. Adding up responses to topical and expository sermons, averaging them, and comparing them affirmed the picture painted by these results, as shown in table 24.

Table 24: Q10 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q10: Overall, I Remember This Sermon Quite Well			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.09	4.04
B	Std. Deviation	0.82577	0.82365

As shown, topical sermons had a higher mean score of 4.09 compared to expository sermons, which had a mean score of 4.04. These results imply that, on average, topical sermons were remembered quite well, more than expository sermons. The results indicate that participants remembered both types of sermons quite well, somewhere between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.”

### **Sustained Level of Application**

The set of questions under this category sought to find which sermons achieved sustained levels of application among the hearers, and to what extent.

#### **Question 11: I Was Able to Apply One of The Insights from The Sermon This Week**

The purpose of this question was to find the sermon whose insights were applied by listeners in their life. Participant responses were captured and analyzed, as shown in table 25.

Table 25: Q11 Listener Responses.

Q11: I Was Able to Apply One of The Insights from The Sermon in My Life This Week			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	36	39
4	To A Great Extent	41	32
3	To A Moderate Extent	23	29
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

The above results indicate that topical sermons received more positive responses compared to topical sermons. More participants were able to apply at least one insight from topical sermons in their life compared to expository sermons. These findings were depicted more clearly when all the responses for the two sermon types were summed and averaged to find mean scores, as shown in table 26.

Table 26: Q11 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q11: I Was Able to Apply One of The Insights from The Sermon in My Life This Week			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.13	4.10
B	Std. Deviation	0.75703	0.81854

Although from the above results it appears that topical sermons ranked slightly higher in listener perception of “able to apply one of the insights from the sermon in own life this week,” more interesting is the observation that expository sermons were not rated as less helpful in this regard given their equally high mean scores that differed with the former by some small fraction. Listeners were able to apply insights from both types of sermons to great levels of between “To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent.”

### Question 12: The Way I Behaved and Acted This Week Was Affected by The Sermon

This item sought to examine which sermon method, between the topical preaching and the expository preaching, affected the behavior of the listeners, and to what extent.

Table 27: Q12 Listener Responses.

Q12: The Way I Behaved and Acted This Week Was Affected by The Sermon			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	34	34
4	To A Great Extent	35	32
3	To A Moderate Extent	31	34
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

As shown in table 27, the sample topical sermons received more positive responses (“To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent”) than expository sermons regarding how they affected listener behavior during the stated period. The results suggested that topical sermons were more effective in impacting positive behavior. A clearer picture of this finding was painted when all answers for topical sermons and expository sermons were summed up and averaged, and the results compared side-by-side, as shown in table 28.

Table 28: Q12 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q12: The Way I Behaved and Acted This Week Was Affected by The Sermon			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.03	4.00
B	Std. Deviation	0.80567	0.82462

Topical sermon responses had a higher mean compared to expository sermons indicating that they affected the way the listeners behaved more. Topical sermons also had a lower standard deviation indicating that the answers were more consistent than those for expository sermons. However, both sermon methods scored 4.0 and above, which meant that they affected listener behavior to a great extent or more.

### Question 13: My Emotional Life was Affected This Past Week by the Sermon

This question sought to find out which sampled sermons, topical or expository, was more effective in affecting listener emotions in the week of delivery. Table 29 shows that expository sermons received more responses on “To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent” combined.

Table 29: Q13 Listener Responses.

Q13: My Emotional Life was Affected This Past Week by the Sermon			
	<b>N=100</b>	<b>Topical Sermons (TS)</b>	<b>Expository Sermons (ES)</b>
5	To A Very Great Extent	32	39
4	To A Great Extent	40	38
3	To A Moderate Extent	28	23
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

When the responses were summed and averaged, expository responses had a higher mean. The lower standard deviation also indicates that the participant responses were consistent in demonstrating their perception that these sermons had affected their emotional life more compared to the topical sermons, as seen in table 30.

Table 30: Q13 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q13: My Emotional Life was Affected This Past Week by the Sermon			
	<b>N=100</b>	<b>Topical Sermons (TS)</b>	<b>Expository Sermons (ES)</b>
A	Mean	4.04	4.16
B	Std. Deviation	0.77356	0.77097

#### Question 14: Overall, I Am Able to Retain and Apply This Sermon to My Life

This question focused on determining which sermon method, between the sampled topical sermons and expository sermons, the listeners were able to retain and apply in their lives more effectively. Table 31 shows that topical sermons had more participants choosing “To a Very Great Extent” compared to those that said the same for expository sermons.

Table 31: Q14 Listener Responses.

Q14: Overall, I Am Able to Retain and Apply This Sermon to My Life			
	<b>N=100</b>	<b>Topical Sermons (TS)</b>	<b>Expository Sermons (ES)</b>
5	To A Very Great Extent	43	37
4	To A Great Extent	27	35
3	To A Moderate Extent	30	28
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

On response item 4 (“To a Great Extent”), expository sermons scored higher. When positive responses (“To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent”) were considered, expository sermons scored higher with 72% compared to topical sermons with 70%. These results were confusing; which sermon method performed better in light of these results? When all the answers for topical sermons were summed and then compared with a similar average for expository sermons, the outcome was clearer, as shown in table 32, with topical sermons having a higher mean.

Table 32: Q14 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q14: Overall, I Am Able to Retain and Apply This Sermon to My Life			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.13	4.09
B	Std. Deviation	0.84445	0.80119

This indicates that, on average, the listeners were able to retain and apply topical sermons to their lives more than they did expository sermons. However, expository sermons had a lower standard deviation indicating that there was more consistency in the answers.

### **Question 15: I Believe That the People Around Me Could Sense a Difference in Me as a Result of the Sermon**

This item sought to find out which sermon method, between topical and expository preaching, was perceived by the participants as more effective in impacting change among listeners to the extent that others could see the difference in them. As table 33 shows, expository sermons had a higher proportion (74%) of positive responses (“To a Great Extent” and “To a Very Great Extent” combined). Topical sermons scored 73%.



Table 33: Q15 Listener Responses.

Q15: I Believe That the People Around Me Could Sense a Difference in Me as a Result of the Sermon			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
5	To A Very Great Extent	33	34
4	To A Great Extent	40	40
3	To A Moderate Extent	27	26
2	To A Small Extent	0	0
1	To A Very Small Extent	0	0

When all the responses for both sermon types were added up and averaged, expository sermons registered a better performance with a mean score of 4.08. Topical sermons had a mean score of 4.06, as table 34 shows.

Table 34: Q15 Statistical Comparison of the Methods.

Q15: I Believe That the People Around Me Could Sense a Difference in Me as a Result of the Sermon			
	N=100	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
A	Mean	4.06	4.08
B	Std. Deviation	0.77227	0.77045

Nevertheless, as shown by the results, topical sermons also can achieve this outcome. Overall, responses for both sermons averaged somewhere between “To a Very Great Extent” and “To a Great Extent.”

### **Question 16: Please Describe in What Practical Ways You Are Applying This Particular Sermon to Your Life**

Question 16 was the only question in the Listener Response Questionnaire that did not apply the multiple-choice Likert-scale like (ordinal) quantitative questions. Because of the subjective nature of the participants’ responses, it was necessary to code them based on the keywords or phrases and categorize similar codes into emerging themes or patterns.<sup>5</sup> Table 35 shows the themes that emerged. These themes indicate a description of the most repeated (mode) practical ways the participants were applying each particular sermon.

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, *Writing and Research*.

Table 35: Q16 Application Themes.

Q16. Please Describe in What Practical Ways You Are Applying This Particular Sermon to Your Life		
Name of Sermon	Type of Sermon	Application
The Goodness of God	Topical	"Having hope and faith in God."
Forgiveness	Topical	"Forgiving others."
God's Promises	Topical	"Trusting in God"
Respectable Worldliness	Topical	"Seeking the wisdom of God. Not this world's!"
Some Remove the Landmarks	Topical	"Remaining steadfast in the Christian faith."
We Need a Nathan	Topical	"Learning to correct others and allow yourself to be corrected."
The Eagle	Topical	"Letting go of our human fears and trusting in God."
The Conie	Topical	"Believing in Jesus as the only savior and protector."
Repentance	Topical	"Genuinely feeling sorrow and repenting for our sins."
The Love of God	Topical	"Living in harmony with each other as God is love."
The Backslider	Topical	"Being watchful and prayerful in our faith."
What Trees Teach Us	Topical	"Being strong in God."
Say So	Topical	"Being a living testimony of God's goodness."
The Perfection of God	Topical	"Not questioning the existence of God."
The Ministry of Refreshing	Topical	"Spreading the good news of Jesus to others."
God's Great Power	Expository	"Being strong in Jesus, know he is winning for us."
He Has Risen	Expository	"Being comfortable and peaceful in Jesus "
The Greatest of All	Expository	"Having no fear knowing Jesus is greater than all."
Jonah Lives Today	Expository	"Obeying the law and God's Word."
The Church	Expository	"Going into fellowship with others regularly."
The Victorious Church	Expository	"Calling upon the Holy Spirit to fight the enemy."
The Raising of Jairus' Daughter	Expository	"Praying to God for salvation and healing."
A Miracle of Leftovers	Expository	"Living happy, knowing Jesus is the provider."
The Salvation of Israel	Expository	"Knowing we are the chosen ones by God Himself."
A Time of Trials	Expository	"Learning to overcome sorrow and rejoicing in God."
Visiting the Sick	Expository	"Learning to share with the needy in society."
Healing of the Nobleman's Son	Expository	"Learning the healing power of God."
Jesus Heals the Paralytic	Expository	"Learning the healing power of God."
Reconciliation Between Believers	Expository	"Problem-solving and conflict resolution."

### Conclusion

The sampled participants in this project were asked to listen to two sermons, one topical and one expository. The sampled topical sermons included those preached by Pastor Duncan between 2005 – 2010, while the sampled expository sermons included those preached by Pastor Beauchamp between 2010 – 2015.

The sampled participants were administered the Listener's Response Questionnaire, which they completed in writing after listening to the sermons. Over the entire survey exercise, 100 listeners participated in the project, answering 16 questions regarding the sermons they listened to in audio (CD) format. Chapter 4 has been involved in reporting and analyzing the results and findings from participant responses. The outcome of these analyses forms the basis for the conclusions drawn in the next section, Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a concluding summary and discussion of the findings from the research project, relating the content in the chapter to the material presented in the previous chapters. The conclusion includes research implications and recommendations for the future. The purpose of this research project was to compare and contrast topical and expository preaching. To achieve this purpose, this research project evaluated listener responses through quantitative and qualitative inquiry to ascertain listener preference for these methods at the First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa. The evaluation took four weeks. The procedure included the sampling of participants and administering the Listener Response Questionnaire.

Homiletical and hermeneutical research literature indicates an increased preference for topical sermons given the modern times where technological and cultural globalization has turned the world into a global village.<sup>1</sup> Does this observation apply, however, for listeners in the First Free Will Baptist Church? The conclusions that follow, drawn from the data gathered from participant responses, explore answers to that question.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Careful examination of the results presented in Chapter 4 comparing topical and expository sermons based on various survey question items supports the observation that the listeners were generally positive in their responses. This was demonstrated by the results that

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<sup>1</sup> David Simmons, *The Pastor's Personal Friendships*, 37.

averaged between 4 (“To a Great Extent”) and 5 (“To a Very Great Extent”) on each of the items on the survey. Furthermore, there were no negative responses 1 (“To a Very Small Extent” or 2 (“To a Small Extent”), and quite a small number of moderate responses 3 (“To a Moderate Extent”). Before participating in the survey, the respondents were encouraged to give genuine responses and not shy away from giving any negative responses where one felt so.

That no respondent gave a negative review was, therefore, surprising but not entirely unexpected from the church adherents. It appears the listeners had built strong personal and spiritually-based relationships with both preachers and therefore tended to rate their sermons highly, which was not necessarily a negative thing. Further examination of the results reveals that there were no significant differences in listener responses.

Both topical and expository sermons showed a fairly equal level of listener engagement, memorization, application, and by implication, preference. An assumption can be made that if the listeners were to be asked to state which method they preferred over the other, the respondents (listeners) would indicate “Both methods,” implying that they did not see any difference between topical and expository sermons. The fact that some responses scored higher in favor of one method compared to the other did not diminish the fact that all the means were high, almost equal for both methods, in the range of 4-5 (To a very/great extent) on the 5-point scale. Table 36 shows the means of responses per survey question. The sampled topical sermons appear to have scored better overall compared to expository sermons with participants preferring them on nine survey question items (Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 14); compared to six for expository sermons (Questions 2, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 15). However, as can be seen in the chart on the preferred sermons means columns, the differences between the means were small enough to be negligible, indicating that there was no big winner or loser between the topical and

expository sermons. These results show that the perceived overall preference for topical sermons was not unanimous, nor did it signify disfavor toward expository sermons.

**Table 36: Preferred Sermon Methods; Comparisons**

	Preferred Sermon Means	
	Topical Sermons (TS)	Expository Sermons (ES)
Q1: The Sermon Content Captured My Attention	4.13	4.03
Q2: The Delivery Style Captured My Attention	4.04	4.06
Q3: The Sermon Stirred My Emotions	4.06	4.05
Q4: This Sermon Really Made Me Think	4.02	4.00
Q5: This Sermon Kept Me Thinking About How It Applies to My Own Life	4.12	4.10
Q6: Overall, I found The Sermon Engaging	4.02	4.01
Q7: The Sermon Helped Me Better Understand the Word of God	4.03	4.09
Q8: I Specifically Recall Some of the Biblical Text and Passages	4.01	4.04
Q9: I Recall the Main Biblical Point(s) of the Sermon	4.08	4.10
Q10: Overall, I Remember This Sermon Quite Well	4.09	4.04
Q11: I Was Able to Apply One of The Insights from The Sermon in My Life This Week	4.13	4.10
Q12: The Way I Behaved and Acted This Week Was Affected by The Sermon	4.03	4.00
Q13: My Emotional Life was Affected This Past Week by the Sermon	4.04	4.16
Q14: Overall, I Am Able to Retain and Apply This Sermon to My Life	4.13	4.09
Q15: I Believe That the People Around Me Could Sense a Difference in Me as a Result of the Sermon	4.06	4.08
<b>Preferred Sermons (Total)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

These results suggest that, in determining the engagement level, ability to memorize, and sustained application of the sermon, the choice of method alone is not enough to make the sermon better than the other in the eyes of the listeners. The most evident conclusion from these findings is that both topical and expository methods are capable of eliciting interest in the hearts of the listeners and being useful in advising them to apply doctrinal, moral, and godly living.

### Discussion

Homiletical theory distinguishes between topical and expository preaching. In this research project, topical preaching is defined as the sermon delivery method or style that involves identifying a current event, issue, or situation that affects the listener and using the text

to address it. A topical sermon interprets a contemporary issue, but it does not originate in the exposition of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> Expository preaching identifies a text from a Bible passage and proclaims it to the hearers where they are able to hear what the Bible says about a contemporary issue. The expository sermon originates in the exposition of the Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

The pattern of sermon delivery determines whether the preaching method is inductive or deductive. An inductive sermon leads the hearer into the big point or general truth. It moves from particular to general, while a deductive sermon begins with the general truth and moves to the particular. An analysis of the sermons reveals that Pastor Duncan tended to lean toward topical-inductive sermons while Pastor Beauchamp tended to lean toward expository-deductive sermons.

Preaching in the New Testament was largely expository-inductive with Jesus using parables, stories, and anecdotes, but preaching that immediately followed after Jesus was more of expository-deductive. Since the time of post-New Testament preaching, expository-deductive preaching took center stage. The literature, however, as reviewed in Chapter 2, indicates that after the period of the early church, topical preaching, often following the inductive approach, became popular. In Chapter 2, a comparative analysis of Pastor Duncan's sampled topical sermons as well as Pastor Beauchamp's expository sermons was done, examining essential parts of the sermon that can affect listener preference for one sermon over the other.

Today, a raging debate on whether topical preaching should be practiced abounds among homileticians. Listeners, however, appear to favor this preaching despite observations by many homileticians that expository preaching is the true biblical method.<sup>4</sup> Other homileticians argue

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<sup>2</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 9–11.

that topical sermons are inevitable and argue that they should only be used on occasion.<sup>5</sup> The results from this project, as shown above, gave a hint on the sermon delivery method preferred by listeners.

Nonetheless, the results from participant responses indicate that preference for a given preaching style, whether topical or expository, depends on the question being asked. Chapter 4 of this project defined three essential components shared by both topical and expository preaching that can be used to evaluate and examine listener preference: engagement level with the sermon, ability to memorize the Word of God, and sustained level of application.

### **Engagement Level with the Sermon**

In terms of perceiving the engagement quality in the sermon delivery method, the data from the listeners' responses indicate that topical sermons elicited a higher overall positive response compared to expository sermons. No pastor hopes to deliver a sermon, for which he has put in several days of preparation, only to result in an expression of extreme confusion, restlessness, indifference, and agony amongst hearers. At best, every pastor wants to deliver a sermon that is engaging and effective within the listeners' limits of endurance. A sermon is as good as its ability to hold the attention of the listener. Homileticians argue that preachers should employ techniques that are appealing and faithful, both to the biblical and practical needs of the church.<sup>6</sup>

The first point under this component dealt with the ability of topical versus expository sermon content to capture listener attention. Sermon content has to do with whether the sermon

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 2–3.

<sup>6</sup> See Theo Pleizier, *Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons: A Grounded Theory Study in Empirical Theology and Homiletics* (Otterlo: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2010), 233–246.



originates in the exposition of a scriptural text or whether it opts not to follow the outline of the biblical text and is not constrained by a particular scriptural text, as in topical preaching.<sup>7</sup> A major finding regarding this component was that the content of a sermon form has a significant impact on capturing listener attention. While the differences in the results were not significant, they nonetheless were an indication that the participants' responses suggest a slight advantage for the sampled topical sermons over the expository sermons in terms of how their content captured listener attention.

The second point had to do with the delivery style of topical versus expository sermons. For many hearers of the sermon, how it is communicated and delivered are as important as the sermon message itself, if not more.<sup>8</sup> The delivery style constitutes the pattern of the arrangement by which the preacher organizes and delivers the sermon. A sermon delivery style is characteristically, either deductive or inductive.<sup>9</sup> The analysis of deductive and inductive styles of sermon delivery done in the last section of Chapter 3 revealed that deductive sermons announce the main point (proposition) authoritatively at the beginning of the sermon, while inductive sermons arrive at the main point towards the end of the sermon. Preachers use transitions and illustrations to deliver the big point. Chapter 2 indicated that Pastor Duncan typically delivered his sermons inductively while Pastor Beauchamp tended to deliver his sermons deductively.

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<sup>7</sup> Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 8–9.

<sup>8</sup> David G. Buttrick, "Sermon as Plot and Moves," in *Patterns of Preaching: A Sermon Sampler*, ed. Ronald J. Allen (Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 1998), 88.

<sup>9</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 2–3.

The results indicated that expository sermons had an advantage over topical sermons, although the differences were not great. These results were not surprising considering observations made in previous sections that expository sermons were delivered deductively. Deductive sermons tend to have an introduction that has greater clarity that allows every listener to get the main point from the onset. The listener gets the drift and is not caught unaware by the development or content of the sermon.<sup>10</sup>

Pastor Duncan tended to deliver his topical sermons inductively. The literature has argued that inductive sermons invite listener participation. As the sermons reserve the big point for the end of the sermon, they tend to maintain a certain level of suspense and therefore increase the curiosity of the listener. The listener is keen to find out what the main point of the sermon is, which sustains their attention.<sup>11</sup> Pastor Duncan used stories, anecdotes, personal testimonies, and vivid illustrations to capture and sustain listener attention, while Pastor Beauchamp used biblical illustrations and stories to achieve the same.

The third point focused on the ability of the sermon, topical versus expository, to stir the emotions of the listeners. Pastor Duncan's topical sermons were shown by participant responses to have a slight advantage, but with no appreciable difference with Pastor Beauchamp's expository sermons. God's Word should be delivered by men who care passionately about their hearers.<sup>12</sup> Jesus Christ and the Apostles preached the Word of God with their voices and relayed their emotions through their work and actions. Jeremiah stirred emotions by weeping as a prophet, and Paul often reminded the church to pray with tears. Jesus Himself stirred his hearers'

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<sup>10</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>12</sup> John S. McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2004), 12–14.

emotions and roused their souls, for example, with his Sermon on the Mount.<sup>13</sup> A sermon should have emotional appeal. It should not just be uninspired lectures delivered by impassionate theological intellectuals who focus entirely on logical and ethical appeal.<sup>14</sup> Hearers often adopt or resist the message of a sermon because of the emotional associations they have with the messages.<sup>15</sup>

The third question of this project focused on the extent to which the sampled topical and expository sermons stirred the emotions of the listeners. The sermon should have the hearers' hearts burning at every Scripture the preacher opens. The first and most important function of a sermon is to soften and soothe the soul of the hearer by presenting Jesus Christ as the Savior who takes away all sins. Many authors argue that in the hands of a well-informed, well-meaning, and honest preacher, topical sermons offer inspiration, uplift the hearers, and produce a cathartic effect. A truly called topical preacher warms up the church and leads to its growth.

Church membership tends to increase with topical preaching as adherents and visitors feel good and tell others about the preacher and his church. Many authors seem to agree that an ill-informed, self-centered, and dishonest topical preacher can burn the church down with his sermons and lead to hostility and destruction.<sup>16</sup> A lack of negative response by participants indicated that the topical sermons preached at the First Free Will Baptist Church were from a genuine and well-informed preacher, who positively stirred the emotions of the listeners.

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<sup>13</sup> McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners*, 12-14.

<sup>14</sup> Edwards, *Deep Preaching*, 169-170.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald J. Allen, *Hearing the Sermon: Relationship, Content, Feeling Channels of Listening Series* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2004), 90-92.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

The fourth point under the engagement level with the sermon component concerned examining the sermon method, topical versus expository, that really made the listeners think. Listeners indicated that Pastor Duncan's sermons were more beneficial compared to Pastor Beauchamp's sermons in this regard, although the differences, again, were slight. Topical sermons were suggested to be comparatively more effective in capturing the imaginations of participants and pushed them to contemplate the Word of God concerning their lives. Homiletical literature shows that the sermon method should cause hearers to think about the Bible, theological doctrines, issues in the society, and their personal lives.<sup>17</sup> It should push them to think logically beyond the limits of their current perspectives.<sup>18</sup> The literature further shows that listeners enjoy listening to sermonic material that stretches them and challenges them to think about things, issues, and solutions they would not have thought about on their own.<sup>19</sup> A sermon should equip hearers to overcome adversity, describe situations that scare them, then allow them to consider how they might address life's issues that tend to come between them and their Christian faith.<sup>20</sup> The positive feedback from the research supports that both types of sermons were able to achieve these goals, even though topical sermons demonstrated a marginal advantage.

Fifth, this project examined which sermon method, between topical and expository, could keep listeners thinking about how it applies in their life. The listeners' responses indicated that topical sermons had a slightly higher advantage in this regard. One of the most critical and vital

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<sup>17</sup> McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners*, 39.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Alice Mulligan et al., *Believing in Preaching: What Listeners Hear In* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2005), 171.

<sup>19</sup> Allen, *Hearing the Sermon*, 35.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Overdorf, *One Year to Better Preaching: 52 Exercises to Hone Your Skills* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2013), 217.

issues to sermon delivery is the whole idea of applying biblical truth.<sup>21</sup> A preacher should ensure that the sermon can effectively transition from the context of the biblical world into what it means for the listener's world considering his or her daily living, demographics, community, and environment.<sup>22</sup> The apostle Peter says that ancient prophets and preachers did not only speak to their generations but also to those that would come long after them. God intended for their ministry to be relevant for all generations for eternity. The Apostle Peter says that the Word which turned the world upside down during the prophets' time should be used by the preacher to help hearers understand that God's Word is as relevant today as it was at the beginning.<sup>23</sup> Relevance is not necessarily the same as a specific application.

Relevance demonstrates how the gospel message connects to the listener's life and experience. Application implies the listener's deep thinking about the gospel message delivered through the sermon and their decision to do something about it.<sup>24</sup> The sermon should intersect with the listener's life, given their demographics for it to be applicable and relevant. In order to show the relevance of God's Word, the preacher must show how it relates to the hearer personally and not someone else. However, a preacher who considers relevance alone will lack compelling biblical explanation, illustrations, principles, and authority to exhort listeners whose personal situations and experiences do not connect with the sermon message.<sup>25</sup> The literature can provide a possible explanation for the listener-responses on selecting topical sermons as they

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<sup>21</sup> Mulligan et al., *Believing in Preaching*, 150.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Acts 17:6.

<sup>24</sup> Robert A. Carlson, *Preaching Like the Prophets: The Hebrew Prophets as Examples for the Practice of Pastoral Preaching* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 114–115.

<sup>25</sup> Carlson, *Preaching Like the Prophets*, 114–115.

tend to address the specific felt-needs of the listeners. Hence they are more likely to help the listeners relate to the gospel and begin thinking about how it affects them in their world.<sup>26</sup> However, it should be noted that according to the largely positive and similar listener responses, Pastor Beauchamp's expository sermons were also shown to have a significant ability to keep listeners thinking about how the sermon applied to their life. So, careful sermon preparation to keep a good balance between being biblically driven and listener relevant is needed with both approaches.

The sixth and last point under the sermon level of engagement component focused on overall listener engagement with the sermon; how, in general, the participants perceived the engaging abilities of a topical sermon versus an expository sermon. Both sermons scored high in the listener responses, but with a very slight difference, topical sermons manifested some relative advantage. Merely standing in the pulpit and delivering a sermon is not enough. Preachers must always endeavor to engage their listeners spiritually by taking advantage of their physical presence. Every preacher should have the ability to discern whether his audience is tired and uninterested by looking at their behavior and participation.<sup>27</sup>

Listeners can be easily distracted by thoughts of their life situations and miss the sermon message. Many homileticians opine that a good sermon involves some level of monologue and dialogue where the preacher lectures, but still engages the hearers in a conversation where they give feedback verbally with their mouths and non-verbally with their body language. To engage listeners, preachers must understand and enter their listeners' world, ask questions, use

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<sup>26</sup> Richard, *Preparing Evangelistic Sermons*, 123-135.

<sup>27</sup> Carlson, *Preaching Like the Prophets*, 116.

illustrations, tell stories, supply anecdotes, apply some humor, and call them to respond.<sup>28</sup> The results indicate that Pastor Duncan's sermons and Pastor Beauchamp's sermons were engaging to a great or very great extent.

### **Ability to Memorize the Word of God**

The church has changed dramatically since its beginning. The way church services are conducted has changed with the recent emergence of technology that revolutionizes sermon delivery. The art and science of preaching have also changed. Nevertheless, the main principle of preaching, which includes redemption, revival, and glorifying God, should remain the same. A preacher often has between 30 to 45 minutes every week to minister in the lives of individuals and apply God's Word to his people.<sup>29</sup>

Every preacher should be concerned that the gospel message they are delivering sticks because by doing so, they are not only applying God's truth to contemporary situations and circumstances, but they are also building the church. The preacher hopes that in this limited time, God will use him to change lives by drawing them closer to God, helping them understand His Word, and exhorting them to glorify Him for what He has done for all through Christ.<sup>30</sup>

With this in mind, the preacher wants his hearers to encounter, remember, and apply God's Word to their lives. The preacher wants hearers to encounter not only the persuasive words in the Bible, especially the persuasive Christ, who is the Savior of mankind. Remembering and memorizing the verses is life-changing and practical for the hearers of the Word of God. The Bible directs Christians to become Bible memorizers, and the preacher is commanded to deliver

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<sup>28</sup> McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners*, 45.

<sup>29</sup> Ben Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), 17.

<sup>30</sup> Overdorf, *One Year to Better Preaching*, 219.

a sermon that helps his hearers to be able to actualize their duty to memorize the scripture.<sup>31</sup> If poorly delivered, a sermon may not support the hearers to recall and memorize the critical Scriptural text. The hearers are able to carry the Word with them and apply it in their lives.<sup>32</sup> Memorizing the Word is life-changing.<sup>33</sup>

The first point of the ability to memorize the Word of God component dealt with the ability of the sermons, topical versus expository, to help listeners better understand God's truth. In this regard, expository sermons demonstrated a higher advantage, albeit with a small margin. One of the most important, needed, and legitimate objective of preaching is to draw listeners closer to God and impart knowledge, wisdom, and deep understanding of who God is, what He can do for them through Christ, and what He has promised to do for them. This enables them to love God more and live a Christian life according to His ways. The average listener goes to church or listens to a sermon because they want to hear about God and gain knowledge about the Christian life.<sup>34</sup>

A sermon should help listeners hold on to their faith, exhort them to reflect on their doings to achieve deeper insight and understanding of God in the Christian life.<sup>35</sup> From the survey results, both types of sermons helped the listeners to gain knowledge of God's Truth, achieve wisdom and conviction, gain deeper insight about what it means to live a Christian life

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<sup>31</sup> Joshua 1:8; Deuteronomy 11:18-19; Matthew 4:4

<sup>32</sup> Read Psalm 119:10-11

<sup>33</sup> Read Hebrews 4:12; Colossians 3:16

<sup>34</sup> Mulligan et al., *Believing in Preaching*, 59.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 39.



and apply God's wisdom in their lives. Although the expository sermons manifested an advantage overall in this regard.

The second point had to do with how the sermons, topical versus expository, could help the listeners to recall some of the biblical text and passages specifically. Expository sermons demonstrated an advantage in this regard. These results were expected as expository sermons are based on exposing and interpreting the Word of God based on the biblical text, compared to topical sermons, which by design, focus on a contemporary issue that is then addressed in light of the gospel.<sup>36</sup>

The third point focused on an evaluation of listener responses in terms of the sermon delivery method that was more effective regarding the perceived recall of the main biblical points of the sermon. The results from listener responses indicated that expository sermons had an advantage over topical sermons in this regard. As already observed above, when a preacher prays, prepares, practices, and preaches a sermon to his hearers, he believes it will touch them and change their lives. The last thing the preacher expects is that by the end of the sermon, the listeners will leave having no idea what it was all about. The preacher is concerned about how to increase retention of the main points from the sermon and deepen the life change of his hearers.<sup>37</sup>

The main points in the sampled sermons included the sermon topics, themes, propositions, and messages for practical application. The results indicating that expository sermons had a slight advantage over topical sermons regarding the recalling of the main points were not surprising. Previous chapters of this project have already established that expository sermons are based on the exposition of the Bible.

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<sup>36</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Ronald J. Allen, *Hearing the Sermon*, 95.

The fourth point under the component of the sermon's effect on memorizing the Word of God examined which sermon method, topical versus expository, was remembered quite well by the listeners. The listener's responses indicated a slightly higher rate for remembering topical sermons than for remembering expository sermons. The main idea arising from this point was that some sermons are memorable while others are not. Every preacher wants to deliver a sermon that will be remembered for how it was delivered, its contents, and its applicability. The finding that topical sermons performed better was not surprising as topical sermons appear to be increasingly popular and memorable due to their ability to relate to community-wide ethical issues, problems, and life-situations in light of the principles of the gospel.<sup>38</sup> Pastor Duncan's topical sermons were characterized by entertaining, memorable, and compelling stories that not only captured and sustained listener attention but were also easier to remember.

### **Sustained Level of Application**

Every sermon must persuade the hearers to contemplate the implicit or explicit doctrinal, moral, or practical propositions of the scriptural text and passage. As such, the biblical text must drive the application. The preacher may use the sermon to make a call of faith to his hearers, or the sermon may be a comprehensive exhortation to a doctrinal truth or a devout lifestyle inspired by the Word.

The first point of this component investigates whether the listeners were able to apply at least one insight from the sampled topical and expository sermons. The purpose of this point was to find out which sermon type was effective in causing the hearers to take at least one insight from the sermon message, be moved at heart, think about it again in reflection, bring the message

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<sup>38</sup> Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon*, 9–11.

into their time with God, and apply it into their lives during the stated period. The listeners showed slightly higher responses for topical sermons regarding life application. The possible reason for this is that topical sermons tend to enter into the life of the listener to understand their needs and address them. As a result, listeners are able to pick a few insights they apply in their personal and spiritual life.

The second point focused on examining the sermon method, between topical and expository, that had a clear advantage in affecting listener behavior in the short period of one week after its delivery. The central hypothesis of this point was that when the content and style of delivery of the sermon are moving and able to speak directly to the spiritual and personal needs of the listeners, then their behavior is likely to be affected positively. Here again, the listeners indicated slightly higher ratings for topical sermons than expository sermons in this regard, although the difference was very minimal. It can be argued that topical sermons performed better due to their ability to identify and speak to the felt-needs of hearers. As shown in the literature, listeners tend to change their behavior when they feel a sermon dealt with their concerns, fears, and issues.<sup>39</sup>

Preaching can change the behavior of listeners.<sup>40</sup> However, which preaching style can be more effective in changing listener behavior? Homiletical literature has indicated that for sermons to change behavior, they must be relevant in addressing the issues that listeners care about and must help them to understand the message and how it applies to their personal lives.

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<sup>39</sup> Heather Joy Zimmerman, "No Longer Second-Class Sermons," *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 18, no. 1 (2018): 36.

<sup>40</sup> Dennis L. Price, W. Robert Terry, and B. Conrad Johnston, "The Measurement of the Effect of Preaching and Preaching Plus Small Group Dialogue in One Baptist Church," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19, no. 2 (1980): 186–197.

Every sermon should aim at redemption and revival. Sermons should nourish and challenge both the immature and mature.<sup>41</sup>

The immature in faith are curious, unfamiliar, unaware, and easily threatened by new truths for redemption. The mature in faith may no longer get excited or curious with the familiar truths for revival. If the sermon does not address the needs of the immature in the faith, they are likely to reject it, and the sermon may not change their behavior. If, on the other hand, the mature in faith are not stretched in their thinking to help them strengthen or discover new values, meanings, and relationships, their behavior may not change either. The sermon should call the immature and mature in the faith to repentance.<sup>42</sup> From the positive responses of the questionnaire on this matter, it is evident that both styles of preaching seem to be able to result in behavioral change in the listeners.

The third point focused on the impact of both sermon methods on the emotional life of the listener. The results showed that expository sermons had a slight advantage over topical sermons. Expository sermons, typically, exegete the Scripture accurately and attractively, and in doing so, attempt to expound the biblical text. They, therefore, also tend to provoke emotions that derive from the text. Topical sermons were also seen to have a significant effect, with mean scores that differed from scores for expository sermons by a mere fraction. The small difference could mean that topical sermons also speak to the felt emotional needs of the listeners.

As previously mentioned, a sermon should have the ability to move and stir the emotions of the listener.<sup>43</sup> The presence of emotion in a sermon reflects its persuasive quality. One goal of

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<sup>41</sup> David M. Brown, *Transformational Preaching: Theory and Practice* (College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm Publishing, 2003), 468–469.

<sup>42</sup> Akin, Allen, and Mathews, *Text-Driven Preaching*, 280.

<sup>43</sup> McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners*, 12–14.

the preacher is to exhort listeners to believe in the gospel and what the text teaches them. To support this goal, the preacher also aims at helping his listeners feel and experience the emotion of the Scripture. Listeners typically experience several emotions in the course of their lives, whether positive emotions such as happiness, relief or hope, or negative emotions such as guilt, anger, or fear.<sup>44</sup> Emotions are one way the listeners make sense of their world around them. How Christians respond to God's character in many respects shapes their emotional life.<sup>45</sup>

Fourth, this research project focused on finding the sermon method, topical versus expository, that had a clear benefit regarding listeners' ability to retain and apply it in their life. The participants indicated slightly higher ratings for achieving this outcome with topical sermons, with the responses for expository sermons not very far off.

Lastly, the project sought to find out which sermon method was able to impact a change in listeners such that the people around them could sense a difference. The listeners gave slightly higher ratings for expository sermons, although the difference with topical sermons was not great. A possible explanation for these findings is that since exposition calls for a focus on biblical doctrines touching on the whole counsel of God, expository sermons tend to have the ability to give listeners more theological and spiritual stability.

Sermons should urge hearers to adopt and maintain a lifestyle that openly acknowledges Jesus Christ as their Savior in front of other people. Christians follow Christ's footsteps, and that should reflect in their words and actions. Sermons should exhort hearers to use their own lives as a testimony for Christ, and the results of the Holy Spirit working in the believer should be seen

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<sup>44</sup> J. Alasdair Groves and Winston T. Smith, *Untangling Emotions: God's Gift of Emotions* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2019), 12.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

by others, both in action and words.<sup>46</sup> Sermons should touch listeners in a manner that they are able to behave differently in Christ. Those around them should be able to witness the difference and see their faith in work so much that they will also desire to acknowledge and receive the Savior.<sup>47</sup>

### **Conclusions**

The review of literature presented in Chapters 1 and 2 noted that topical sermons face the severe problem of falling out of homiletical fashion, although the benefits were outlined as well. It was noted that many authors and practitioners in the broad field of theology, homiletics, and hermeneutics consider expository preaching to be the biblical model widely suggested and utilized in the Bible. It was also noted that advocates of topical preaching had used some instances in the Bible where topical preaching was practiced.

It was seen in these chapters that many other homileticians have made strong propositions that both sermon styles should be used (with topical preaching being occasionally used when events so demand) so that the benefits of one can counter the dangers of the other. Chapter 3 compared two preachers at the First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa, where one preacher, Pastor Roger Duncan, delivered topical sermons (2005 – 2010), and the other Pastor Will Beauchamp, delivered expository sermons (2010 – 2015).

While there have been a lot of heated debates pitting topical sermons against expository sermons within homiletical theory and practice, very few authors, studies, and discourse have focused on the opinions, perceptions, and feelings of the hearers of the sermons. This project sought to weigh the hearers' views on the debate. Notably, it tried to find out which type of

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<sup>46</sup> Read 1 Peter 2:21; Acts 4:33; Mark 5:19; 1 Peter 3:15-16; John 4:4-26.

<sup>47</sup> Allen, *Hearing the Sermon*, 12-15.

sermon delivery between topical and expository, engaged the hearers more, enabled them to memorize the Word of God, and effected the sustained level of application.

A major conclusion that can be made from the findings in this research project is that while the topical sermons appeared to be selected by participants as having an overall advantage over expository sermons based on the evaluation items, the sampled expository sermon forms possessed some significant strength, too. Where topical sermons were shown to perform better, expository sermons were close by, and where expository sermons performed better, topical sermons were not far as well.

### **Implications and Recommendations for the Future**

The implications of the findings were drawn: First, topical sermons were not as ineffective at our church as some homileticians would want to argue. The listeners did not join the increasing number of homileticians who disparage topical sermons in castigating them, nor did they join them in fronting expository sermons as an overwhelming favorite within the exegetical, hermeneutical, and homiletical circles.

Although this researcher will continue to use expository preaching as the dominant method of preaching for his church, a preacher can, therefore, develop a strategy to combine both topical and expository methods in delivering their sermons without having to deal with the stigma involved. After all, the essence of the sermon is to communicate the gospel message and deliver the Word of God. It is not surprising that advocates of effective communication in preaching have called for a combined method strategy.<sup>48</sup>

An important implication here is that whichever the sermon method, whether topical, expository, or combined, adequate attention must be given to the scriptural text. Another

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<sup>48</sup> Allen, *Hearing the Sermon*, 12-15.

recommendation is that there is a great benefit in seeking congregational and listener feedback through a well-intentioned and objective sermon evaluation procedure. This can help a preacher improve on his sermon delivery.

### **Critique of the Methodology**

The use of audio (CD) recording proved invaluable as participants were able to listen to the sermons and fill in the questionnaire at their own time away from the regular church sermons. However, the decision to have the listener choose two random sermons (one topical and one expository) from a sample of 30 sermons (15 topical and 15 expository) proved problematic as the possible combinations were complex. It was also problematic to characterize sermons that were listened to by a small number of participants. In order to mitigate the problems, the responses for all topical and expository sermons were treated as one overall group; the sermons were not evaluated individually.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

An interesting area of further research for seminary students wishing to follow this project's methodology would be an investigation of the preferred sermon pattern between inductive and deductive preaching. This could be done by having the listener respond to sermons delivered live from the pulpit.

### **The Value and Impact of God's Word**

I want to conclude my thesis project by making three statements regarding preaching God's Word. (1) The Scriptures are sufficient. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Bible comes from God and gives us the breathed words of the Creator. (2) Scripture is our



teacher. Hebrews 4:12 states, “For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.” The Bible provides direction. It instructs, guides, disciplines, and encourages. (3) The Scriptures will last forever. Psalm 119: 89 says, “Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” The Bible is not the book of the week, month, or year. It is the book of the ages firmly fixed for all of eternity!

## Appendix A:

### Listener Response Questionnaire

Using the scale from 1-5 below, how true are the following statements for you?

#### ENGAGEMENT LEVEL WITH THE TOPICAL SERMON:

**Date of Sermon** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Sermon** \_\_\_\_\_

**[Q1]** The topical sermon content captured my attention.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q2]** The delivery style captured my attention.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q3]** The sermon stirred my emotions.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q4]** This sermon really made me think.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent

(5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q5]** This sermon kept me thinking about how it applies to my own life.

(1) To a very small extent

(2) To a small extent

(3) To a moderate extent

(4) To a great extent

(5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q6]** Overall, I found the sermon engaging.

(1) To a very small extent

(2) To a small extent

(3) To a moderate extent

(4) To a great extent

(5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

### **ABILITY TO MEMORIZE THE WORD OF GOD:**

**[Q7]** The sermon helped me better understand the Word of God.

(1) To a very small extent

(2) To a small extent

(3) To a moderate extent

(4) To a great extent

(5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q8]** I specifically recall some of the Biblical text and passages.

(1) To a very small extent

(2) To a small extent

(3) To a moderate extent

(4) To a great extent

(5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q9]** I recall the main biblical point(s) of the sermon.

(1) To a very small extent

(2) To a small extent

- (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here

**[Q10]** Overall, I remember this sermon quite well.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

### **SUSTAINED LEVEL OF APPLICATION:**

**[Q11]** I was able to apply one of the insights from the sermon in my life this week.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q12]** The way I behaved and acted this week was effected by the sermon.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q13]** My emotional life was affected this past week by the sermon.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q14]** Overall, I am able to retain and apply this sermon to my life.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q15]** I believe that the people around me could sense a difference in me as a result of the sermon.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q16]** Please describe in what practical ways you are applying this particular topical sermon to your life.

Please enter your response here:

### **ENGAGEMENT LEVEL WITH THE EXPOSITORY SERMON:**

**Name of Sermon** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Sermon** \_\_\_\_\_

**[Q1]** The expository sermon content captured my attention.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q2]** The delivery style captured my attention.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent

- (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q3]** The sermon stirred my emotions.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q4]** This sermon really made me think.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q5]** This sermon kept me thinking about how it applies to my own life.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q6]** Overall, I found the sermon engaging.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

#### **ABILITY TO MEMORIZE THE WORD OF GOD:**

**[Q7]** The sermon helped me better understand the Word of God.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent

- (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q8]** I specifically recall some of the Biblical text and passages.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q9]** I recall the main biblical point(s) of the sermon.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q10]** Overall, I remember this sermon quite well.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

### **SUSTAINED LEVEL OF APPLICATION:**

**[Q11]** I was able to apply one of the insights from the sermon in my life this week.

- (1) To a very small extent
  - (2) To a small extent
  - (3) To a moderate extent
  - (4) To a great extent
  - (5) To a very great extent
- Please enter your response here:

**[Q12]** The way I behaved and acted this week was affected by the sermon.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q13]** My emotional life was affected this past week by the sermon.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q14]** Overall, I am able to retain and apply this sermon to my life.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q15]** I believe that the people around me could sense a difference in me as a result of the sermon.

- (1) To a very small extent
- (2) To a small extent
- (3) To a moderate extent
- (4) To a great extent
- (5) To a very great extent

Please enter your response here:

**[Q16]** Please describe in what practical ways you are applying this particular topical sermon to your life.

Please enter your response here:



**Appendix B:****Consent Form****Compare and Contrast the Effects of Topical and Expository Preaching at First Free Will****Baptist Church of Tampa from 2005 – 2015****Will Beauchamp****Liberty University****School of Divinity**

You are invited to be in a research study on the effects of topical and expository preaching at the First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa from 2005 – 2015 . I am looking to compare and contrast the effects of the different preaching styles our church has experienced from 2005 – 2015. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a present member who has attended Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa from 2005 – 2015 and are 18 years of age or older. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Will Beauchamp, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the effect a topical preaching style has had upon you compared to the impact an expository preaching style has had upon you.

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Choose and watch an archived sermon from our church website [www.tampafreewill.com](http://www.tampafreewill.com) from the current pastor and a sermon from the previous pastor (i.e., 2 sermons). These archived videos can be watched at your convenience and will take approximately 60 minutes.

2. Fill out a 40-question survey. It should take approximately 20 minutes for you to complete the procedure listed.

**Risks:** The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

**Benefits:** Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and the faculty mentor will have access to the records. Participant responses will remain anonymous.

Electronic data will be stored on a password-locked computer, and hard copy data will be stored in a locked desk. Data may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and all hard copy data will be shredded with our on-site document shredder.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** The researcher serves as the senior pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa. To limit potential conflicts, the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time, prior to submitting the survey, without affecting those relationships.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, simply do not complete and return the survey.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Will Beauchamp. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at

\_\_\_\_\_. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C:****IRB Approval****LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 5, 2019

Will Beauchamp

IRB Exemption 3864.080519: Compare and Contrast the Effects of Topical and Expository  
Preaching at the First Free Will Baptist Church of Tampa from 2005-2015

Dear Will Beauchamp,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

A rectangular gray box used to redact the signature of G. Michele Baker.

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional*

**Research Ethics Office**

*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*

## Appendix D:

### Sampled Sermons

	Date	Title/Theme	Type of Sermon	Scriptural Text (KJV) <sup>49</sup>
1.	March 6, 2005	The Goodness of God	Topical	James 1:17
2.	April 10, 2005	Forgiveness	Topical	Genesis 50:15-21
3.	March 12, 2006	God's Promises	Topical	2 Corinthians 1:20
4.	November 19, 2006	Respectable Worldliness	Topical	Isaiah 5:20
5.	February 11, 2007	Some Remove the Landmarks	Topical	Job 24:2
6.	July 22, 2007	We All Need a Nathan	Topical	2 Samuel 12:1-12:14
7.	December 16, 2007	The Eagle	Topical	Deuteronomy 32:9-12
8.	January 27, 2008	The Conie	Topical	Proverbs 30:26
9.	February 10, 2008	Repentance	Topical	Mark 1:15; Revelation 3:3
10.	June 7, 2009	The Love of God	Topical	1 John 4:8;16-21
11.	August 16, 2009	The Backslider	Topical	2 Peter: 20-22
12.	November 22, 2009	What Trees Teach Us	Topical	Psalms 1:3
13.	March 7, 2010	Say So	Topical	Psalms 107:1-2
14.	May 9, 2010	The Perfection of God	Topical	Matthew 5:48
15.	July 07, 2010	The Ministry of Refreshing	Topical	2 Timothy 1:16-18
16.	May 2, 2010	God's Great Power	Expository	Isaiah 26:4
17.	May 23, 2010	The Apostles – Bible Series	Expository	Acts
18.	June 6, 2010	The Church – Bible Series	Expository	Acts
19.	May 8, 2011	The Salvation of Israel – Bible Series	Expository	Revelation
20.	June 13, 2011	The Victorious Church – Bible Series	Expository	Revelation
21.	July 15, 2012	He Has Risen!	Expository	1 Corinthians 15:1-21
22.	October 28, 2012	Reconciliation Between Believers – Bible Series	Expository	Philemon
23.	June 23, 2013	Jonah Lives Today	Expository	Jonah 4:10, 11
24.	July 7, 2013	The Raising of Jairus' Daughter – Miracle Series	Expository	Mark
25.	July 28, 2013	Jesus Heals the Paralytic – Miracle Series	Expository	Mark
26.	October 19, 2014	Healing of the Nobleman's Son – Miracle Series	Expository	John
27.	December 10, 2014	A Miracle of Leftovers – Miracle Series	Expository	John
28.	February 15, 2015	The Greatest of All	Expository	1 Corinthians 13
29.	March 8, 2015	A Time of Trials – Bible Series	Expository	James
30.	July 12, 2015	Visiting the Sick – Bible Series	Expository	James

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<sup>49</sup> King James Version (KJV)

## **Appendix E:**

### **Tables of Data**

(Refer to the following 8 pages for data on the 15 questions)

Q1: The Sermon Content Captured My Attention																																												
N=100															Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)														
															TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15
Response Item																																												
To A Very Great Extent	8	5	1	0	5	1	1	2	3	4	1	0	3	3	3	4	0	0	0	1	7	7	1	7	0	1	0	2	2	1														
To A Great Extent	2	4	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	8	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	2	7	1	7	1	0	0	6	7	3	0														
To A Moderate Extent	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	4	7	3	0	0	2	3	4	1	1	0	2	3	3	0	4	1	0	3	5	3	0														
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0														
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0														
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1													

Q2: The Delivery Style Captured My Attention																															
N=100			Topical Sermons (TS)													Expository Sermons (ES)															
	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
Response Item																															
To A Very Great Extent	6	4	2	0	2	0	1	2	4	4	0	1	2	1	3	4	1	1	0	4	9	3	2	6	0	0	1	5	2	0	
To A Great Extent	3	4	1	1	6	1	1	3	2	5	4	0	2	5	2	1	0	0	1	1	5	4	3	3	0	0	4	6	2	0	
To A Moderate Extent	3	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	10	1	0	0	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	3	1	1	4	3	4	1	
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1



3: The Sermon Stirred My Emotions																																
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)															
		TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
Response Item		3	4	2	0	4	1	2	1	3	7	2	0	0	2	4	3	1	0	1	3	6	4	1	2	0	1	4	5	2	1	
To A Very Great Extent		4	5	1	0	3	1	0	3	5	5	2	0	1	3	3	6	0	1	0	0	1	6	7	4	1	0	3	7	1	0	
To A Great Extent		5	2	0	1	1	0	1	2	2	7	1	1	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	10	1	0	6	0	0	2	2	5	0	
To A Moderate Extent		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
To A Small Extent		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
To A Very Small Extent		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
No. of Respondents		12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1	

Q4: This Sermon Really Made Me Think																														
N=100			Topical Sermons (TS)													Expository Sermons (ES)														
	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15
Response Item																														
To A Very Great Extent	6	2	3	1	3	0	0	0	3	8	1	1	0	3	1	4	0	1	1	1	7	3	1	3	0	0	5	5	1	0
To A Great Extent	3	3	0	0	4	1	3	1	5	8	3	0	2	1	4	2	1	0	0	3	4	1	4	6	1	1	3	4	6	0
To A Moderate Extent	3	6	0	0	1	1	0	5	2	3	1	0	2	3	3	4	0	0	0	1	6	7	3	3	0	0	1	5	1	1
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1

Q 5: This Sermon Kept Me Thinking About How It Applies to My Own Life																																	
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)																
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15			
To A Very Great Extent	6	6	2	0	2	0	0	0	5	5	3	0	1	4	0	7	0	0	0	4	7	6	3	4	0	0	3	4	1	0			
To A Great Extent	6	4	1	1	4	2	3	3	4	8	0	0	2	2	4	0	1	0	0	1	2	3	2	8	0	1	4	7	3	0			
To A Moderate Extent	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	6	2	1	1	1	4	3	0	1	1	0	8	2	3	0	1	0	2	3	4	1			
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1			

Q6: Overall, I found The Sermon Engaging																																
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)															
		TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
Response Item		4	3	1	0	1	1	2	1	5	7	3	1	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	2	6	5	0	6	0	0	2	7	4	1	
To A Very Great Extent																																
To A Great Extent		2	3	1	1	5	0	1	5	2	5	1	0	1	2	1	4	0	1	0	1	6	5	3	3	1	0	0	4	1	0	
To A Moderate Extent		6	5	1	0	2	1	0	0	3	7	1	0	1	3	4	3	1	0	1	2	5	1	5	3	0	1	7	3	3	0	
To A Small Extent		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
To A Very Small Extent		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No. of Respondents		12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1	

Q7: The Sermon Helped Me Better Understand the Word of God																																	
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)																
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15			
To A Very Great Extent	5	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	9	2	1	2	3	3	6	0	1	1	4	7	3	3	5	1	0	3	4	2	1			
To A Great Extent	3	5	2	0	5	1	1	4	5	4	1	0	1	2	3	4	0	0	0	1	4	4	2	1	0	0	3	6	2	0			
To A Moderate Extent	4	4	1	1	2	0	0	2	3	6	2	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	6	4	3	6	0	1	3	4	4	0			
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1			

Q8: I Specifically Recall Some of the Biblical Text and Passages																																
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)															
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15		
To A Very Great Extent	5	1	1	0	2	2	0	3	3	1	2	1	1	3	3	4	1	0	0	2	2	2	3	3	0	0	3	8	3	1		
To A Great Extent	5	6	2	0	6	0	0	1	3	13	2	0	1	2	4	3	0	1	1	2	7	5	3	6	1	0	5	4	2	0		
To A Moderate Extent	2	4	0	1	0	0	3	2	4	5	1	0	2	2	1	3	0	0	0	1	8	4	2	3	0	1	1	2	3	0		
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1		

Q9: I Recall the Main Biblical Point(s) of the Sermon																															
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)														
		TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15
	Response Item	6	5	1	1	3	1	3	2	3	5	0	1	1	2	5	2	0	1	0	2	7	1	4	6	1	0	2	8	5	1
	To A Very Great Extent																														
	To A Great Extent	4	3	2	0	4	0	0	2	3	8	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	4	3	3	4	0	1	3	6	2	0
	To A Moderate Extent	2	3	0	0	1	1	0	2	4	6	4	0	2	4	2	7	1	0	0	1	6	7	1	2	0	0	4	0	1	0
	To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1

Q10: Overall, I Remember This Sermon Quite Well																															
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)														
	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
Response Item																															
To A Very Great Extent	6	5	1	1	5	2	1	0	3	9	1	0	0	3	2	3	0	1	0	0	7	4	4	7	0	0	4	4	2	0	
To A Great Extent	3	3	2	0	1	0	2	5	2	6	1	1	1	3	1	4	1	0	1	3	4	2	3	3	1	0	2	5	2	1	
To A Moderate Extent	3	3	0	0	2	0	0	1	5	4	3	0	3	1	5	3	0	0	0	2	6	5	1	2	0	1	3	5	4	0	
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1	

Q11: I Was Able to Apply One of The Insights from The Sermon in My Life This Week																															
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)														
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
To A Very Great Extent	7	5	2	0	2	0	1	1	1	7	3	0	1	3	3	3	0	0	1	2	8	6	2	5	0	0	3	4	4	1	
To A Great Extent	2	4	1	1	4	0	2	2	7	7	2	1	2	3	3	5	0	1	0	2	6	1	2	1	1	1	4	6	2	0	
To A Moderate Extent	3	2	0	0	2	2	0	3	2	5	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	3	4	4	6	0	0	2	4	2	0	
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1	

Q12: The Way I Behaved and Acted This Week Was Affected by The Sermon																																
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)															
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15		
To A Very Great Extent	6	0	1	0	3	0	1	3	1	7	2	1	1	3	5	4	1	0	0	0	6	5	2	3	0	1	4	5	3	0		
To A Great Extent	1	7	1	1	3	0	1	2	4	10	2	0	0	1	2	4	0	0	0	4	4	5	2	4	0	0	2	5	2	0		
To A Moderate Extent	5	4	1	0	2	2	1	1	5	2	1	0	3	3	1	2	0	1	1	1	7	1	4	5	1	0	3	4	3	1		
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1		

Q13: My Emotional Life was Affected This Past Week by the Sermon																															
N=100			Topical Sermons (TS)														Expository Sermons (ES)														
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
To A Very Great Extent	4	3	0	0	4	0	0	2	3	8	2	1	1	3	1	3	0	0	0	3	6	7	1	4	0	0	0	5	6	4	0
To A Great Extent	3	4	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	6	3	0	3	3	5	5	1	1	1	2	5	2	5	7	0	0	2	5	2	0	0
To A Moderate Extent	5	4	1	0	3	0	1	1	5	5	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	6	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1	1

Q14: Overall, I Am Able to Retain and Apply This Sermon to My Life																															
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)														
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
To A Very Great Extent	2	4	1	0	4	1	2	4	5	7	3	1	3	3	3	4	0	1	1	1	4	3	3	7	0	1	3	7	2	0	
To A Great Extent	8	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	5	3	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	7	8	3	3	1	0	3	4	0	1	
To A Moderate Extent	2	4	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	9	1	0	1	2	4	4	1	0	0	1	6	0	2	2	0	0	3	3	6	0	
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1	

Q15: I Believe That the People Around Me Could Sense a Difference in Me as a Result of the Sermon																															
N=100		Topical Sermons (TS)															Expository Sermons (ES)														
Response Item	TS1	TS2	TS3	TS4	TS5	TS6	TS7	TS8	TS9	TS10	TS11	TS12	TS13	TS14	TS15	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	ES6	ES7	ES8	ES9	ES10	ES11	ES12	ES13	ES14	ES15	
To A Very Great Extent	7	2	0	1	4	0	1	0	2	5	2	0	2	5	2	3	0	1	0	1	6	2	3	4	1	1	6	2	3	1	
To A Great Extent	4	5	2	0	1	2	0	2	2	11	3	1	2	0	5	1	1	0	0	3	5	8	1	6	0	0	2	10	3	0	
To A Moderate Extent	1	4	1	0	3	0	2	4	6	3	0	0	0	2	1	6	0	0	1	1	6	1	4	2	0	0	1	2	2	0	
To A Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
To A Very Small Extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No. of Respondents	12	11	3	1	8	2	3	6	10	19	5	1	4	7	8	10	1	1	1	5	17	11	8	12	1	1	9	14	8	1	

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