Liberty University School of Divinity

THE PRIORITY OF HOMILETICS IN PREACHING TEAMS: A STRATEGY FOR AN EFFECTIVE HOMILETICAL PROCESS FOR CHRIST-CENTERED, GOSPEL-DRIVEN, EXPOSITORY SERMONS

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by

Bob C. Greene

Lynchburg, Virginia
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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

MENTOR:  Dr. Kevin King
          Professor of Homiletics and Historical Theology
          Liberty University School of Divinity

READER:  Dr. Adam McClendon
          Associate Professor of Christian Leadership & Church Ministries
          Liberty University School of Divinity
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Mentor: Dr. Kevin L. King

The purpose of this thesis project is to propose an effective strategy for preparing Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons (CGES) by developing an effective methodology for redemptive sermon preparation. Many contemporary churches today often have multiple preaching pastors and preaching teams, many of which have little to no seminary training in homiletics, yet even those that do, recognize that a seminary education does not necessarily mean that a competency in preaching exists merely due to the education or degree earned. Due to talented and gifted pastors with multiple approaches to sermon preparation, it is imperative that

1 The value of preaching teams (in churches that have more than one primary preaching pastor) and the movement that many churches today are working towards offer multiple helps to pastoral staff. Mark Hallock, in his article, “10 Reasons to Consider a Team Preaching Model,” offers significant help in understanding the value in team preaching. https://www.preachleadlove.com/single-post/2016/06/16/10-Reasons-To-Consider-A-Team-Preaching-Model (accessed March 28, 2020).

2 Jeff Robinson Sr. explains, “Every hour of seminary delighted my soul. It left me with much knowledge, and, as it is designed to do, equipped me to gain more for myself. Sure, my theological knowledge positions me to make wise decisions and enables me to feed the flock with healthy grass, but the maturity needed to be a godly under-shepherd comes only through days, weeks, months, and years of labor in the vineyard of the Lord. It didn’t take long for me to realize that I am a man in the middle of his sanctification, just like the people who listen to me preach every Lord’s day. Seminary did not teach me how deeply ministry could wound. But it couldn’t teach me that, for seminary is to ministry what basic training is to combat: a training ground, a relatively safe place to acquire the tools of ministry-Greek, Hebrew, exegesis, homiletics, systematic theology, church history, and much more. Basic training is not war, and seminary is not local church ministry.” 15 Things Seminary Couldn’t Teach Me (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 18-20.
preachers have a proper homiletical process, to avoid the pitfall of preparing non-redemptive sermons. Theoretical and biblical research was conducted on sermon preparation, and the potential benefits of committing to the CGES approach through relevant literature and articles on homiletics. Based on surveys sent to current preaching pastors, the present situation of sermon preparation and homiletics was assessed. To prove the benefits and possible applications of CGES, several biblical and homiletical discourses were analyzed, and homiletic applications were presented from the results of analyzing discourse structures. Findings in this study were integrated to develop an appropriate process intended to aid pastors in utilizing the CGES for preparing sermons.

Abstract length: 205 words.
DEDICATION

For the one true King and Master of the universe, who has gone above and beyond anything we could hope or image, simply to be our Lord and Savior. To you all glory and honor is given.

To my loving wife and children, who have endured long nights and short weekends, the multiple conversations and weeks of absence due to research and examination. Without your support and loving care, this would not be possible.

To those whom have been gifted and called to share the amazing message from the one and only true, great God of the universe. May this serve as an encouragement for all the years of dedicated study and delivery of the Gospel message from the pulpit.
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## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CGES</td>
<td>Christ-Centered, Gospel Driven, Expository Sermons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCF</td>
<td>Fallen Condition Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHC</td>
<td>Fallen Human Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JETS</td>
<td><em>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCRJ</td>
<td><em>Great Commission Research Journal</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TJ</td>
<td><em>Trinity Journal of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHS</td>
<td><em>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV</td>
<td><em>English Standard Version</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNT</td>
<td><em>A Reader’s Greek New Testament</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCSB</td>
<td><em>Holman Christian Standard Bible</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIV</td>
<td><em>New International Version</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLT</td>
<td><em>New Living Translation</em></td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

Sermon preparation in churches around the world is an art form and vital piece of what drives the pulpit today. The global church has the opportunity on a weekly basis to preach and teach people about the wonders and works of God. Pastors have the great honor and opportunity to introduce the Gospel message of salvation brought to humanity through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Pastor’s both in smaller and larger churches often approach the Scriptures with a different goal and different methodology, yet all seek to prepare well and preach effective sermons every time they are given the opportunity.

Preaching has been viewed and regarded by some as the critical element of Christianity. The message of the Gospel, which is what the Christian faith and church is built upon, centers around and on God’s Word. The Apostle Paul encouraged and instructed Timothy to, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season” (2 Tim 4:2a), because preaching is

3 Peter Taylor Forsyth explains, “I will venture to say that with its preaching Christianity stands or falls.” See Peter Taylor Forsyth, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind (Blackwood: New Creation Publications Inc., 1993), 89. Also, J. Daniel Baumann said with a quote from Clyde Reid, “… with preaching Christianity stands or falls.” See J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1972), 93.

In regard to preaching and the authority of Christianity, John R. W. Stott explains, “Preaching is indispensable to Christianity. Without preaching a necessary part of its authenticity has been lost.” See John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 15.


Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. explained that, the church always casts a destiny with the Bible. See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1981), 7-9.

5 Unless otherwise noted all scripture is from the English Standard Version (ESV; Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2001). Incidentally, this project uses the ESV because its translators pursued an essentially literal translation of the biblical text.
imperative in the proclamation of the Gospel, which is the central and essential message of the 
Christian faith and the main focus of the church. In order for preachers to feel confident in 
prefaching, proper sermon preparation and methodology must be worked through and applied.

Sermon preparation must be at the forefront of any and all approaches to preaching, 
because the landscape of preaching can change. As a church grows or dwindles, the 
communication of the Gospel must remain central, and cannot change, even in the midst of 
factors like audience size, demographics, denominational influence, the personality and/or 
giftedness of the preacher and/or mere complacency. While preaching and effective pulpit 
communication gifts can be tied, traced to, and come from God, the proper preparation of a 
sermon can be taught and developed. Sermon preparation that accurately interprets the 
Scriptures and then correctly applies the Gospel message should be an essential and vital 
ministry of the church today. Preachers must not abandon the message of the Gospel and 
need to stay diligent in avoiding messages that are little more than moralistic-therapeutic-deism, 
completely devoid of proper homiletics, some even abandoning the sermon altogether. True, 
engaging, and sincere preaching is lacking in many churches today, primarily due to poor 
preparation, which is why preaching is so vital to the life and influence of the church.

Wayne McDill explains, “I do believe that the gifts for preaching are from God, but I also believe that 
skills must be developed. We are all stewards of what God has invested in us. As in every aspect of this Christian 
life, God chooses to use us and holds us accountable for our stewardship. We are ever learning, growing and 
sharpening our tools for this calling.” See, Wayne McDill, 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching (Nashville, TN: 
B&H Publishing Group, 2006), Preface.

Kenton C. Anderson asserts, “Preaching today is at a crossroads. Changes in church and culture have 
undone the prior consensus on the importance of biblical exposition as a staple of church life. Local church leaders 
currently hear from an array of influential preachers and leaders, some of whom would abandon the sermon, others 
who would retain the traditional sermon, and yet others who would preserve the sermon but in a much different 

J. Ellsworth Kalas explains, “I tell my preaching students that they have no greater enemy than the poor 
preacher, because poor preaching makes poor listeners, and poor listeners in turn make for still more poor (or 
discouraged) preachers. Poor preaching lowers the expectations of the people who come, and it drives out those 
individuals who hunger for something better. Poor preaching discredits the product it represents. It’s dreadful to 
think of anything that makes the cross of Christ commonplace or that reduces the grace of God to a byword. By poor
proper preparation and strong homiletics, preaching has suffered in the past. Therefore, proper homiletics in regard to preparation of the sermon, coupled with the proper methods and strategies found in solid preparation and exegesis can affect how a sermon is prepared and also preached.

Statement of the Problem

Positive, numeric church growth has become the norm in regard to the effectiveness of the ministry of the local church. Most churches place such a high focus and priority on positive numeric growth, that growth typically helps the church establish if it is successful. By developing this habit, the church sometimes diminishes the importance of the pastors’ job of preaching and changes the focus to finding how the pastor can be a more effective leader. The problem is that those numbers do not necessarily translate into the success of the ministry, nor the effective communication of the Gospel. Preachers can and have become sidetracked, paying

preaching I mean preaching that is insincere or that is carelessly prepared (which, in truth, is another expression of insincerity). By poor preaching I mean preaching that is without a gospel—that is, without the good news of Christ that brings salvation. By poor preaching I mean preaching that is short on love for God and for the human race. By poor preaching I mean preaching that is not doctrinally sound. By poor preaching I mean preaching that is not winsome or persuasive. By poor preaching I mean preaching that does not bring salvation to sinners and growth in Christ to believers.” J. Ellsworth Kalas, Preaching in An Age of Distraction (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 132-133.

9 Martyn Lloyd-Jones identified, “The most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the greatest and the most urgent need in the Church, it is obviously the greatest need of the world also.” Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2011), 17.

10 David R. Dunaetz & Kenneth E. Priddy “Pastoral Attitudes that Predict Numerical Church Growth” In Great Commission Research Journal (Volume 6, Number 1, 2013), 241-256.

11 George Barna observes, “To be an effective leader you need not win the preaching award, nor must you be a great manager of the ministry, or a wise counselor of parishioners who have emotional problems. Such abilities are often counterproductive for a true leader. A great leader is more likely to delegate preaching, administration, counseling, fundraising, evangelism and program development. Doing so frees him/her to focus on the heart of leadership necessities: communicating and gaining widespread ownership of the vision, strategic thinking, creative problem solving, team building, conflict resolution, long-term planning, development of future leaders, evaluation of the ministry and opportunities, etc.” George Barna, The Habits of Highly Effective Churches (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999), 31.
attention to numbers and the delegation of responsibilities/activities,\textsuperscript{12} rather than the proper study of the Scriptures and the solid preaching of the Gospel, which should be the focus of the church and her ministry, but unfortunately has become more of secondary importance.\textsuperscript{13} This has potentially opened the door for an almost ethical/moral sermon to come about,\textsuperscript{14} sermons that are less about Jesus and more about being a good person.\textsuperscript{15}

Often sermons are being hijacked by moralism\textsuperscript{16} and a biblically illiterate culture that promotes the idea that churches need to change, as does the preaching that comes from these churches.\textsuperscript{17} While this approach to preaching may bring people in the door, a serious problem now potentially faces the church, the problem that solid, expositional, biblical preaching is not as

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13} Barna further explains, “There is nothing wrong with having a church that provides great preaching-every church benefits from dynamic, biblical, application-oriented preaching! However, most of the great preachers in America are not great leaders-not do they aspire to be. Outstanding preachers feel called to preach God’s Word to the best of their ability and, to their credit, they devote many of their waking hours to studying the Scriptures, developing ways of conveying important information in comprehensible ways and finding the perfect illustration to drive home crucial points. But living for the purpose of preaching solid biblical sermons is a world apart from casting vision, building a world-class ministry team, planning for the future, and doing the myriad of other activities that consume the mind and energy of a true leader.” Ibid., 33.

\textsuperscript{14} According to Lloyd-Jones, “The Church has been trying to preach morality and ethics without the Gospel as a basis; it has been preaching morality without godliness; and it simply does not work. It never has done, and it never will. And the result is that the Church, having abandoned her real task, has left humanity more or less to its own devices.” Lloyd-Jones, 	extit{Preaching and Preachers}, 45.

\textsuperscript{15} Danny Franks observes, “The gospel is the good news that God has done for us what we cannot do for ourselves, by dying in our place for our sin so that through him we can have eternal life. This offer of salvation is available to all who seek it by repentance and faith. So, if the gospel is true, then we can’t preach an ‘I’m okay, you’re okay’ message.” Danny Franks, 	extit{People Are the Mission} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 45.

\textsuperscript{16} According to Timothy Keller, “The Christian preacher seems to be saying, ‘Be moral,’ along with exponents of other philosophies. But when we ask, ‘Why be moral?’ the other systems say, ‘In order to find God’ while Christianity says, ‘Because God has found you.’ The Christian gospel is that we are not saved by moral living, we are saved for it. We are saved by grace alone, but that grace will inevitably issue in a moral life.” Timothy Keller, “Preaching Morality in An Amoral Age” in 	extit{The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators}, edited by Haddon W. Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2005), 169.

\textsuperscript{17} Derek Thomas explains, “In an age of relative biblical illiteracy in many parts of the world, the need to preach the whole Bible, rather than serendipitously picking a text from here and there, is all the more urgent.” See, “Expository Preaching” in 	extit{Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching}, ed. Don Kistler (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), 44.
important as it once was. The great need of today is that people still need to hear God’s Word. The Apostle Paul makes this point clear as he encourages young Timothy that, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16) because preaching these truths is what can help people to understand their need for the Gospel and the message of Jesus Christ.

Proper training in homiletics can only make a preacher stronger, which ultimately can help the preacher stay away from straying from biblical preaching and continually move them...
towards Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons. The absence of proper training is no one’s fault and certainly the blame cannot fall on the leadership, but the reality of having little to no homiletical training can only hinder the church and the preacher, which is why it seems imperative that research be done to find out what preachers knows about homiletics, as well as how they can grow together in understanding the importance and application of a proper homiletic. By answering the question of what kind of preacher the communicator is looking to

20 Chapell explains, “God fully reveals the dynamic power of his Word in the New Testament, where he identifies his Son as the divine Logos, or Word (John 1:1). By identifying Jesus as his Word, God indicates that his message and his person are inseparable. The Word embodies him.” Chapell, 27.

Chapell goes on to highlight, “The necessity of grace in balanced preaching inevitably points both preacher and parishioner to the work of Christ as the only proper center of a sermon. Christ-centered preaching is not merely evangelistic, nor is it confined to a few gospel accounts. It perceives the whole of Scripture as revelatory of God’s redemptive plan and sees every passage within this context—a pattern Jesus himself introduced (Luke 24:27). What is critical at this point as we begin to consider the structural components of a sermon is to understand that our union with Christ is the end and the means of all biblical obedience (Rom. 6:1-14; Phil. 2:1-5).” Ibid., 40

21 Greg Gilbert observes, “What God has done for us in the gospel—his unfathomable grace in forgiving people who have rebelled against him, his breathtaking plan to send his Son to suffer and die in their place, to establish the throne of the resurrected Jesus over a kingdom of perfect righteousness, and to bring those who are saved and redeemed by his blood into a new heavens and new earth where sin and evil will be forever conquered.” Greg Gilbert, What is the Gospel? (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 114-115.

Gilbert goes on to highlight, “We are included in God’s promises only because we know that we are dependent on Jesus Christ to save us, and we are united to him by faith.” Gilbert, 117.

Gilbert then concludes, “There will never be another gospel, and there in no other way for people to be saved from their sins. If your friends, family and coworkers are ever to be saved from their sins, it will be because someone speaks the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. That’s why Jesus commissions us to go into all the word, preaching and teaching this good news to the nations. Even as we slog through the trials, persecutions, irritations, temptations, distractions, apathy, and just plain weariness of this world, the gospel points us to heaven where our King Jesus—the Lamb of God who was crucified in our place and raised gloriously from the dead—now sits interceding for us. Not only so, but it calls us forward to that final day when heaven will be filled with the roaring noise of millions upon millions of forgiven voices hailing him as crucified Savior and risen King.” Ibid., 120-121.

22 According to Chapell, “The fact that the power for spiritual change resides in God’s Word argues the case for expository preaching. Other types of preaching that proclaim biblical truth are certainly valid and valuable, but for the beginning preacher and for a regular congregational diet, no preaching type is more important than expository. Biblical exposition binds the preacher and the people to the only source of true spiritual change. The expository preacher opens the Bible before God’s people and dares to say, ‘I will explain to you what this passage means.’ The words are not meant to convey one’s own authority but rather humbly to confess that the preacher has no better word than God’s Word. Thus, the preacher’s mission and calling are to explain to God’s people what the Bible means.” Chapell, 30. Haddon Robinson also identifies, “Expository preaching attempts to present and apply the truth of a specific biblical passage.” See Haddon Robinson, Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages (Grand Rapids, MI: 2001), 21.

23 D.A. Carson is convinced that proper training in preaching and preparation is affecting the church, “The best of Western seminaries and theological colleges reinforce the cultural bent toward the abstract and fill students’ heads with the importance of grammatical, lexico-graphical exegesis. Such exegesis is, of course, of enormous
be, the problem of untrained preachers could be minimized, and a new era of expository teaching, training, learning, guiding, and preaching could potentially arise in churches that utilize preaching teams. Those who feel or sense a calling to preach, or who already are preaching, could also use this research and the strategic outline that follows, to help in training up preachers to be the most effective communicators, even if they are unable to attend seminary due to ministry, work, and family commitments.24

A practical guide that could be duplicated, distributed, taught and used as a template for preaching teams could be just the instrument needed to take all churches to the next level in regard to proper study and sermon preparation. In order for this to be an effective tool, the preacher must understand that preaching is a science which requires the proper training in homiletics to achieve such a task.25 This research will help to give the church and the preaching team guidance and understanding of where the importance of the Gospel is found in the pulpit, as well as provide practical steps for the members of a preaching team to incorporate into all facets of their ministry. But in students who do not have a feel for literature, it can have the unwitting effect of so focusing on the tree, that the entire forest remains unseen, except perhaps as a vague and enormous challenge.” D. A. Carson, The Gospel According to John (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 100-101.

24 York and Decker identify, “Every preacher must decide whether he really want to be an expositor. A true expositor of the Word will have to make some commitments up front. Before he ever opens his Bible to study, he will need to make some commitments about his task. Before he ever stands behind a pulpit, he must be convinced of certain elements of preaching.” York and Decker, 18.

25 According to Anderson, “It is a technical discipline that requires meticulous study and careful construction of the sermon. Homiletic textbooks describe the ‘functional elements’ of preaching and the technical ‘steps to the sermon.’ Seminaries emphasize the study of biblical languages to ensure that preachers are ‘rightly dividing the word of truth.’ This is appropriate, given that preaching is the presentation of God’s truth as mediated by his Word. As the saying goes, God is in the details, and preachers need to get it and him right.” Anderson, 86.

26 Again, York and Decker explain, “Once we are settled on the truth of the Word and the profitability of all of the Word, we then must arrive at a consequent view of what preaching is. Preaching is not just building a sermon, telling stories, inspiring an audience, or giving a speech. If the Bible is the Word of God, then preaching is speaking God’s words. The purpose of preaching is to lay bare the meaning of the passage, to present its application, and to show its relevance to the audience. With such reliance on the text rather than on personal opinion or human thought, the preacher can say with confidence, ‘thus saith the Lord!’ In other words, when our sermons arise from the text, based on sound hermeneutical and exegetical methods, we can call men and women everywhere to obey the admonitions of the text, to believe it’s prophetic word, to accept its directions for the home, and to trust its word of salvation.” York and Decker, 22.
of their preaching, so that Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons are continually and excellently preached week to week, regardless of which preacher is in the pulpit. The purpose of this thesis project is to propose a guide for, and examples of, using the CGES as one of the most effective homiletical methods of sermon preparation. Therefore, this project will first establish a homiletical process and/or method that can be used to enhance the preaching ministry of the church, as well as to help develop young or new preachers with the tools necessary for strong Biblical exposition. Then, this project will focus on gathering enough data and information to help the existing preaching team of Pure Heart Church become better equipped with the necessary homiletical and exegetical methods and modalities needed, in order to be equipped to deliver Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons.

Statement of Limitations

This project has several limitations for studying, implementing and applying the CGES process of preparing biblical, expository sermons. First, this study relies heavily on past sermon preparation and preaching from the Pure Heart Church pulpit and other preaching ministry areas. This potentially could reveal that advances and corrections have already been made and implemented prior to this study, and that the report and results of the study could be incorrect from a current standpoint. While nothing can be proven until the research is completed and the results quantified, this limitation could have an impact on the solution to issues found in the research and could affect the proposed guide on homiletical training.

27 In regards to the theory of homiletics, Haddon W. Robinson explains, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and the experience of the preacher, then through the preacher applies to the hearer.” in The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators, eds. Haddon W. Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2005), 58.
Second, this study deals primarily with the proposed CGES processes for preparing expository sermons. The study is not focused on the craft of preaching or sermon delivery specifically. Thus, it is not within the scope of this study to present various views on the definition of preaching or to solve methodological issues for effective delivery of sermons, however the potential for overlap could exist, due to the nature of the study. This study is primarily focused on homiletical preparation.

Third, this study discusses the value and the applicability of using a suggested sermon outline. The CGES was developed to be the most effective and practicable homiletical method in the process of preparing a Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermon. Therefore, the scope of this study is limited to introducing the methodology of the CGES system to preachers and preaching teams. Presenting a practical guide with examples of the CGES is necessary for preparing a strong sermon outline with robust homiletics.

Finally, the research of this project is conducted strictly and specifically at Pure Heart Church, which is a large in Glendale, Arizona of over 6,000 attenders each weekend. Once the research and results are published, this study will not specifically be a targeted handbook or guide for other churches in America, as it will be specific to Pure Heart, but hopefully what will come will have some value outside of just Pure Heart Church. The tendency could be that other churches see the results and action plan, and then choose to incorporate the findings into their own preaching ministry context. While that could be a good thing for other churches, the dynamics that are inherent to Pure Heart will be the driving factors in the research, so the study is not meant to be a one size fits all help, but rather a comprehensive look at how the pulpit is being approached at Pure Heart, and what is being communicated from the pulpit at Pure Heart Church, both in the sermon preparation and the delivery to the congregation.
Theoretical Bases

This section explores three theoretical bases for understanding the need for a proper homiletical approach to sermon preparation. The Biblical Basis, the Hermeneutical Basis, and the Homiletical basis are all explored in order to remain faithful to Christ and the Gospel, and to accomplish the proper preaching and teaching of His Word. The research that follows will be conducted with the goal of identifying where the major problems are found in regard to sermon preparation and preaching from the Pure Heart pulpit. The outcome of such research should provide solutions which can be implemented to keep the church’s’ primary focus on finding Christ in all Scripture and clearly communicating the truth of the Gospel.

Biblical Basis

The Bible has a lot to say about the necessity of preaching, as well as the preparation that a preacher must engage in and walk through. The Old Testament book of Deuteronomy illustrates Moses’ calling and role as an expository preacher and provides three distinct expository sermons preached by Moses (Deuteronomy 1:6-4:40, 4:44-26:68, 29:1-30:20). The main goal of all three of these sermons was to explain and expound (בֵּאֵר) what the Word of God said to and for the people in a clear, precise, and understandable way. The law in Deuteronomy 1:5, was to be explained and applied by Moses to the particular situation of the Israelites.

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28 According to the Charles Simeon Trust, “Expository preaching is considered to be among the highest forms of teaching and is, perhaps, the greatest form of preaching. This ecclesiastic importance stems both from the rich Biblical tradition of exposition by example and from Biblical injunction. Much of the Scriptures are ‘preached material’ and we can learn much from God’s preachers handling God’s Word, explaining the plain meaning and intention. Moses did it.” “The Biblical Foundation for Expository Preaching,” accessed December 10, 2019, http://www.simeontrust.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=217&Itemid=267.

29 According to Peter C. Craigie, "The word expound (בֵּאֵר) has the sense of making something absolutely clear or plain: the same verb is used in 27:8 to indicate the clarity or legibility with which the words of
According to Deuteronomy 1:3, Moses speaks of everything or “all” that the Lord had given to command all the people. Moses sets his preaching trajectory to expound on everything that God’s Word contains, not simply picking and choosing what parts appear to be culturally relevant or comfortable, but applicable in the current context of the people.

The Old Testament is full of connections to the New Testament when it comes to preaching. More and more it is recognized that there is a strong continuity between the worship of Israel and the worship of the earliest Christians. Jesus had many examples from the Old Testament to follow as he preached to both small and large crowds, even when Jesus preached on the hillsides or beside the Sea of Galilee he had plenty of examples to follow. The Levitical priesthood further illustrates for preachers the connection and calling of preaching identified in the Old Testament.

the law were to be inscribed in stone. This law, which Moses was to expound, is probably to be understood as all that the Lord had commanded (1:3); it was this that formed the basis of the covenant relationship between the Lord and his people. It is important to stress that the content of Deuteronomy is an exposition of the law; the book does not simply contain a repetition of the earlier legal material known in Exodus and Numbers, to which a few new laws have been added. It is true that there is a common core of law with the earlier books, but here the law is to be explained and applied by Moses to the particular situation of the Israelites. They were about to enter the promised land, and the law of the covenant could not lie as a dead letter. It had to be expounded and emphasized to all the Israelites for the success of the events lying ahead of them depended on this critical point.” Peter C. Craigie, The Book of Deuteronomy: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 92.

Hughes Oliphant Old explains,” Jesus himself preached in the way many Jewish rabbis of his time preached. He preached in the synagogues, as the Gospels themselves tell us. He even preached in the courts of the Temple, which had been the most prestigious of pulpits for a thousand years. In doing all this he followed the example of those who had gone before him.” Hughes Oliphant Old, The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 19.

Old continues, “The Gospel of Matthew saw Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount as the fulfillment of the preaching of Moses begun on Mount Sinai. The preaching of Jesus fit into a well-established tradition. The same was true of the preaching of the apostles. To understand the origins of Christian preaching we have to look at the magnificent tradition of preaching from which Christian preaching comes. Israel’s worship was characterized by its focus on the reading and preaching of Scripture. In the synagogue the liturgy revolved around the Holy Scriptures and their exposition. Even in the courts of the Temple the Law of Moses was constantly taught. The prophets had brought the Word of God to bear on every conceivable subject and in every possible place.” Ibid., 19-20

Old further explains, “The preaching activity was the work of the Levitical priesthood. All too often one assumes that the taproot of Christian preaching goes back to the ministry of the prophets; preaching is thought of as the religious concern of the prophets, over against the liturgical concerns of the priesthood. There have been circles in which this was true, but those who gave us the book of Deuteronomy saw teaching and preaching as a cardinal
In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul, speaking to young Timothy charges him to, “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2). To “be ready” is a verb in the Greek (ἐφίστημι) that carries a firm stance of strength and power, which is accompanied with an understood preparation, but also an urgency of movement. Paul’s point for Timothy is that he must be prepared to share the Gospel message at all times, which requires the preacher to both know the Gospel and be prepared and ready to proclaim the Gospel message. Paul continues to encourage preaching throughout his other letters and writings to the New Testament churches as well. To the Colossians he writes, “To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me” (Colossians 1:27-29). Paul aims and encourages those who have experienced the life-transforming message of the Gospel to continue to share and proclaim this same message with those who have not yet heard or experienced the freedom that comes from the Gospel message.

As the preacher not only prepares his own heart, but also his mind to understand and comprehend the depth of the Biblical text, with the purpose of rightly establishing the proper hermeneutic and homiletic structures to help in delivering the message that the Holy Spirit

function of the priesthood. It was the responsibility of the priestly tribe of Levi to be the ministers of the Word every bit as much as to be ministers of the altar.” Ibid., 30-31.

33 According to Humbert of Romans, “In order that preaching be of profit to the preacher as well as to his listeners, it is necessary that he does not preach unless he has a mission for preaching; that he be not in a state of open sin, or depart from the truth, or contradict his words with his deeds, or seek temporal rather than spiritual goods, or work for his own interests and not for the glory of God; or discourage or scandalize his listeners, or provoke him to sin; or neglect works of penance, or not have charity as his motive for preaching.” Humbert of Romans, Treatise on Preaching (London: Blackfriars Publication, 1955), 36.
provides insight into. The Apostle Paul encourages pastor Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). This instruction and direction make it clear that the preparation of a sermon is not just a mind issue, but also a heart issue, which is what helps drive the preacher to study and prepare well. Preparing a CGES begins with a prepared heart and mind, and a passion and conviction to preach the majesty of God found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the greatest book ever written, “The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times” (Psalm 12:6). The Bible is the primary way God has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Hebrews 1:1-2). Preachers should hold this conviction and see the Bible for what it is, the true and only revelation of God, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16). Understanding the depth and weight of God’s holy revelation must push the preacher to a new level of excitement and reverence for the Word of God, “The rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:9-11), and must develop a passion, delight and desire to meditate and know this Word well, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD and on his law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2).
Jesus is the greatest King, Lord, and Master the world has ever experienced, “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11). Past, present, and future no one will ever stand anywhere close to where Jesus rightfully stands, as risen Savior, “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel” (2 Timothy 2:8). Jesus also stands as a friend, “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15), and preachers must hold this conviction deep within their souls. Without a proper grasp of the person and work of Christ, preachers and preaching will be unable to communicate the right and true

34 Saint Anselm explains, “The Divine and human natures cannot alternate, so that the Divine should become human or the human Divine; nor can they be so commingled as that a third should be produced from the two which is neither wholly Divine nor wholly human. For, granting that it were possible for either to be changed into the other, it would in that case be only God and not man, or man only and not God. Or, if they were so commingled that a third nature sprung from the combination of the two (as from two animals, a male and a female of different species, a third is produced, which does not preserve entire the species of either parent, but has a mixed nature derived from both), it would neither be God nor man. Therefore the God-man, whom we require to be of a nature both human and Divine, cannot be produced by a change from one into the other, nor by an imperfect commingling of both in a third; since these things cannot be, or, if they could be, would avail nothing to our purpose. Moreover, if these two complete natures are said to be joined somehow, in such a way that one may be Divine while the other is human, and yet that which is God not be the same with that which is man, it is impossible for both to do the work necessary to be accomplished. For God will not do it, because he has no debt to pay; and man will not do it, because he cannot. Therefore, in order that the Godman may perform this, it is necessary that the same being should perfect God and perfect man, in order to make this atonement. For he cannot and ought not to do it, unless he be very God and very man. Since, then, it is necessary that the God-man preserve the completeness of each nature, it is no less necessary that these two natures be united entire in one person, just as a body and a reasonable soul exist together in every human being; for otherwise it is impossible that the same being should be very God and very man.” Saint Anselm, Cur Deus Homo (Fort Worth, TX: RDMc Publishing, 2005), 20.

35 According to Millard J. Erickson, “The doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ does not end at the point of describing his divine and human natures. The unity of these two natures has extensive implications for the understanding of Christian theology. Through anthropological understanding, humans have attempted to disclaim or overemphasize the view of the unity of Jesus Christ. However, the biblical and historical material supports the view that Christ has both a human and divine nature united in one person. This does not come directly from a human perspective, for humanity cannot comprehend such a joining of two natures.” Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 739.

36 Erickson further explains, “Christ’s work is uniquely suited for the role that he maintains in the Trinity. Traditionally, the work of Jesus has been classified in terms of three basic functions he performs: his revelatory role, his rule, and his reconciling work. Temporarily, there are two main stages of Christ’s work: the humiliation and the
message of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13), leaving their audience and themselves with a distorted view of the Gospel and wanting more.

The Gospel is the greatest message that has ever been communicated. The Gospel is the only way that sinners can be reconciled back to God. The great news that Jesus has accomplished what the Father sent him to do must be communicated clearly by preachers regardless of the audience, “Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4), as they themselves are convicted to believe it and find a passion for communicating this truth, “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8), to all those whom God sends them, “I am under obligation both to Greek and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome” (Romans 1:14-15).

The Scriptures are still alive today, “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edge sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). Due to this truth, preachers specifically have been called to be God’s heralds of the Gospel, “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach [herald] the word” (2 Timothy 4:1-2). Preachers should respond to this calling with willingness, passion and a desire to preach the great news of exaltation. The work of Christ is not limited to these areas, but these titles for the work of Christ help us to identify and give meaning to what Christ has done for humanity.” Ibid, 779.
salvation, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Considering that Christian doctrine teaches that there is no other message, no other Messiah and no other revelation that has been revealed to humanity from God, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14), preachers must begin to look at their preaching from the starting point of the cross of Christ. The authority and power that comes from the work of salvation on the cross must be highlighted in all preaching, as preaching, “is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those of us who are saved, it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). Preachers are tasked with the charge to “preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 15:15). Thus, it is right that every preacher, make every effort, to herald the authority and life-transforming power of the Word of God by proclaiming the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Hermeneutic Basis

Many modern-day preachers tend to lean more comfortably towards the New Testament when it comes to sermon selection and personal preference in preaching, rather than the Old Testament.37 For those who lean more towards the New Testament, there is a needed...
illumination on how the Old Testament plays a crucial role in Biblical interpretation. Many do not understand how much the Old Testament plays a part in the formation, hermeneutic, and theology of the New Testament. G.K Beale’s treatment on this very issue is incredibly complete. The preacher cannot approach the New Testament without understanding the importance and impact the Old Testament holds, due to the fact that through a proper hermeneutical process we find that the New Testament writers were thoroughly conversant with the Old Testament, and felt that they were in direct continuity with it.

38 Graeme Goldsworthy explains, “A key dimension of the Bible is its historical narrative that is viewed theologically. The Bible is concerned with a specific history of God’s actions in the world. It is history under the sovereign control of God. Thus, evangelical biblical theology is frequently associated with the notion of redemptive history or salvation history. In broadest terms this conveys some concept of God’s actions to save or redeem that take place within human history. It also implies that God’s revelation of his redemptive plan involves a discernable historical framework.” Graeme Goldsworthy, Christ-Centered Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 57.

39 According to G.K. Beale, “No subject is perhaps more important for the understanding of Christian faith than the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. The Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures were, of course, the only Bible the early Christian thinkers and writers had. Many of these Christians were transformed Jews and would have known Hebrew. Other early Christians would have known the Jewish Scriptures only in Greek translation. Regardless of their language, however, all Christians would have been engaged in relating the two most important realities of their lives—the Scriptures and Jesus Christ. At every point early Christians attempted to understand their Scriptures in the new light of the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They used the Old Testament to prove their Christian theology and to solve Christian problems. The Old Testament also provided the language and imagery for much of New Testament thought, although this is not always obvious to a casual reader. Therefore, New Testament concepts must be understood from Old Testament passages. Virtually every New Testament subject must be approached through the contribution of the Old Testament.” G.K. Beale, The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 29-30.


41 Goldsworthy further explains, “An evangelical concept of salvation history is that the Bible contains a perceptible historical timeline that reaches from creation to the new creation. This is not to suggest that this timeline has no gaps or no mystery. And, strictly speaking, salvation history would not include the events before the fall into sin. Nevertheless, the term is useful to express the entire biblical timeline because the story of creation and Eden constitute the necessary background for God’s redemptive work.” Goldsworthy, Christ-Centered Biblical Theology, 58.

42 According to Walter C. Kaiser and Moises Silva, “There are 224 direct citations of the Old Testament in the New Testament, each introduced by a definite quotation formula. Seven other cases are introduced by and; nineteen cases of paraphrase or summaries of Old testament texts appear to depend on quotation; and forty-five instances of striking similarity also indicate that they too depend on the Old Testament, giving a total of some 295 quotations from the Old in the New Testament. There is little agreement as to the exact number of allusions to the Old Testament in the New; C. H. Toy counted 613. Wilhelm Dittmar argued that there were 1,640, while Eugene Huenh thought he found 4,105! The point is that New Testament writers were thoroughly conversant with the Old Testament and felt that they were in direct continuity with it.” Walter C. Kaiser and Moises Silva, Introduction to
Based on this understanding, it would be entirely plausible that a correct Old Testament hermeneutical and theological framework would be necessary for interpreting and fleshing out the message and method of Biblically interpreting the New Testament correctly. G.K. Beale confirms this by highlighting this important approach. Presuppositions can be very helpful when it comes to interpretation of the Scriptures, but the key is to know that one has the correct presuppositions. The New Testament cannot and should not be approached without a working and correct framework and understanding of the Old Testament. The Old Testament has much to do with the fulfillments and basis of the New Testament.

To become a well-rounded preacher, it is imperative to have a full grasp (as much as is possible) of Scripture as a whole. Holding only to the passages one loves to preach or even the

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43 Chapell explains, “Scripture’s portrayal of its own potency challenges us always to remember that the Word preached, rather than the preaching of the Word, accomplishes heaven’s purposes. Preaching that is true to Scripture converts, convicts, and eternally changes the souls of men and women because God’s Word is the instrument of divine compulsion, not because preachers have any power in themselves to stimulate such godly transformations (although human powers can certainly bring about all kinds of worldly changes, including those that masquerade as the products of heaven). God’s Word is powerful because he chooses to exercise his power through it and to be present in it. By his word God brought the world into being (Gen. 1), and Jesus is the Word by whom ‘all things were made’ (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16) and who continues ‘sustaining all things by his powerful word’ (Heb. 1:3). The Word uses his word to reveal his person and to carry out all his purposes. Christ’s redemptive power and the power of his Word coalesce in the New Testament, with Logos (the incarnation of God) and logos (the message about God) becoming so reflexive as to form a conceptual identity. As the work of the original creation comes through the spoken word of God, so the work of new creation (i.e. redemption) comes through the living Word of God.” Chapell, 27-28.


45 Sidney Greidanus explains, “Historical interpretation can also bring out the continuity that exists between then and now by understanding the historical referents of historical narrative in the context of the universal kingdom history that stretches from creation to new creation. Moreover, since the ultimate narrative of God’s coming kingdom reaches beyond the Old Testament and beyond the New Testament to the future creation, relating an individual Old Testament narrative to this ultimate narrative will link it directly to modern times, for the past as well as the present form part of that one history. Recognizing the connection between these ancient narratives and kingdom history thus opens the door to their contemporary relevance.” Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 215-216.
Testament that one holds more near and dear can be problematic.46 Doing the work and having a proper hermeneutical approach is a key for all Biblical interpretation. Having a complete and healthy understanding of how the New Testament is informed and shaped by the Old Testament is also paramount, as the Gospel message transcends all of time, space and both Testaments.

**Homiletical Basis**

When it comes to homiletics, preachers should begin by taking a look at the vital importance of their own preaching patterns. Approaching these patterns can help preachers understand that God has specifically laid down patterns within the Scriptures that preachers should take seriously, should identify and learn, and should follow in all preaching endeavors. Preachers often cannot see or can even neglect these patterns, which then brings to light certain questions of what patterns or structures God himself has harnessed and utilized in speaking to men? What patterns or structures did Jesus and the Apostles harness and utilize in heralding the truth of God? Our view of the inspiration of the Scriptures is such that the ascertaining of Paul’s method is none other than the ascertaining of God’s method; and it is precisely God’s method that constitutes the incontrovertible basis for a sacred rhetoric.47 With proper homiletical training, background, and passion for proper uses of language and interpretation, preachers can have a distinct advantage over the people in their congregations that they have the honor and privilege of communicating the Gospel to each week. There is in homiletics an essential pattern

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46 Greidanus explains further, “The Bible is unique and indispensable for preaching because it provides the definitive interpretation of God’s acts in history; the Bible is the source for contemporary preaching because it alone provides the normative proclamation of God’s acts of redemption and the response he requires. The bible itself, therefore, can be seen as preaching authority: authoritative proclamation for future generations of God’s good news of salvation. As such the Bible is the only normative source for contemporary preaching.” Ibid., 13.

or structure which God himself has utilized in the proclamation of New Testament Christianity in that of the indicative imperative.48

Within homiletics, preachers should learn and become familiar with examining, highlighting, and mastering the Indicative, Exclamative, Interrogative, and Imperative moods of sermon preparation. The essential pattern or structure which God himself has utilized in the proclamation of New Testament Christianity is that of the indicative-imperative.49 Once established, preachers can then attempt to weave these in and out of their sermons.50 By approaching preaching, study and delivery with these four elements, preachers can begin to look for patterns in preaching due to the desire to be the best preacher they can be.

The indicative emphasizes the activity of God and the accomplishment of man’s redemption. The indicative emphasizes the historicity and factuality of man’s redemption. The indicative imparts light; it appeals essentially to the mind; it highlights the importance of the declarative and the didactic element in preaching. The indicative is indispensable in explication verbi Dei [the explication of the Word of God].51 The indicative places the focus on what God has already done, rather than on what man must do. The indicative mood is in general, the

48 Carrick clarifies, “In other words, God himself has, in the gospel of Christ, harnessed these two fundamental grammatical moods and invested them with theological and homiletical significance. God himself has, in his Word, also made use of two other grammatical or rhetorical categories, namely, the exclamative and the interrogative. Clearly the scope of sacred rhetoric is potentially much wider than that of these four categories; nevertheless, there is something quite foundational about them. Thus, in this theology of the rhetoric of preaching we propose to consider the theological and homiletical significance and value of these four grammatical or rhetorical categories, namely, the indicative, the exclamative, the interrogative, and the imperative. Ibid., 5.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid, 147.

52 Carrick further explains, “The word ‘indicative’ as a grammatical term points out, states, or declares. It describes ‘that mood of a verb of which the essential function is to state a relation of object fact between the subject and predicates.’” Ibid, 8.
mood of assertion, or presentation of certainty. The structure of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Colossians, like Paul’s other letters, starts with doctrinal content (Chapters 1 and 2), then transitions into the practical outworking of that doctrine (chapters 3 and 4). To use grammatical terms, Paul begins with the vertical indicative (what God in Christ has done for us), followed by the horizontal imperative (how we’re to live in light of what God has done for us). This order in Paul’s teaching is vitally important. Throughout Scripture God reveals who he is, and what he has done. God also reveals what he is like, not in an ivory-tower speculation but done on the ground in real human history. The vertical indicative is a key element in homiletics that should accompany every expository sermon.

The Exclamative reinforces the indicative with emphasis and feeling. It tends to impart heat as well as light; it tends to appeal to the heart as well as to the mind; it highlights the

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53 Daniel B. Wallace explains, “It is not correct to say that it is the mood of certainty or reality. This belongs to the presentation (i.e., the indicative may present something as being certain or real, though the speaker may not believe it). To call the indicative mood the mood of certainty or fact would imply (1) that one cannot lie in the indicative (but cf. Acts 6:13), and (2) that one cannot be mistaken in the indicative (but cf. 7:39). Thus, it is more accurate to state that the indicative mood is the mood of assertion, or presentation of certainty.” Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan, 1996), 448.

54 According to Tullian Tchividjian, “The Bible is so rich and deep and multifaceted that we learn not simply from what the Bible says, but even from how the Bible says things. Paul knew that the right way for us to think about our Christian lives is always to start with the vertical, then move to the horizontal. We’re always to soak first in what God has already done before we set out to do. This intentional order is crucial because it distinguishes the gospel from moralism in our minds and helps us preserve the gospel from moralism in our actions.” Tullian Tchividjian, Jesus + Nothing = Everything (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 61.

55 Michael Horton points out, “One reason why many Christians find the Bible inaccessible is that they have not yet been shown how its various parts fit into an unfolding drama that runs from creation and the fall to exodus and redemption all the way to the new creation. The plot with Christ as the central character ties it all together. Every story in the Bible points not to us and how we can have our best life now, but first to Christ and how everything God orchestrates leads to redemption in him.” Michael Horton, Core Christianity: Finding Yourself in God’s Story (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 17.

56 According to Carrick, “The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar substantiates and defines the exclamation as ‘a word, phrase, or clause expressing some emotion,’ and it goes on to speak of it as ‘expressing anger, pleasure, surprise, etc.’” Carrick, 31.
importance of the emotional element in preaching. Expressing some kind of heightened emotion through a word, phrase, implication or even presupposition helps to strength the exclamative mood. Exclamative words in the context of Scripture are words that help to illuminate a strong sense of emphasis or emotion, words such as “what” and “how.” Clearly there is an element of excitement about the exclamation. This element of excitement may be either positive or negative in import; it may denote either approval or disapproval on the part of the speaker. Thus, the exclamation always presupposes a heightened level of emotional intensity.

The Interrogative appeals essentially to the conscience. It highlights the importance of the searching, probing element in preaching. The interrogative is indispensable in application verbi Dei [the application of the Word of God]. The Interrogative is interested in identifying and answering the questions of “who?” “when?” “where?” and “why?” in the Scriptural text. The interrogative replaces the note of certainty that inheres generally in the indicative statement with a note of uncertainty and doubt.

The Imperative emphasizes the responsibility of man and the application of redemption. It appeals essentially to the will; it highlights the directive element in preaching. The

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57 Ibid, 147.
59 Carrick continues, “The interrogative does not so much assert objective fact as question objective fact. It searches and probes in order that it might establish the facts. There are essentially three different types of questions available to the preacher: the analytical question, the rhetorical question and the searching question.” Ibid., 56.
60 Ibid, 147.
61 Ibid, 56.
62 Carrick goes on to explain, “The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word ‘imperative’ as a grammatical term ‘expressing command.’ It is ‘applied to the verbal mood (or any form belonging to it) which expresses a command, request, or exhortation.’ The imperative mood is essentially ‘directive.’” Ibid, 83.
imperative is, like the interrogative, indispensable in application verbi Dei. The imperative mood is the mood of intention. It is the mood furthest removed from certainty. Ontologically, as one of the potential or oblique moods, the imperative moves in the realm of volition (involving the imposition of one’s will upon another) and possibility. Based on these four distinct elements, the indicative-imperative structure of New Testament Christianity demonstrates that, under the superintendence of the Spirit of God, the theology of the Gospel of Christ has been conveyed in the Scriptures by means of certain distinct grammatical or rhetorical categories. The corollary for the preacher is that the grammatical or rhetorical categories employed in preaching the Word of God have themselves profound theological and homiletical implications.

Statement of Methodology

In order to evaluate exactly what is being proclaimed from the pulpit in the ministry of Pure Heart Church, as well as what the sermon preparation methodology consists of, engagement with the preaching team who preach on a regular basis will be administered via an online survey through Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). The study will be comprised of 18 questions that seek to discern the habits, understandings, and approaches each of the preaching team members take when preparing and delivering sermons. The selected preachers will be asked how they prepare, what developmental process they use, their own specific methodology in study and preparation, delivery format, and what the central theme of their messages typically tend to be. Through the use of the online survey, one of the goals is helping to identify the preachers

63 Ibid, 148.
64 Wallace, 485.
65 Carrick, 148.
understanding of homiletics, as well as to help them develop a desire, appreciation and effective system for preparing Christ-Centered, Gospel Driven, Expository Sermons. The feedback gained from the questionnaire will then be analyzed in order to help reach a viable conclusion to what is actually being preached from the pulpit at Pure Heart Church. The types and methodologies currently being incorporated into the sermon preparation stage of preaching will also be examined.

The proposed outcome will be a preaching template that will help those on the preaching team, as well as any new and up in coming preachers to have a satisfactory understanding and knowledge of proper Biblical homiletics and exegesis. This will be accomplished primarily through the development of a sermon template that will be accessible to all those that wish to serve in a preaching ministry, or those who would like to learn how to prepare a sermon. The project will consist of six chapters that are designed to help identify what the proposed preacher knows or understands when it comes to homiletics, highlight what the preacher doesn’t know or is unfamiliar with in regards to homiletics, introduce strategies and methods of proper homiletics, provide essential tools and resources for the preacher to work though while engaging in the homiletic discipline, and finally, offer sample templates and structures that the preacher can work through to develop this new understanding of homiletics.

Chapter one will begin by establishing the nature and need for the research. Time will be given to identifying the problem for the project, the limitations associated with the project, the theoretical bases (including the Biblical, Hermeneutic, and Homiletic bases) which will highlight the biblical rational of the research and the “why” of the research project. This chapter will examine the Scriptural basis for a proper homiletical process and provide insight into how much Scripture actually speaks to the need for a proper homiletic. This chapter will also highlight the
methodology of the project and will conclude with a review of precedent literature. Chapter two
will be devoted to identifying and explaining the need for a proper focus on the supremacy of
Christ in all of preaching.

Chapter three will examine the current understanding of homiletics in regard to the
preaching pastors of Pure Heart Church. An overview of the survey process will accompany the
diagnosis, gathering of information, evaluation, development of various strategies, and methods
available in regard to homiletics. This chapter will begin with the development and distribution
of a questionnaire for each of the preaching pastors to complete online, which will give the study
a basis to start from regarding homiletical knowledge and understanding. This chapter will also
highlight the findings in regard to the questionnaire and provide an evaluation of said knowledge
based on the results from the questionnaire. This information will be analyzed and interpreted,
and the findings will assist in creating a diagnosis of the current climate and culture in regard to
homiletics at Pure Heart Church. In this chapter, time will be taken to issue proposed directions
and outcomes possible for the greatest amount of learning and growth. Considerable time will be
given to the development of the CGES outline and process.

Chapter four will be focused on identifying and explaining the need for the Gospel to be
preached through all of Scripture. Chapter five will focus on the steps and application of the
CGES outline and preparation for preaching. The introduction and practical strategies that the
preacher is working through via the CGES process, while also guiding the preachers to the best
and most effective method of preparation for the style of preaching they bring to the pulpit. Time
will be given to breaking down each of the elements of the CGES outline, with practical
examples and finished template outlines for the preacher to work through and become familiar
with. Another goal of this chapter is to develop an easy to follow process for preparing redemptive sermons.

Chapter six will be the conclusion and “what’s next” of the CGES system. The focus will be primarily on understanding the CGES process, as well as providing a systematic approach to duplicate and multiply the process so that others can benefit and learn the system and methodology. The focus group of the study will be limited to those people who are already part of the preaching team at Pure Heart Church. Only pastors on the preaching team will be included in the study. Primary focus will be on developing those already in a preaching/teaching ministry, so the focus group will be narrowed down to three staff pastors.

Review of Literature

This project identifies and deals with the issue of how churches that utilize preaching teams can effectively prepare Christ-Centered, Gospel Drive, Expository Sermons (CGES). The focus will be on both large and small audiences. The focus will be utilizing the simple homiletical method of CGES outline. In approaching this study, a brief review of literature will provide a helpful background.

The Call of Christ-Centered Preaching

Concerning the calling of preachers to present Christ to their congregations, Bryan Chapell speaks to preachers in modern day context through his book *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*. This work is a highly practical text that keeps the main

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thing the main thing, namely God’s redemptive plan of salvation found in the Scriptures, combined with the most effective way to communicate this message. What else can or should a preacher communicate from the pulpit? The answer is nothing. Approaching Scripture with anything less than who God is, what God is like, and what God has done will do a disservice to those whom God has given preachers charge to care for. In his treatment of preaching, Chapell confirms this point.67

Preachers often have the ability to believe that they are preaching Christ-centered sermons. However, they sometimes miss the mark because they don’t actually deal with the redemptive aspect of God’s work in their sermons. It’s not that preachers don’t want to preach Christ-centered sermons, it just seems that they may not have the correct framework or experience to do so. This is an issue that Chapell hits pretty hard, as he is looking to instruct and guide his readers into a different and better approach to preaching.68

God’s redemptive purposes are so vital to all preaching that every preacher should be looking to what Chapell highlights extensively, which is the task of becoming a better, more effective, Christ-centered preacher.69 Because God’s redemptive plan is seen throughout the

67 Chapell explains, “I have attempted to clarify the redemptive context of ‘Christ-centered’ messages in two ways. First, by indicating that the term itself is a synecdoche-standing not only for reference to Christ’s incarnation or death on the cross but for the entire matrix of God’s redemptive work, which finds its culminating expression in Christ’s person and work. Second, by indicating that a message is Christ-centered not because it makes creative mention of an aspect of Jesus’ life or death but because it discloses an aspect of God’s redeeming nature (evident in the text) that is ultimately understood, fulfilled, and/or accomplished in Christ.” Ibid, 15.

68 Chapell continues, “Messages on the atonement are certainly Christ-centered because Christ provided his sacrifice on our behalf. But messages on the establishment of the Old Testament kingdom and the new creation kingdom are also Christ-centered to the extent that they demonstrate that each is a provision of God’s grace for his people in order to glorify himself in his Son. Grace may appear in ‘Old Testament clothes’ or ‘new covenant robes,’ but it is always ‘Christ-centered’ when a preacher makes it plain that God provides what his people could not and cannot provide for themselves.” Ibid.

69 Chapell goes further, “Every passage was written to bring glory to God by addressing some aspect(s) of our fallen condition (affecting faith and/or practice with divine provision). By correction, warning, diagnosis, and/or healing of this fallen ness, a text reveals God’s means for enabling his people to glorify him and to know his grace both in the passage’s original context and in the present situation.” Ibid, 271.
Bible, as the story of God (creation, fall, redemption, restoration), it is imperative that preachers approach every text with this story idea in mind. Otherwise obscure passages dealing with Old Testament laws, poetry, or eschatology can become very difficult to understand and communicate. However, if all Scripture is seen as a piece or part of the larger narrative, then the promise of a Messiah (Old Testament) or the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of a Messiah become part of the faithfulness aspect of God’s redemptive story. This truth can then provide preachers with an unlimited amount of material to help drive home the point of how a good and loving God fixed the problem of a rebellious creation that is in desperate need of saving. In an essay entitled, “Preaching the Cross of Christ” presented as a homiletics lecture series held at Covenant Theological Seminary in 1976, Thomas F. Jones pointed out that the identification of God’s redemptive work in every biblical passage is foundational for proper Christ-Centered, expositional preaching.70

In Preaching with Purpose, Jay Adams identifies the absolute necessity for the focus of evangelical sermons to be about Christ. Adams defines what an evangelical sermon looks like in its preparation and delivery. Adams strikes hard at the reader to be focused on the person and work of Christ in the sermon. This focus can help guide the preacher to preach the Gospel, rather than trying to cultivate and develop a moralistic sermon that focuses more on the hearer and congregation than the magnificent glory and redemption that is found only in Christ.72

70 Thomas F. Jones explains, “True Christian preaching must center on the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross is the central doctrine if the Holy Scriptures. All other revealed truths either find their fulfillment in the cross or are necessarily founded upon it. Therefore, no doctrine of Scripture may faithfully be set before men unless it is displayed in its relationship to the cross. The one who is called to preach, therefore, must preach Christ because there is no other message from God.” Thomas F. Jones. “Preaching the Cross of Christ” In 2011 Essay presented at the Homiletics Lectures, Covenant Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 1976), 1.

72 Jay Adams explains, “By evangelical, I mean that the import of Christ’s death and resurrection-His substitutionary, penal death and bodily resurrection-on the subject under consideration is made clear in the sermon. You must not exhort your congregation to do whatever the Bible requires of them as though they could fulfill those
In *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*, Edmund P. Clowney rightly identifies that Christ-centered sermons are not based and crafted only from New Testament texts. This point is incredibly important for preachers to grasp and understand. The drama of Scripture, as a whole, takes into account the entirety of Scripture and requires the preacher to identify Christ in the text at hand. A key in this understanding is to recognize that regardless of where the preacher finds himself in the text, Christ is there. Without taking into account the full drama of the story of God (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration), the realization of Christ can be difficult to find in all of Scripture.73

In *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*, Bartholomew and Goheen highlight the importance of understanding Scripture as one unified story, from Genesis to Revelation. This one story, focused on God’s revealing of Himself through the person and work of Christ to all of humanity, helps to set the stage for a Christocentric look at all of Scripture.74 In the same way that Clowney stresses the importance of preaching Christ in all of Scripture, Bartholomew and Goheen take the approach of looking at all of Scripture as the story requirements on their own, but only as a consequence of the saving power of the cross and the indwelling, sanctifying power and presence of Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit. All edification preaching, to be Christian, must fully take into consideration God’s grace in salvation and in sanctification.” Jay Adams, *Preaching with Purpose* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1982), 147.

73 Edmund P. Clowney explains, “Preaching Christ from the Old Testament means that we preach, not synagogue sermons, but sermons that take account of the full drama of redemption, and its realization in Christ. To see the text in relation to Christ is to see it in its larger context, the context of God’s purpose in revelation. We do not ignore the specific message of the text, nor will do to write an all-purpose Christocentric sermon finale and tag it for weekly use. You must preach Christ as the text presents him. If you are tempted to think that most Old Testament texts do not present Christ, reflect on both the unity of Scripture and the fullness of Jesus Christ. Christ is present in the Bible as the Lord and as the Servant.” Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 11.

74 Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen explain, “We cannot grasp the meaning of the story of Jesus until we begin to see that it is in fact the climatic episode of the great story of the Bible, the chronicle of God’s work in human history.” Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 129.
of God, and the one true way that God has chosen to communicate to humanity. Due to the clarity in Scriptures there is only one way to God, through the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Preachers should see the Bible as one story, otherwise the Scriptures become something that highlights what man must do to gain God’s favor, rather than the truth found in Scripture that Christ has already accomplished what humanity could not, which is seen as the one true story, the revelation of the person and work of Christ.

Doctrine is another key in all of preaching, as correct doctrine always highlights the majesty, glory and exceptionality of Christ. Robert Smith Jr. echoes this truth in *Doctrine that Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life*. Proper doctrinal understanding helps to prepare the preacher for delivering sound sermons. With proper doctrine the preacher can help the hearers see themselves in light of the person and work of Christ, rather than trying to find themselves in the Scriptures as one of the Biblical characters. In order to properly deliver doctrinal preaching that highlights the person and work of Jesus Christ, Smith provides two homiletical metaphors for the preacher to examine, the Exegetical Escort and the Doxological Dancer. The Exegetical Escort is one who ushers hearers into the presence of God for the purpose of transformation.

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75 According to Robert Smith Jr., “Doctrinal understanding prepares the preacher for preaching. Its task is to continually pass the baton to preaching. Doctrine must be preached; it is not an ivory tower engagement of a scholar divorced from an ongoing involvement with the congregation. Doctrine that cannot be preached is not real doctrine at all. It must be preachable!” Robert Smith Jr., *Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008), 45.

76 Smith further explains, “Doctrinal preaching, even at its best, does not answer all the questions about the incarnation, the Trinity, and other primary doctrines; but it helps contemporary listeners see their faces alongside the faces of characters in the biblical photo album. Many Christians criticize and laugh at Simon Peter because they recognize many of his traits in themselves: we are like Peter. We are like Abraham, who laughed at the promise of God. We are like the woman at the well, who could not be satisfied until she had her thirst quenched by the living water. Consequently, doctrinal preaching does not motivate the hearer to be like the biblical character; they are already. The challenge of doctrinal preaching is for the believer to be transformed into the image of Christ.” Ibid, 47.

77 Smith continues, “Once the exegetical escort has ushered hearers into the presence of God and given them the Word, the escort’s job is over. The escort leaves them in the throne room of God and lets God transform
communicate the doctrinal message of the Bible with accuracy and ardor so that the exuberant hearer exults in the exultation of God. Preachers are simultaneously exegetical escorts and doxological dancers as they respond respectively to the substance of the Word of God within a style that is unique to their own personality, yet reflective of an enthusiastic and passionate delivery. Within this enthusiasm, comes the call to preach Christ, as He is the only avenue for redemption, renewal, restoration, and transformation.

In *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, John Piper makes the argument that Christ must be supreme in all preaching. Piper believes that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the beginning, middle, and end in the ministry of preaching. In this work, Piper shares with his readers the truth that the supremacy of God in preaching is surrounded by the amazing grace that God has given all of humanity in the person and work of Jesus Christ. To highlight anything other than the glory of God and his supremacy would be to devalue the Gospel of Jesus Christ and water down true biblical preaching.

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78 According to Smith, “Doxology is the alpha and omega of the alphabet of preaching. The doxological dance is part of the experience. The doctrinal message of the Bible must be preaching. It is not a dynamic that is employed in order to get to the conclusion! The preacher is taking the people on a trip and enjoying the journey as well. Preaching is not a monological event; it is a dialogical exercise. The preacher preaches so that the church may preach.” Ibid, 107.

79 Smith clarifies, “Doctrinal preaching includes both the exegetical escorting of the hearer and the doxological dancing of the preacher as the preacher ushers the hearer into the presence of God for the purpose of transformation. The preacher, who prior to the preaching moment has been transformed and who dances in the delivery of the message, expects the hearers also to be doxologically responsive to the Word of God because of the transformative moment. The doxological response in the preaching and hearing of the Word of God does not enter the sermon in its conclusion; rather, it begins the sermon in its introduction and resounds throughout the message.” Ibid.


81 According to John Piper, “My burden in these pages is to plead for the supremacy of God in preaching—that the dominant note of preaching be the freedom of God’s sovereign grace, that the unifying theme be the zeal that God has for his own glory, that the grand object of preaching be the infinite and inexhaustible being of God, and that the persuasive atmosphere of preaching be the holiness of God.” Ibid, 25-26.
The Passion for Gospel-Driven Preaching

The driving force in preaching should not be condemnation of a person, but exultation of the greatness of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Sin must be dealt with of course, but what drives a person to Christ is key to understanding the Gospel. In his book, *A Treatise on Law and Gospel*, John Colquhoun highlights the importance of understanding God’s goodness, mercy, righteousness, and forgiveness as keys to responding to the Gospel message. Through the proper Gospel lenses, people can see the message of the Gospel clearly and through this clarity the need they have for a saving message from a perfect savior.

Graeme Goldsworthy’s book, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* was specifically written with preachers in mind. Goldsworthy sets out to provide a handbook for preachers that will help them apply a consistently Christ-centered approach to their sermons. At first glance, there was a stark realization that, more times than not, pastors have potentially preached from a text without even considering the whole Bible as Christian Scripture, let alone a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven sermon. Goldsworthy shows that sometimes preachers can deliver sermons from the Old Testament that have nothing to do with Jesus, that were more

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82 Smith continues, “Preaching is an act of worship. Preaching that simply investigates a body of truth without leading people to worship God who is truth personified in the person of Jesus missis the mark.” Ibid, 5.

83 According to John Colquhoun, “When a man is driven to acts of obedience by the dread of God’s wrath revealed in the law and not drawn to them by the belief of his love revealed in the gospel; when he fears God because of his power and justice, and not because of his goodness; when he regards God more as an avenging Judge, than as a compassionate Friend and Father; and when he contemplates God rather as terrible in majesty than as infinite in grace and mercy; he shews that he is under dominion, or at least under the prevalence, of a legal spirit.” John Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1999), 143-144.

84 Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

85 Ibid., 9.
focused on a moral ethic. Goldsworthy seeks to remedy these kinds of issues for preachers at every level and season of their preaching ministry.

Goldsworthy addresses, in part 1, the basic questions in regard to preaching and the Bible, by identifying the problem that needs a solution. It is this first half of the book, where Goldsworthy introduces his methodology and interpretative process for approaching any and every biblical text, which is rooted in biblical theology and hermeneutics. It is the question of where the Gospel gets incorporated in the text that creates the catalyst for a new understanding and approach to preaching the entire Bible as Christian Scripture. Part 2 of this work concentrates on the practical aspect of putting this method into action, regardless of the type of biblical literature at hand, that at the core of all Scripture is the person and finished work of Jesus Christ. Goldsworthy is very clear on this point as he outlines how the Gospel message, found in the entire Scripture, is the central focus and point of reference for all preaching. This understanding brings meaning to the Scriptures and is only understood in light of the person and work of Christ, who is the true Son of God.

Goldsworthy concludes this work with a huge service to all preachers in that he examines genre from the biblical-theological context, taking several texts from both the Old Testament and New Testament and providing examples for the how and why of interpretation. He then speaks to the literary and historical issues and concerns found in biblical literature and finishes with an

86 According to Goldsworthy, “The problem we face as preachers is not a new one. Throughout the ages Christian preachers have struggled with the question of the centrality of Christ and how this affects the way we handle the text of the Bible. It is an obvious problem for the preaching of the Old Testament, but, in a more subtle way, it also exists for the preacher of the New Testament.” Ibid., 2.

87 Goldsworthy continues, “If a passage is not directly about the gospel events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, to what extent are we obligated to make the connection?” Ibid.

88 Ibid., 16.
invaluable resource, with tips and suggestion for preparing and planning sermons that are rich in biblical theology. One big takeaway in this work is Goldsworthy’s commitment to the importance of biblical theology and Gospel presentation in every sermon, specifically in regards to the thematic approach. Through this understanding, preachers should be moved to keep in mind and apply both strong biblical theology and clear Gospel presentation to all sermon preparation and delivery.

D.A. Carson, in his chapter, “Preaching the Gospels” from Preaching the New Testament highlights how the Gospel is Jesus and the Gospels are about Jesus. Carson qualifies this by beginning his chapter explaining that “The Gospels are about Jesus. More particularly, they are about Jesus’ coming, his earthly ministry (including his works and his words), all rushing towards the cross and resurrection.” This message seems like it would be a no brainer for every seasoned preacher, yet Carson’s point is clear that the Gospel has been written to point out to all the aspects of the person and work of Christ, to which every preacher should be about illuminating and bringing focus on. To preach anything other than Jesus would be a futile attempt at moral and ethical behaviors that have nothing to do with life transformation. Forgiveness and transformation only come through the person and work of Jesus Christ (i.e. the Gospel).

Further, in Preaching the New Testament, Paul Weston’s chapter, “Preaching the Gospel from the Gospels” was another incredible contribution. Weston encourages preachers to strive to be all about Gospel preaching. Weston’s approach and passion are expressed when he rightly identifies, “In an age in which biblical literacy continues to be on the wan, and there is an almost

89 Ibid., 245.

complete ignorance of Jesus’ words and deeds among unbelievers, my experience is that many are often surprised and amazed that Jesus actually said or did the things recorded of him. Now—as then—these stories bring us face to face with Jesus, and our preaching must reflect this in its emphasis and focus. We are called to preach Jesus.”

In *Preaching: Communicating Faith in a Skeptical Age*, Tim Keller highlights the importance of always preaching the Gospel in every sermon. In order to understand and explain any text of the Bible, preachers should put it into its context, which includes fitting into the canonical context: the message of the Bible as a whole. Due to the fact that salvation is offered by God alone through the person and work of Jesus Christ alone, the Gospel must be presented and be the goal of all preaching. This reminder is key for all preachers as a classical formulation of the Gospel and its relationship with this life is this: that we are saved through Christ alone, by faith alone, but not a faith which remains alone. True salvation results in good works and a changed life. To show how a text fits into its whole canonical context, then, is to show how it points to Christ and Gospel salvation, the big idea of the whole Bible. Every time a preacher expounds a Bible text, they are not finished unless they demonstrate how it shows people that they cannot save themselves and that only Jesus can. This means that preaching Christ from

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91 Ibid, 245.

92 Timothy Keller explains, “What is that message? From the perspective of the Old Testament, it is that “salvation comes from the Lord” and only from the Lord (Jonah 2:9). We are too fallen to save ourselves, too flawed to keep our covenant with God. There will have to be an intervention of radical grace, and it can come only from God himself. In the New Testament, we see how salvation comes from the Lord. It is only through Jesus. “‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.’ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45). Jesus told his disciples that unless you understand who he is and what he came to do, you can’t understand either God’s salvation or the Bible itself. Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in a Skeptical Age* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 2015), 47-48.

93 Ibid., 48-49.
every text is imperative, which is the same as saying we must preach the Gospel every time and not just settle for general inspiration or moralizing.  

The Necessity of Proper Hermeneutics in Expository Preaching

As a valuable introduction to the necessity of expository preaching, Hershael York and Bert Decker wrote the book, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*. In the introduction of this work the authors highlight how to find the intended audience, central theme, and direction. York and Decker explain that preaching with bold assurance issues a challenge to pastors and preachers everywhere to take up the mantle of the preaching ministry and to proclaim boldly the Word of God in a way that will reflect accurately the meaning of the text, challenge the lives of the listeners, and engage them so that they actually hear and can implement what they have heard. This work is broken up into three primary sections dealing with the text, the sermon, the delivery. This work also provides a sample sermon that illustrates exactly what the authors intended to communicate. The authors have approached this work with the intent of providing preachers a process to make better use of their time in preparation of sermons, by offering several methods that they have developed to save modern preachers time.

Andreas Kostenberger and Richard Patterson’s book, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature and Theology* provides a simply, yet succinct method for interpreting the Bible, which involved preparation, interpretation, and application. The methodical interpretation is built around the hermeneutical

94 Ibid., 48.
95 York and Decker, 9.
triad, which consists of history, literature, and theology. In essence, the authors’ core proposal is this: for any passage of Scripture, you will want to study the historical setting, the literary context, and the theological message.\textsuperscript{97} Lining out exactly what their method looks like and the structure they will introduce hits the major points needed for proper interpretation of any Scriptural text. Understanding these methods help to strengthen a preacher’s understanding of the necessary means and strategies for proper biblical interpretation. Understanding the importance and task of taking an ancient text and moving that text into a contemporary one is essential for proper biblical interpretation and a way to engage in preparing an expository sermon.\textsuperscript{98}

Due to the newness of labels and wording, in regard to the “triad” and its term used by the authors, it is imperative for the reader to understand the method spoken of and how that method should work. Whether the reader completely agrees with the method or not is a moot point, because the focus should be how this new method works.\textsuperscript{99} Two of the most helpful aspects of this work, outside of the robust theological depth, were how each chapter began with an objective, an outline of what was to be discussed, and completed with a practical application for the reader. The authors give a guideline for each of the specific areas discussed, offer key

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, 24.

\textsuperscript{98} Kostenberger and Patterson explain, “The hermeneutical triad, for its part, points to the triadic structure of the interpretative task, noting that the biblical interpreter is faced with three inescapable realities: history, the text (i.e. literature), and theology (divine revelation). God has revealed himself in history, and the biblical texts require skilled interpretation, with careful attention being given to the text’s canonical locations, genre characteristics, and linguistic features (including word meanings and grammatical relationships).” Ibid.

\textsuperscript{99} Kostenberger and Patterson are keenly aware of this issue and address it by explaining very clearly and concisely that, “By starting with the big picture or broadest category, canon, and moving from there to genre (still a very broad category) and finally to the study of a concrete literary unit in its discourse context (with careful attention being given to the specific words used), our method embodies the principle of interpreting the parts (words) in light of the whole (canon and genre). By moving all the way from history (the historical-cultural grounding of a given biblical passage) to contemporary application (the final chapter of our book), we heed the key concern of the proponents of the hermeneutical spiral–that interpretation is not complete until we apply our interpretative insights to our own lives and those of our congregations.” Ibid., 25.
words that help to drive home the points in the corresponding chapters, study questions to help put into practice the information gleaned, a challenge or assignment for further sharpening, and a chapter bibliography. This was all incredibly helpful due to the intensity and depth of the information in each section and chapter. One of the unique gems of this work was the language section of Unit 3, due to the robust section in terms of the grammar, syntax and discourse. The weightiness of this text is so vast that these definitions and distinctions needed to be highlighted as part of this project due to the importance they hold for the interpretative process to be clear in the preachers mind.

Gordon Fee, author of, New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors begins his work with an explanation of what the word exegesis means, as well as its function. For the serious student of biblical study, knowing and being able to interpret the meaning of any given biblical text is crucial, regardless of whether preaching at church, leading a home Bible study, or simply reading for personal study and growth. The necessity to know exactly what the text says and why it says it should never be overlooked, yet with a work like this it would seem that Fee has determined that many people do not approach Scripture in this light. While

100 Kostenberger and Patterson further explain, “Before moving on to the discussion, it will be helpful to define three major terms: (1) grammar; (2) syntax; and (3) discourse. There is no sharp distinction in definition and usage between the term’s “grammar” and “syntax.” If any distinction can be made at all, it may be said that grammar denotes specific features of syntax, such as a certain kind of genitive or participle (form), while syntax refers more broadly to relationships between words in the larger scheme of discourses and sentence structures. A distinction exists also between semantics and syntax. Semantics is concerned with the meaning of individual words (based on the recognition that word meaning is to be discerned in context), while syntax is concerned with the relationship between words.” Ibid., 576.


102 Fee further explains, “Exegesis therefore answers the question, what did the biblical authors mean? It has to do both with what he said (the content itself) and the why he said it at any given point (the literary context)—as much as that might be discovered, given our distance in time, language, and culture. Furthermore, exegesis is primarily concerned with intentionality: what did the author intend his original readers to understand?” Ibid.
establishing the heart of exegesis and the necessity of proper exegetical methods, Fee does make it clear that exegesis (in itself) is not necessarily the end all goal. This book is primarily concerned with the exegetical process itself. Thus, the immediate aim of the biblical student is to understand the biblical text. Exegesis however should not be an end in itself. Often times, preachers can become more focused on the methods and application of interpretation, potentially losing the biblical text and the “why” of learning these methods, which directly affects the preparation of an expository sermon. From the beginning Fee makes it clear that preachers need to keep the main thing the main thing, and that is to be all about the biblical text, otherwise the expository sermon delivery cannot survive.

Several areas of particular encouragement should be highlighted. The first was how Fee provides diagrams and helps for preachers to properly line out the exegetical process. In these areas, Fee gives practical examples and uses terms that are easy to understand without leaving out theological depth. By showing the reader exactly where to start and how to properly proceed, Fee takes the guesswork out of the exegetical process. Second, Fee utilizes and incorporates the Greek text in this work. By outlining the Greek and providing the English translations, Fee has helped to supply a working structural diagram that is very impressive. For students and pastors who have never studied the biblical languages or those who have but need a refresher, this is a great way to get the blood pumping. By providing the Greek and English, Fee has ignited the biblical text and has offered a working diagram that every serious student can work from.

What really drives this work home was the short guide for sermon exegesis. The fact that Fee distinguishes that sermon preparation is different from an exegetical standpoint in terms of

103 Ibid., 2.
term paper writing is huge. Fee’s work reads like a preachers’ theological textbook without the heavy and weighty terminology that typically accompanies works such as this. While not a large volume of work, this book holds some very deep and long-lasting information that preachers keep handy as they continue to study and be a student of the Scriptures, while seeking to prepare and delivery theological sound, biblical, Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository sermons.

In *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method*, Sidney Greidanus offers an incredibly helpful work on the steps needed to take an Old Testament text and transform it into a Christocentric sermon. Greidanus provides a ten-step process that can help preachers learn to craft a Christocentric sermon. He also highlights that the number of steps needed is not the necessity, only the need for a proper method and sequence of the steps in terms of the preparation of the sermon. This idea and concept has provided a great example in regards to crafting Christocentric sermons, with the help of a hermeneutic that can be easily taught and adapted to any preachers style.

Understanding the meaning of a Biblical text is the starting point to any Christocentric sermon, and Greidanus once again provides an invaluable understanding of this truth in *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature*. The

104 Fee continues, “Although the process of exegesis itself cannot be redefined, the fashion in which it is done can be adjusted considerably. In the case of sermon preparation, exegesis cannot and, fortunately, need not be as exhaustive as that of a term paper. The fact that it cannot be exhaustive does not mean that it cannot be adequate. The goal of the shorter guide is to help the pastor extract from the passage the essentials pertaining to sound interpretation and exposition (explanation and application).” Ibid, 133.

105 According to Sidney Greidanus, “The number of steps is not as important as is the sequence, for putting questions to the text in the wrong sequence is asking for hermeneutical and homiletical trouble. In the context of this book on preaching Christ from the Old Testament, we need to learn primarily at what point in the interpretive process we should raise the question concerning the way of preaching Christ and how this functions concretely in preaching Old Testament texts.” Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 280.
recognition of different forms of biblical literature is important for hermeneutics because it provides the initial clues to the meaning of a passage. In highlighting the importance of genre, Grant Osborne states that “genre plays a positive role as a hermeneutical device for determining the sensus literalis, or intended meaning of the text. Genre is more than a means of classifying literary types; it is an epistemological tool for unlocking meaning in individual texts.”

Greidanus goes on to explain that, “the hermeneutical significance of recognizing biblical literary forms is that such discernment guides the interpreter in asking the right questions—questions that are appropriate to the form of the text.”

Good content has great value when designed and delivered for maximum impact. Great preachers seem to have effortless delivery. But behind that seemingly impromptu ability is great design. Conversely, valuable content is often squandered through disordered design and dreary delivery. In Preaching the Whole Counsel of God: Design and Deliver Gospel-Centered Sermons, Julius J. Kim explains that the value of proper hermeneutics in preaching is both a key and a priority for preachers, but another aspect of this importance falls into the arena of neuroscience. In chapter 8 of this work, Dr. Kim’s focus is an attempt to learn more from science so that preachers can return to God the glory that is due his name and bless his people with

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106 Greidanus further explains, “Interpreters understand texts only by asking questions and receiving answers. Asking the right questions is of crucial importance, for asking the wrong questions will undoubtedly result in receiving wrong answers. One of the weighty issues in hermeneutics is, therefore, how to ask the right questions.” Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature, 17.

107 Grant R. Osborne. “Genre Criticism-Sensus Literalis” In Trinity Journal, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Volume 4, Number 2, 1983), 143-144.


sermons that are like gold in settings of silver.\textsuperscript{110} This work provides a brief look at twelve interesting facts about how the brain functions, followed by preaching implications of these facts for sermon design and delivery.\textsuperscript{111} The research conducted by Dr. Kim, which he shares in this work, is a great place to start when dealing with hermeneutical methods, particularly when it comes to how the brain functions differently in all people.\textsuperscript{112}

One of the most valuable chapters in \textit{Preaching and Preachers}, is chapter eight, where D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones addresses the preparation of the preacher. Up to this point in the research and study of the hermeneutical process, very little time has been devoted to the preparation that must take place in regard to the preacher. Lloyd-Jones remedies this with an amazing chapter that takes the preacher through a process of preparation, highlighting several key areas that when implemented can help keep the preacher refreshed and renewed.\textsuperscript{113} As much as a proper hermeneutic is needed for preaching preparation and delivery, the man who is called to preach should also be prepared in his soul to share the great news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so finding balance between the method and the process is key.

In chapter seven of \textit{Preaching: How to Preach Biblically}, the focus zeros in on the subject of hermeneutics and expository preaching. James E. Ross cup seeks to explain how

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 180.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 179-180.

\textsuperscript{112} According to Kim, “As a professor of preaching, and more importantly, as a preacher myself, I want to discover ways to preach more effectively with fidelity for God’s glory and for the good of the church. To that end, one particular area of research that has aided me is the growing field of neurology, or neuroscience. To state the obvious, every brain is different. Every brain is wired differently due to the complex ways in which the brain grows and learns through experience.” Ibid.

\textsuperscript{113} Lloyd-Jones explains, “I would lay it down as a first postulate that he (the preacher) is always preparing. I mean that literally. That does not mean to say that he is always sitting at a desk; but he is always preparing. But turning to certain specific matters, the preacher’s first, and the most important task is to prepare himself, not his sermon.” Lloyd-Jones, \textit{Preaching and Preachers}, 177-178.
expository preachers can fulfill their charge to preach the Word. Rosscup identifies several of the keys to proper hermeneutics, which is extremely helpful. The goal of rightly understanding and delivering sound, biblical, Christocentric sermons, according to Rosscup, is essential to expository preaching.

In order for preachers to engage in expository preaching, they must understand what expository preaching is, and what expository preaching is not. D.A. Carson addresses this issue in his article, “Teaching the Whole Bible,” in The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators. Carson breaks down the issue of expository preaching by identifying what expository preaching is not, then gives six reasons why expository preaching is key. This is a valuable resource as not all biblical preaching is expository preaching. Having the right understanding of what expository preaching actually is will help the preacher to stay the course and preach well.

Haddon Robinson also provides a strong case for expository preaching from, The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators. In his article, “My Theory of Homiletics” Robinson provides an important and direct explanation of

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114 According to James E. Rosscup, “The expositor who represents God fills roles comparable to those of explorers, detectives, historians, trackers, and prospectors. He needs the perspective of one who wants to do his best possible work in meeting a variety of challenges in analyzing his text before preaching. He must utilize sound principles of hermeneutics such as scrutinizing the relevant context, watching for significant grammatical constructions, studying broader usages of the words in his text, learning to distinguish literal and figurative language, making allowance for progressive revelation, incorporating insights gained from other pertinent passages, and wisely using information on the customs of biblical times. Implementation of these and other important principles will ensure that the expositor accurately represents the truth of God’s Word.” James E. Rosscup. Preaching: How to Preach Biblically (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 93.

expository preaching. Robinson explains that preachers communicate ideas, and the idea of a passage should govern the idea of the sermon, as biblical preaching must be applied.116 These concepts help to aid in the sermon preparation, primarily by providing direction for the preacher as he works through the hermeneutical process, which is most valuable to this project.

Chapter Two

Preaching the Supremacy of Christ in All of Scripture

According to the Apostle Paul, the grounds for all Christian preaching is the cross of Christ. The Apostle made this very clear as he proclaimed to the church in Corinth, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Corinthians 1:21-25). The truth of the work of Christ on the cross points to the great need for sermons that have a Christocentric aim or focus. The cross presents the truth that God’s Word clearly and with authority brings about the conviction of the redemptive

117 Piper explains that, “In the cross of Christ, God has undertaken to overcome both obstacles to preaching. It overcomes the objective, external obstacle of God’s righteous opposition to human pride. And it overcomes the subjective, internal obstacle of our proud opposition to God’s glory. In doing so, the cross becomes the ground of the objective validity of preaching and the ground of the subjective humility of preaching.” Piper, The Supremacy of God in Preaching, 35.

118 According to Chapell, “In this sense, the entire Bible is Christ-centered because his redemptive work in all of its incarnational, atoning, rising, interceding, and reigning dimensions is the capstone of all of God’s revelation of his dealings with his people. Thus, no aspect of revelation can be thoroughly understood or explained in isolation from some aspect of Christ’s redeeming work.” Chapell, 276.
aspect of God’s trinitarian work. As the preacher’s preparation begins, the sermon should be based on some aspect of the person and work of Christ, which naturally should lead to the Gospel presentation. Gospel preaching presents Jesus Christ and the work in which he has already accomplished through the incarnation, his life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. The Apostle Paul poses a powerful question to the Galatians, “Oh foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified” (Galatians 3:1). Paul attacks the “false apostles” who perverted the good news of salvation in Christ into a plan for earning heaven. He does not only declare that God saves by grace, not works; he brings Christ forward, and placards him. Preaching points to Christ crucified for our sins and risen for our life.

Christ-centered preaching, which is accompanied by what Jesus accomplished on the cross, intertwined within the Gospel message, should be the most important aspects of sermon delivery. The authority of a preacher should be founded on the Bible itself.

119 Chapell utilizes Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 5-6 in explaining that, “Preachers should not pretend that every text specifically mentions Jesus if one has the right decoder ring. Rather, they should demonstrate how every text reflects aspects or needs of his grace that are made plain in the fullness of time. In this way, preachers demonstrate the unity of Scripture, God’s unchanging but progressive plan of redemption, and the ways that all Scripture coordinates to reveal the grace of the Savior and the futility of any other hope”. Chapell, 284.

120 Ibid., 25.


122 Piper explains, “Without the cross, the righteousness of God would demonstrate itself only in the condemnation of sinners, and the goal of preaching would abort-God would not be glorified in the gladness of his sinful creatures. His righteousness would simply be vindicated in their destruction. Even though all scorn the glory of God, and even though God’s righteousness is his unwavering commitment to uphold that glory-nevertheless, God designed a way to vindicate the worth of his glory and at the same time give hope to sinners who have scorned that glory-and what he designed was the death of his Son. It took the infinitely costly death of the Son of God to repair the dishonor that my pride has brought upon the glory of God.” Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 37.

authority of the Gospel must be restored, and the biblical text must be interpreted and communicated correctly through Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Preaching. The goal of preaching is the glory of God in Christ reflected in the glad submission of his creation.124

Crisis of Neglecting Redemptive History in Preaching

The redemptive aspect of all preaching should be at the center of all sermon preparation, as it is the core of all of Scripture.125 Messages that are not Christ-centered (i.e., not redemptive focused) inevitably become human-centered, even though the drift most frequently occurs unintentionally among evangelical preachers. These preachers do not deliberately exclude Christ’s ministry from their own, but consistently preach messages that have a more human focus than Christ focus.126 Sermons which take into account the full drama of redemption,127 which is tied explicitly to the work of Christ, see the text in relation to Christ in a larger context, the context of God’s purpose in revelation. Preachers do not ignore the specific message of the text, nor will it do to write an all-purpose Christocentric sermon finale and tag it for weekly use.128 This is the only way for preachers to become the gift to the world of teaching and

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125 Chapell explains, “All Scripture reveals God in either his words or his doings. The redemptive truths made evident by these means may appear in seed form or in mature form, but Scripture, by its revelatory nature, bares these divine features for those with eyes to see. This grace may appear in a direct New Testament statement of Christ’s work through the cross and resurrection. It may also appear in Old Testament clothes woven from the fabric of the persons and events that the Holy Spirit uses to reflect the redemptive character of God, which is ultimately revealed and fulfilled in Jesus.” Chapell, 285.

126 Ibid., 288.


128 Clowney, “Christ in All of Scripture” in Preaching Christ in All of Scripture, 11.
preaching that God intended for preachers to be. This is the way to be able to share the gift that is Jesus Christ, through gifted preachers who know what they have to offer a dying world that is so very in need of a Savior.

Non-Redemptive Preaching

Preachers who ignore the history of redemption in their preaching are ignoring the witness of the Holy Spirit to Jesus in all the Scriptures. Preachers live in a constant tension to communicate messages that are both biblical and redemptive in nature. The temptation to ignore the redemptive aspect of the Scriptures can create immense issues for preachers, specifically regarding expository preaching. A couple of these issues are: 1) A message preached from the pulpit that ignores Jesus and his redemptive purpose in a text is a message that can have scripture in it, without being biblical. 2) Non-biblical preaching that fails to correctly interpret and

130 Ibid., 10.
131 According to Chapell, “The theological basis for designing messages with an FCF derives from a principle evident in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, a touchstone verse for all biblical preaching. The fact that ‘all Scripture is God-breathed…so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work’ (2 Tim. 3:16-17) necessarily implies that even the most gifted and good persons remain spiritually incomplete apart from God’s revelation (cf. Col. 2:9-10). God uses his Word to make us what we could not be on our own. In this sense, God’s Word acts as an instrument of his redeeming work. Scripture continually aims to restore aspects of our brokenness to spiritual wholeness so that we might reflect and rejoice in God’s glory. Our condition as fallen creatures in a fallen world requires this redemptive work not merely for the initial work of salvation but also for our continuing sanctification and hope (Rom. 15:4).” Chapell, 269-270.
132 Anderson makes the cases that, “Christian preachers understand that their task is to offer some kind of spiritual nourishment, but the means of providing that nourishment seems to be a matter still in question. Judging by our practice, one might think that we are embarrassed by our Bibles. Not that we are afraid of the Bible. A little healthy fear might be appropriate. We are afraid, rather, of what listeners might think if we use the Bible too much. We have not entirely abandoned the Bible, but we seem to use it sparingly. Sermons focused on practical themes, with occasional references from the Bible judiciously inserted-only so much as not to be offensive or to otherwise tax the listener’s patience. We believe people think the Bible is difficult, irrelevant, or just plain boring and that if we use it, people will quit listening, as if they are going to be scandalized by the fact that we have dared open a Bible-in church of all places.” Anderson, 34.
133 Robinson points out that, “Those in the pulpit face the pressing temptation to deliver some message other than that of the Scriptures—a political system (either right-wing or left-wing), a theory of economics, a new religious philosophy, old religious slogans, or a trend in psychology. Ministers can proclaim anything in a stained-
communicate the redemptive aspect and nature found in the Word of God is eroding the pulpit of the contemporary church today. Preaching that strikes at the heart of faith, rather than supporting it, often have an identifying theme. These messages drive Christians to strive to achieve or try to accomplish something that will make them acceptable to and/or loved by God. There exists today, three types of sermons that could be classified as non-redemptive preaching: diligent-driven preaching, imitation-driven preaching, and morality-driven preaching.

Diligent-Driven Preaching

Diligent-driven preaching is a way of preaching that focuses on the believer being disciplined in the means of what they can do or how they can follow more rules (i.e. don’t smoke, don’t chew, and don’t hang out with girls that do), in order to advance and improve their relationship with God. Through being diligent to follow certain “man-made” rules set out by the church (i.e. no skateboarding in the parking lot) or preacher (the preacher avoids alcohol so the congregation should also), believers can gain favor with God. This type of preaching focuses not on the Scriptures, but on what the preacher thinks is best for the audience from his own perspective. This idea is contrary to the biblical call to be diligent in the perseverance of the means of grace. Further, messages that are preached specifically to encourage the believer to glass voice at 11:30 on Sunday morning following the singing of hymns. Yet when they fail to preach the Scriptures, they abandon their authority. No longer do they confront their hearers with a word from God. That is why most modern preaching evokes little more than a wide yawn. God is not in it.” Robinson, Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages, 20.


Chapell, 289.

Joel R. Beeke contrasts and distinguishes the means of grace by explaining that, “The fruits of perseverance and assurance—such as the diligent use of the means of grace, continuance in heartfelt obedience to God’s will, desire for fellowship with God, yearning for God’s glory and heaven, love for the church, and intercession for revival—clearly appear to be waning. The need for a biblically based doctrine of perseverance and assurance is compounded by today’s emphasis on feeling. How we feel often takes precedence over what we think, know, or believe.” Joel R. Beeke, Living for God’s Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism (Lake Mary, FL:
practice certain religious rituals more regularly, sincerely, or methodically are designed with the purpose of lifting the believer to a higher plain of divine approval.\textsuperscript{137}

Remaining diligent to these “man-made” causes has the announced (and often unannounced) proclamation that by following the “rules” God will love and accept the believer more, and by not remaining diligent the believer will be less loved and less accepted by God.\textsuperscript{138} The underlying idea is that by remaining diligent, the believer can receive more favor from God, which drives the believer to try and do more because they “have to gain” God’s approval, not because they already “have gained divine approval, want to remain diligent, and want to continue in the means of grace.”\textsuperscript{139} This type of preaching ignores the redemptive work of Christ and moves the focus to service or “doing” rather than on resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{140}

Reformation Trust, 2008), 115.

\textsuperscript{137} Chapell, 292.

\textsuperscript{138} Beeke further explains, “Assured of victory in Christ who keeps them, the saints strive to keep themselves in His favor by persevering. Perseverance is their life-long activity. It includes confessing Christ as Savior (Rom. 10:9), bringing forth the fruits of grace (John 15:16), and persevering to the end (Matt. 10:22; Heb. 10:28-29). True believers persevere in union with Christ (John 15) and in the ‘things that accompany salvation’ (Heb. 6:9).” Beeke, 118.

\textsuperscript{139} Beeke continues “The use of the means of grace, such as reading, hearing, searching, meditating on, praying, over, and practicing the Scriptures, is necessary to flee sin and promote holiness (John 5:39; 8:31-32; Heb. 10:25-26; 12:14). Believers persevere by giving themselves wholeheartedly to the spiritual battle and by keeping themselves from sin (1 John 5:18), remembering that the church of Christ is never glorious except when it is baptized in holiness. They persevere in keeping the law of God (James 1:22-25) and keeping themselves in the love of God (Jude 21). They persevere in maintaining a good conscience before God and men (Acts 24:16). They persevere in communing in love with one another as the people of Christ, a body that moves, lives, worships, and grows together (1 John 3:14; Ps. 133). They persevere in watching and praying that they might not enter into temptation (Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18). They persevere in making their calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). They run with patience the race that is set before them, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of their faith (Heb. 12:1-2).” Ibid.

\textsuperscript{140} Beeke further explains, “Although such preaching is intended for good, its exclusive focus on actuating or accessing divine blessing through human works carries the message, ‘It is the doing of these things that will get you right with God and/or your neighbor.’ No message is more damaging to true faith. By making human efforts alone the measure and the cause of godliness, evangelicals fall victim to the twin assaults of theological legalism and liberalism—which despite their perceived opposition are actually identical in making one’s relationship with god dependent on human goodness.” Ibid., 288-289.
Imitation-Driven Preaching

Imitation-driven preaching is a way of preaching, often called *biographical preaching*, in which the preacher highlights the accomplishments of a certain biblical character and then encourages the believer to imitate that biblical character. After identifying the exemplary characteristics of the character, the preacher exhorts listeners to try and be like that person in some commendable aspect of his or her personality or practice.141 In this type of *biographical preaching*, pastors urge congregations to be like Moses, Gideon, David, Daniel or Peter in the face of trial, temptation, or challenge.142 While examining these biblical characters can offer certain aspects of relief or encouragement that believers could incorporate into their daily spiritual walk, the helpfulness of emulating such biblical “heroes” only offers believers the opportunity to work on their conduct and character, which does not speak to the redemptive need that every one of these heroes of the faith absolutely did not achieve on their own merit or by their own doing. A difficulty with biographical preaching is that it typically fails to honor the care that the Bible also takes to tarnish almost every patriarch or saint within its pages.143 According to Sidney Greidanus, “Another problem with imitating Bible characters is that it tends to transform the biblical author’s description into prescription for today.”144 Thus, the focus is geared towards following someone in the Bible (other than Jesus) in actions and deeds, hoping that the outcome will be something similar to the result that the biblical character experienced. The Scriptures create the need for a Savior that goes beyond every other biblical character, another push toward the redemptive need for all preaching.

141 Ibid., 289.
143 Chapell, 290.
144 Ibid., 163.
Morality-Driven Preaching

Morality-driven preaching urges believers to focus on their own actions while emphasizing moral and ethical behavior as the highest value that human beings should be about. Similar to focusing on biographies apart from enabling grace, is an emphasis on behaviors alone that also result in non-redemptive messages.\textsuperscript{145} The Bible teaches that there has been an enduring effect of the sin of Adam and Eve recorded in Genesis 3. Because of that sin, humans are born morally fallen. Humans are naturally turned away from God and toward sin in every area of life. Humans are not as bad as they possibly could be, but humans are at no point as good as they ought to be. Preaching messages that highlight moral or ethical behavior in light of the biblical truth of fallen humanity is harmful to every listener.\textsuperscript{146}

Humans are now all sinners, and humans’ sin in all areas of life (Romans 3:23). Humans are corrupted and make the wrong choices, which makes life impossible to navigate simply on moral and ethical convictions, as these convictions can be subjective to each individual. Humans are not holy and are in fact inclined to evil, which taints any ability to make good decisions and live right (apart from the finished work of Christ).\textsuperscript{147} Humans do not love God, and therefore we are under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse. Humans are guilty of sinning against God, fallen from his favor, under the curse of Genesis 3, and the promise of his

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 290.

\textsuperscript{146} Chapell makes it clear, “Preachers of such messages are usually unaware of the harm of devoting an entire sermon to telling people to be good or holy. God expects holiness. He commands it. He devotes innumerable passages in Scripture to telling us what to do and what not to do. So, what could possibly be wrong with exhorting people to be good? Again, the problem lies not in what preachers say, but what they fail to say.” Chapell, 291.

\textsuperscript{147} Beeke explains, “The Bible tells us that although fallen man is capable of doing some externally good acts, he cannot do anything truly good or pleasing in God’s sight (Rom. 8:8) unless he is regenerated by the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-8). From God’s standpoint, which is the only true standpoint, natural man is incapable of goodness in thought, word, or deed, and thus cannot contribute anything to his salvation. He is in total rebellion against God.” Beeke, 51.
right and just judgment of humanity in the future and forever is guaranteed to all humanity (“the wages of sin is death,” Rom. 6:23). This is the state from which all humans need to be saved. When the focus of a sermon becomes moralistic “Don’t smoke, don’t chew and don’t hang out with people who do” (or even a more sophisticated “Renew your heart by doing what God commands”), listeners will most likely assume that they can secure or renew their relationship with God through proper moral and ethical behaviors.

The Biblical Focus of Redemptive Preaching

The Bible makes it clear that God has a unified plan for all of history. All Scripture is redemptive revelation that is inspired to address humanity’s fallen condition (or incompleteness) with divine provision. Preachers who recognize this pervasive scriptural dynamic have discovered the means for uncovering the positive focus in Christ-centered preaching.

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148 According to Beeke, “Total depravity is the inevitable result of our sin, and sin is the inevitable result of our total depravity. You can’t understand what total depravity is if you don’t understand what sin is. The Bible tells us, ‘Sin is the transgression of the law’ of God (1 John 3:4). Thus, sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in our actions, attitudes, or nature—either by doing or being what we should not do or be (sins of commission) or by not doing or not being what we should do or be (sins of omission). Sin is unrighteousness, and all unrighteousness is anti-God. In essence, sin is all that is in opposition to God. Sin defies God; it violates His character, His law, and His covenant.” Ibid., 52.

149 Ibid., 290.

150 According to the ESV Study Bible, “God’s ultimate purpose, a plan for the fullness of time, is to unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth (Eph. 1:10), to the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:12). God had this plan even from the beginning: “remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’” (Isa 46:9-10). “When the fullness of time had come,” when the moment was appropriate in God’s plan, “God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law.” (Gal. 4:4-5). See God’s Plan for History, in the ESV Study Bible.

151 Kim proposes, “Every Christian preacher would wholeheartedly agree with the proposition that they should preach Christ in their sermons. After all, they would be following a long line of preachers in history who modeled their ministry after the Apostle Paul, who stated so unequivocally, ‘But we preach Christ crucified’ (1 Cor. 1:23) and ‘For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified’ (1 Cor. 2:2).” Kim, 51.
discovery occurs when preachers see that a text’s fallen condition focus defines God’s mercy at the same time that it reveals human need.152

According to Kim, not all preachers are convinced that “preaching Christ” is something that should be done in every sermon, at every occasion, from every portion of Scripture. To bring some clarity, there are three reasons why preachers should interpret and preach Christ from all of Scripture: because it’s biblical, foundational, and practical.153 According to the Scriptures, Jesus and the Apostles preached Christ, which helps to give a clearer picture of and to the purpose in preaching Christ.154 The message and purpose of the New Testament is essentially revealed in the Apostle Paul’s message to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 15:3-4), and the Apostle Peter’s statements (Acts 4:10-12). These two great apostles of the New Testament—arguably the two most important leaders at the beginning stages of the Christian church—spoke with unanimity regarding their message and purpose: Christ crucified and raised is the only hope for sinful humanity. This message and purpose, however, did not originate with them; they learned it from their rabbi, Jesus.155 In order to further advance the redemptive-historical truth of the Scriptures, a Christological interpretation and application is biblical, essential, and central to all preaching.156

152 Chapell, 277.

153 Kim, 52.

154 According to Kim, “Jesus and his disciples interpreted the Scriptures—which for them was the Hebrew Bible (the OT)—in light of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah-King. They modeled a particular pattern for preachers to follow. Early Christian preaching had a central controlling message and a specific evangelistic purpose.” Ibid., 52.

155 Ibid., 53.

156 Kim further explains, “It is this Christological interpretation and application that not only advances the redemptive-historical story line of the Bible’s central message, but also provides the pattern for every Christian preacher after Jesus—like the apostles Peter and Paul.” Ibid., 56.
Examining the Scriptures themselves with the correct lens will ultimately bring preachers to the same conclusion that Jesus and the Apostles came to, that preaching Christ in all of Scripture is actually biblical. Central to the biblical story is the person and work of Jesus Christ. Both the Old Testament and New Testament plainly and clearly speak about Jesus. The Old Testament in terms of future and prophecy, while the New Testament in terms of the fulfillment of God’s plan in redemptive history.

Without Jesus, the biblical story has no discernable direction, purpose, or fulfillment as Jesus is the central figure in the entire biblical narrative. Foundational to understanding the whole story of the Bible is the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, future return, and forever reign of King Jesus. God had this plan even from the beginning: “remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose” (Isa. 46:9–10). “When the fullness of time had come, when the moment was appropriate in God’s plan, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Gal. 4:4–5). The work of Christ on earth, and especially his crucifixion and resurrection, are the climax of redemptive history. These events in the life of Christ bring a larger context to the biblical story line,

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157 Kim concludes this section by explaining, “Jesus and the apostles saw Christ as the center of the entire biblical story line. Without Christ, the overall structure of biblical revelation has no coherence or purpose. Every part of the Bible is about the historical unfolding revelation and accomplishment of gospel salvation through Jesus Christ. Thus, there is a story within all the Bible stories. God in his grace is redeeming a people for himself in the face of human rebellion and human desire for a religion of good works. This interpretative method is foundational for preaching the whole counsel of God.” Ibid., 58.

158 Kim further explains, “Rather than being a loose collection of historical narratives, poetry, and other types of literature, the Bible has one central story, from beginning to end; God and redemption. God, as the divine author of all the Scriptures, was involved in the process, supernaturally inspiring all the human authors to communicate his purposes for his creation. As such, reading and understanding different portions of the Bible requires this foundational paradigm, namely, that God is the divine author of the Bible, with a divine purpose.” Ibid.
essentially proving that God is faithful in His promises and that He has and will accomplish everything He has set out to complete. These events culminate as the great turning point at which God accomplished the salvation toward which history had been moving throughout the Old Testament. The story of the Bible, authored by God, then, is not just a nationalistic epic describing the successes and failures of one middle Eastern people group.  

Preaching Christ from all of Scripture is incredibly practical. The Scriptures are clear that there is no other way for humanity to find and experience forgiveness, restoration, and peace. The person and work of Jesus Christ opens the door for sinners to experience a right relationship with God. People cannot become Christian or grow as a Christian without the grace that Christ provides. The good news is that Christ has done something in space, time, and history that can change lives. This is the “gospel” the good news that something has transpired that can transform life. The wonder of the gospel, and the most freeing discovery sinners can ever make, is that God’s deepest commitment to be glorified and humanities deepest longing to be satisfied are not
in conflict, but in fact simultaneously consummated in his display of, and our delight in, the glory of God.\textsuperscript{161}

Piper says that, the goal of preaching is the glory of God reflected in the glad submission of the human heart. And the supremacy of God in preaching is secured by this fact: The one who satisfies gets the glory; the one who gives the pleasure is the treasure.\textsuperscript{162} The present era looks back on Christ’s completed work but also looks forward to the consummation of his work when Christ will come again, when there will appear “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1–22:5). At this time, the full glory of God will be on display for all of creation to see. According to Kim, “preaching the grace that only God in Christ provides is eminently practical. When we preach Christ from every passage of Scripture, we are preaching some facet of his person and/or work. Every biblical text will somehow illuminate the grace of Jesus, which is practical and pertinent for every hearer.”\textsuperscript{163}

\textbf{Fallen Human Condition}

Understanding humanities great need for a Savior and a proper picture of the glory of God, combined with God’s purpose of revealing his glory to humanity for the purpose of relationship, opens the opportunity for preachers to start from the right point and perspective.\textsuperscript{164}

Determining the purpose of a biblical text requires that every preacher begin with asking the

\textsuperscript{161} Piper, \textit{The Supremacy of God in Preaching}, 31.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Kim, 64.
\textsuperscript{164} According to McDill, “Effective inductive analysis of the text depends on asking and answering the right questions. A detective investigates a crime, an attorney defending a case, a physician dealing with a mysterious ailment—all will make careful observations and ask penetrating questions if they are to find the right answers. So, it is with Bible interpretation. If you ask the right questions, your research will follow the right paths and lead you to the information you need for understanding the text.” McDill, 52.
question, “Why did God the Holy Spirit inspire this text, and what aspect of humanity needs the illumination of God’s glory?” The greater intellectual and spiritual task is to discern the human concern that caused the Holy Spirit to inspire this aspect of Scripture so that God would be properly glorified by his people. Understanding and identifying a biblical passage’s purpose is the key to preaching. Until preachers have determined a passage’s purpose, they are not ready to preach its truths, even if they know many true facts about the text.

According to Walter L. Liefeld, “expository preaching is not simply a running commentary. By this, I mean a loosely connected string of thoughts, occasionally tied to the passage, which lacks homiletical structure or appropriate application.” Calvin Miller believes that expository preaching always assumes that the world is not quite right as it is, that where we are would be better served if we were somewhere else, and that the sermon has in mind how to

165 McDill continues, “Though the world of the Bible is different from our own, some things are the same. We open our Bibles with two issues already settled in our minds. First, we believe that God is the same now as he was in the days of the Bible accounts. We believe he is immutable, that he never changes. Therefore, his power and goodness and wisdom do not change. Second, we also believe that man is the same as he was then. His technology has changed so that now he uses a computer to keep his records, drives or flies to get where he wants to go, and carries a phone for instant communication to the world. But the nature of man has not changed. It is still a mixed nature-made in the image of God on the one hand but fallen into sin on the other and seriously damaged in that fall. So, as we read of the strange and foreign world of the Bible, we can recognize the personal dimension. The people described there are much like us. We see ourselves in them—in their hopes, their doubts, their struggles, their failures, and their faith. Their story is our story as we see God dealing with them in love and know that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So, their story is faith’s mirror image of our own.” Ibid.

166 Chapell explains, “Consideration of a passage’s purpose ultimately forces us to ask, why are these concerns addressed? What caused this account, these facts, or the recording of these ideas? What was the intent of the author? For what purpose did the Holy Spirit include these words in Scripture? Such questions force us to exegete the cause of a passage as well as its contents and to connect both to the lives of the people God calls us to shepherd with his truth.” Chapell, 48-49.

167 Ibid., 49.

168 According to Walter L. Liefeld, “Expository preaching is not a captioned survey of a passage. By this I mean the typical: ‘1. Saul’s Contention, 2. Saul’s Conversion, 3. Saul’s Commission’ (Acts 9:1-19). In my own circles I think I have heard more sermons of this than any other. They sound very biblical because they are based on a passage of Scripture. But their basic failure is that they tend to be descriptive rather than pastoral. They lack a clear goal or practical application. The congregation may be left without any true insights as to what the passage is really about, and without having received any clear teaching about God or themselves.” Walter L. Liefeld, New Testament Exposition: Text to Sermon (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989), 20-21.
J. Ellsworth Kalas holds that expository preachers try to relate to two audiences. Broadly speaking, there’s that body of people who are already committed to Christ to one degree or another, and then there are those who are marginal or as yet unreached. It is clear from the first two chapters of Genesis that human beings were first good as God created them. However, that good human condition is forever changed in chapter 3 of Genesis as God’s first created couple, by their own choosing, is tragically transformed into that of a fallen humanity. A major feature of any story is in its central conflict, the thing that goes wrong and needs to be fixed. The story of God (i.e. Scripture) is no different. This fallen human condition effects both believer and non-believer alike, due to the reality that now all

169 Calvin Miller explains, “In a highly individualistic world, not all of us want to go to the same place and many are more comfortable with where they are than they believe they would be with where the sermon wants to take them.” Calvin Miller, Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), 202.

170 According to Kalas, “We see the first group more often because they participate more regularly in worship and may also be in some study group or position of leadership. We shouldn’t assume, however, that all of them are fully committed to Christ. In truth, some of them are in church or in study or fellowship gatherings more out of habit than by the passion of convinced discipleship. For such individuals, church is what they do; the language is familiar to them and they don’t necessarily ask themselves why they ‘belong’ or to what degree they belong. The second group is made up of people who participate occasionally if at all. But if we have a heart for those outside the kingdom, this second group includes not only the people who appear occasionally on the radar of our church life but also numbers of people we’ve probably never met. We dare not neglect either of these groups.” Kalas, 53.

171 According to Bartholomew and Goheen, “The life of Adam and Eve is the life of שָׁלוֹם (Shalom is the Old Testament word for peace, meaning the rich, integrated, relational wholeness God intends for his creation). They walk with God, they have each other; the garden provides all they need as they till its fertile soil and prune its burgeoning plants. There is no storm cloud on this horizon, no hint of trouble to come.” Bartholomew and Goheen, 41.

172 Bartholomew and Goheen continue, “We all know from our own experience that the world we live in is deeply wounded, but what has caused it to be so? When we read about life in Eden, we long for our own lives to be like that. Why is our experience so different? Genesis 3 answers this question, though perhaps without giving us all the information we would like to have. We are not told where the talking serpent come from or who he is. (Only later in the Bible do we learn that this ‘creature’ is also knows as Satan; Revelation 12:9). How could such a creature disrupt God’s good creation? These questions are not answered, and they alert us to the mystery that surrounds the origin of evil in the creation. We should take this mystery seriously.” Ibid., 42.

173 Bartholomew and Goheen continue, “The entrance of sin into God’s perfect world is the cosmic conflict that Genesis describes. This calamity comes upon the creation soon after God forms it, threatening to mar the goodness of creation itself and to touch with evil every event coming after it. Genesis 3 describes this element of the biblical story, often called (simply and ominously) the story of ‘the fall.’” Ibid., 41.
people are cursed with this fallen condition.\textsuperscript{174} The need for a Savior and a solution to this fallen human condition looms large for every person on the planet, due to the connection that sin and the fallen condition have in brining all humanity together.\textsuperscript{175} God has provided His story as a way, via Scripture, to illuminate the truth of rescue and redemption that is brought by His grace through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Bryan Chapell understands this very same issue and rightly identifies the problem as the fallen condition focus. By assuring us that all Scripture has a fallen condition focus (FCF), God indicates his abiding care and underscores his preeminent status in preaching.\textsuperscript{176} God, as a loving, grace supplying, redeemer, refuses to leave his relationship built humanity on their own in their desperate, fallen human condition. Through the Scriptures, God has gifted humanity with the solution to its overarching problem, a problem that left to its own devices could not be remedied or rectified. The FCF present in every text demonstrates God’s refusal to leave his frail and sinful children without guide or defense in a world antagonistic to their spiritual well-being.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{174} According to Eugene Peterson, “A catastrophe has occurred. We are no longer in continuity with our good beginning. We have been separated from it by a disaster. We are also, of course, separated from our good end. We are, in other words, in the middle of a mess.” Eugene Peterson, \textit{Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity} (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 82-83.

\textsuperscript{175} Bartholomew and Goheen continue, “Part of being human is the freedom to choose. Even in God’s good creation, Adam and Eve’s freedom to love means that they may also choose not to love; hence, they may experience temptation. Adam and Eve can obey God, or they can defy him. They can yield to God’s law and enjoy life, or they can try and find their own way apart from his instructions and experience death. Adam and Eve are created beings, fully and wonderfully human as they live out their freedom under God’s reign, according to his rule of life. The temptation they face through the serpent is to assert their autonomy: to become a law unto themselves.” Bartholomew and Goheen, 42-43.

\textsuperscript{176} Chapell explains, “The corrupted state of our world and our beings cries for God’s aid. He responds with the truths of Scripture and gives us hope by focusing his grace on a facet of our fallen condition in every portion of his word. No text was written merely for those in the past; God intends for each passage to give us the “endurance and the encouragement” we need for today (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13). Preaching that is true to these purposes (1) focuses on the fallen condition that necessitated the writing if the passage and (2) uses the text’s features to explain how the Holy Spirit addresses that concern then and now. The Fallen Condition Focus (FCF) is the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or about whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage for God’s people to glorify and enjoy him.” Chapell, 50.

\textsuperscript{177} Chapell continue, “An FCF not only provides the human context needed for a passage’s explanation but also indicates that biblical solutions must be divine and not merely human. Since fallen creatures cannot correct or
Setting the tone of a sermon and identifying the purpose of the biblical text should be carefully and properly addressed and highlighted in preaching. As the preacher unfolds the message of the text, multiple purposes could arise (the problem of sin, separation from God, broken human relationships, etc.), each one being dealt with accordingly. Certain biblical texts offer at times a two and even three-fold purpose (the story of David and Goliath speaks to issues of trusting in God’s promises in the face of insurmountable odds; the reliance on Christ to fight and win the battles we face, and how faith has the ability to comfort even in the most difficult of situations and circumstances), but all Scripture ultimately points to the person and work of Christ. The main point and purpose of the biblical text should not be compromised at any point in the preparation or delivery of the sermon, and by understanding the proper place of the FCF will a preacher find the avenue to preach a sermon that is complete.

An FCF will remain faithful to a text and identify powerful purpose in a sermon if a preacher uses these five successive questions to develop the FCF: 1. What does the text say? 2. What spiritual concern(s) did the text address (in its context)? 3. What spiritual concerns do listeners share in common with those to (or about) whom the text was written? 4. What kind remove their own fallenness, identification of an FCF forces a sermon to honor God as the only source of hope rather than merely promoting human fix-it or behavior change. In technical terms, though an FCF requires a sermon to deal honestly and directly with the human concerns of the text, this focus simultaneously keeps the sermon from being anthropocentric. The acknowledgement of human fallenness that undergirds the text’s explanation and the sermon’s development automatically requires the preacher to acknowledge the bankruptcy of merely human efforts and to honor the wonders of divine provision.” Ibid., 50.

178 Chapell further confirms “There may also be a variety of purposes within a specific text. Still, a sermon’s unity requires a preacher to be selective and ordinarily to concentrate on a Scriptures passage’s main purpose. Ultimately, a sermon is about how a text says we are to respond biblically to the FCF as it is experienced in our lives-identifying the gracious means that God provides for us to deal with the human brokenness that deprives us of the full experience and expression of his glory.” Ibid., 50-51.

179 According to Chapell, “By identifying listeners’ mutual condition with the biblical writer, subject, and/or audience, we determine why the text was written, not just for biblical times but also for our time. We should realize, however, that the Holy Spirit does not introduce an FCF simply to inform us of a problem. Paul told Timothy that God inspires all Scripture to equip us for his work (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17). God expects us to act on the problem his Spirit reveals.” Ibid., 52.
of change is the text asking the hearer to make (cognitive, behavioral, in attitude, or in volition)?

5. How is the change necessitated because of the FCF? These questions are paramount for biblical preaching preparation, as the clear identification of a fallen condition focus automatically locks a preacher into a redemptive approach to the exposition of a biblical passage.

Application of the Fallen Human Condition in Preaching

Determining the Fallen Human Condition in a given Scriptural passage is key for Christ-centered sermons. Scripture has clear and absolute authority as the revelation of God, given by God, to all of humanity. Application helps the preacher to determine what information most strongly supports particular responses that the passage requires of listeners in light of this condition in the message. The Scriptures are not merely a collection of fables or stories to help encourage humanity to be better or do more, and they are not intended to only provide facts, figures, and information alone. If the application loses sight of the FCF, the message can degenerate into a handful of legalisms tacked onto randomly selected observations. Without

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181 Chapell continues, “Because each text was inspired to complete hears in some way, when preachers specify a text’s purpose, they are pressed to redemptive perspectives. From this perspective, listeners take on the appearance of Swiss cheese—they have holes in their spiritual being that God alone can fill. What determines whether a message is truly redemptive (and true to the scope of Scripture) is what the preacher specifies will fill the holes—mere human effort or divine provision. The simple step of making sure that they identify the spiritual hole (i.e. fallen condition) that a text addresses keeps preachers from offering solutions that are merely human responses. Fallen creatures cannot remedy true fallenness by an act of their will. Legalistic, moralistic, self-help messages become self-evident and self-defeating when a preacher begins with a strong awareness of the fallen state that is the burden of a text and the condition of the listeners.” Chapell, 299.


183 Chapell further clarifies, “The application points to the FCF saying, ‘This is what you must do about that problem, need, or fault on the basis of what the passage means.’ Preachers select explanatory arguments and facts from the infinite possibilities on the basis of how readily they will support the application. Application gives exposition a target on which to focus.” Chapell, 212.
building the exposition to support the application directed by the FCF, preachers could simply choose to comment on what is most prominent in their own thought. In other words, by not identifying an FCF that a text addresses, preachers often speak more about what is on their mind than what is in the text, even though they believe they are doing the opposite.184

The Scriptures, according to 2 Timothy 3:16, are to correct, instruct, and reprove. The purpose of Scripture is to reveal God’s story to broken humanity, with a result of human transformation, which comes through the person and work of Jesus Christ, all to the glory of God.185 Preaching without Christ is not Christian preaching.186 Christian Preaching with a Christ focus, however, creates the opportunity for life transformation of fallen humanity, which is accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit to continue to bring the Scriptures to life. Biblical preaching moves from exegetical commentary and doctrinal exposition, to life instruction.187 In order for Christ-centered preaching to be propagated, ministers will need to renounce their tendency to use the pulpit as a catchall, a place from which they attempt to do everything, and will need to return it to its proper place of proclaiming how (and how well) God reconciles

184 Ibid.

185 Chapell makes it clear, “Accurate exposition requires preachers to complete their sermon research by identifying an appropriate application that will focus the exposition according to a text’s priorities. Therefore, although preachers should not definitively determine application until completing their study of a passage (i.e. not deciding what a text requires before determining what it means) they should have the thrust if application clearly in mind before beginning sermon construction. If they start writing a message before determining what a sermon needs to accomplish, then the components of the message not appropriately geared toward the sermon’s goal. Application— at least its general direction—must precede final decisions about structure, exegetical emphases, wording, and even the tone of the message, or else a preacher will be designing a highway without knowing the destination.” Ibid., 212-213.


187 According to Chapell, “Such preaching exhorts as well as expounds because it recognizes that Scripture’s own goal is not merely to share information about God but to conform his people to the likeness of Jesus Christ. Preaching without application may serve the mind but preaching with application results in service to Christ. Application makes Jesus the source and the objective of a sermon’s exhortation as well as the focus of its explanation.” Chapell, 54.
himself to hopelessly lost sinners through the person and work of that beloved Son in whom he is well pleased. 188

Clear articulation of an FCF drives a message’s application and ensures the Christ-centeredness of a sermon. 189 Without a proper focus on the fallen human condition, preachers can struggle with tendency to direct listeners to a less Christ-centered message and a more anthropocentric focus of “do this” or “do that” completely missing the point of the total depravity of all humanity. For listeners to identify with Christ, they must understand the need that is placed on them at the moment of birth, the need for redemption that cannot be accomplished by anything they might try to think or do. Preachers should refrain from exclusively being information providers, but to remain focused on being God’s heralds of the good news of the person and work Jesus Christ, to a fallen and bankrupt world. Preachers are not simply ministering information; they are ministers of Christ’s transformation. Jesus intends to restore his people with his Word and is not greatly served by preachers who do not discern the transformation Scripture requires or communicate the means it offers. 190 Establishing the need of all humanity through the FCF can create and develop a sermon that glorifies God and brings

188 T. David Gordon explains, “A return to such Christ-centered preaching, however, probably cannot occur apart from cultivating the sensibility of reading texts closely (since it is the New Testament texts that teach us to preach Christ). And almost surely this change will not occur apart from cultivating a sensibility of the significant—because only a true sense of what is significant will cause a minister to realize that nothing in the entire history of human affairs is more significant than what the God-man has done; therefore, nothing should crowd the proclamation of Christ from the center of Christian Preaching.” T. David Gordon, Why Johnny Can’t Preach (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 92.

189 Chapel confirms, “The FCF marshals a sermon’s features toward a specific purpose and therefore helps a preacher see how to apply the information in the text. At the same, the fact that a message is focused on an aspect of our fallenness precludes simplistic, human-centered solutions. If we could fix the problem with our own efforts in our own strength, the we would not be truly fallen. Application that addresses an FCF clearly rooted in the textual situation necessarily directs people to the presence and power of the Savior as they seek to serve him.” Chapell., 54.

190 Ibid., 57.
about the necessary heart transformative work that only God can do, through those whom have
been called to be his mouthpiece.

Freedom from the Fallen Human Condition in Preaching

Preaching should be about the amazing news of the person and work of Jesus Christ by
God’s chosen messengers. The gospel is the very message of the essence of God, who embarks
on a rescue mission to all fallen humanity, with the goal of God’s reign and glory communicated
clearly to those who are in conflict with God, for the purpose of life transformation and the
redeeming of the eternal soul of those who cannot save themselves. The goal of preaching is
the glory of God in Christ reflected in the glad submission of his creation. This submission to
God fights hard in every human and further exasperates the fallen human condition, making
rebellion to God’s Word and His ways a common practice.

The remedy to the fallen human condition is the preaching of Christ, which through the
working of the Holy Spirit, has the ability to change the heart of the human and essentially
reverse the curse that was birthed in Genesis 3. Now that Christ has risen from the dead and is
seated at the right hand of the Father, the redemptive and transformative aspects of God’s
kingdom rest in the person and work of Christ.

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191 According to Chapell, “Theocentric preaching is Christ-centered preaching because to proclaim God as
he has revealed himself is to make known the providing nature and character that are eternally manifested in Christ
(Heb. 13:8). A focus on God’s redemptive activity sets the stage for Christ’s work, alerts the human heart to its
necessity, and/or exposes the divine character as Deliverer. A sermon remains expository and Christ-centered not
because it leapfrogs to Golgotha but because it locates the intent of a passage within the scope of God’s redemptive
work. Thus, the sermons purpose remains faithful to the text’s original aim of enabling the people of God to
understand his redemptive activity-predicting it, preparing to understand its nature, reflecting its need, and/or
detailing the results of Christ’s work in our lives.” Ibid., 304.

192 Piper, The Supremacy of God in Preaching, 34.

193 D.A. Carson, Jesus The Son of God (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 50.
identified and explained, the cure for this problem should continually focus on Christ. Because all authority is given to Christ in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18), and all of God’s sovereignty is now mediated through Christ (1 Cor. 15:24-28), Christ’s kingdom is inescapable.194 Anything other than Christ will only result in a legalistic, moral compulsion to try and do something, really anything to “feel” justified, which is exactly what the Gospel speaks against.195

Carson identifies, “Christ’s kingdom is regularly conceived of as that subset if his total reign under which there is transformed, eternal life. We cannot see or enter this kingdom apart from the new birth (John 3: 3, 5). This kingdom is already in operation, permeating this lost world the way yeast permeates a lump of dough (Matt. 13:33). It is the supreme treasure to be persuaded (Matt. 13:44-46). And at its consummation, every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).” Ibid., 50.

Chapell points out, “As unlikely as it seems, this perspective concerning the overall purpose of Scripture means that even if a preacher does not specifically mention an aspect of Christ’s earthly ministry in a sermon, it can still be Christ-centered. As long as a preacher explains the ways in which God uses a text to reveal his plan, purposes, and/or reasons for redemption, the sermon lends listeners away from human-centered religiosity. Exposition is Christ-centered when it discloses God’s essential nature as our Provider, Deliverer, and Sustainer whether or not Jesus is mentioned by name. By concentrating on what God is accomplishing with the record of every event, the account of every character, and the principles in every instruction, a preacher keeps a message from degenerating into mere human hero worship. God remains the hero of every text. This does not mean that biblical characters have no exemplary qualities for us to emulate (e.g., Rom. 15:4; Phil 3:17). We must understand, though, that when these positive qualities appear, grace is the cause (Rom. 11:36). When preachers place a text within the context of what God is revealing about his nature that provides redemption or about human nature that requires redemption, self-reliance vanishes.” Chapell, 303.
Chapter 3

Diagnosis and Evaluation of the Preaching Team Ministry

The preaching of the life-transforming message of the Gospel is the most important reason that churches exist today. Without the clear communication of the Gospel, lives cannot be changed, and relationships cannot be restored. The Gospel-centered preaching ministry that interprets and delivers the Bible as the Word of God must have a proper methodology to start from and be systematically designed specifically to be an easy and manageable process for study, in order for the correct message to be delivered from the pulpit. To help maintain Gospel-centered biblical preaching, the situation of team preaching needs to be surveyed, diagnosed, and evaluated.

Overview of the Survey Process

Purpose of the Survey

This survey was conducted via online questionnaire by interviewing full-time pastors at Pure Heart Church who are involved in some form of regular preaching ministry. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify the processes, structures, approaches and current methodologies of each of the preaching pastors, their perceived knowledge, understandings, and preconceptions regarding the practice of biblical study, interpretation, and application of homiletics in preparing gospel-centered messages. Throughout the history of Christendom, the efforts of the church to proclaim the good news of the Gospel, through talented preachers has not ceased. Nevertheless, it is not easy to determine whether the sermons proclaimed from the pulpit of Pure Heart Church can be called gospel-centered biblical preaching. Not all communication from the pulpit is
preaching and not all preaching is Christ-centered or Gospel-driven. The goal of every message delivered in the church should focus on the Gospel message and the centrality of Christ as that message. However, due to the influences of modern culture, the tendencies of the flesh to rebel, and the willingness of hearts to turn and trust in anything other than the Gospel, the boldness needed to acknowledge every human’s condition and to point out the absolute need and necessity of Christ to the world is essential.

In respect to this difficult truth, the revitalization of the purpose and practice from the pulpit is more urgently required today than ever. Accordingly, a survey to identify, diagnose, analyze, interpret and evaluate the current practice of a team preaching ministry was conducted. The purpose was in order to find ways to correct and encourage the church to move from its present condition. In this chapter, statistics and analysis were performed and evaluated based on the answers from survey respondents of Pure Heart who carry the amazing burden of biblical preaching in a large church ministry.

**Procedures of the Survey**

This survey was designed to be anonymous and was delivered in online format via Survey Monkey. Accordingly, while all of the respondents attend and serve in ministry at Pure Heart Church, to ensure the complete anonymity of the respondents, all the questions in the survey were structured to exclude personally identifiable information, such as name, age, sex, race, nationality, native language, address, phone number, email address, and the name of school/seminary attended. The questionnaire for this survey was divided into four sections and consisted of eighteen multiple-choice questions. The first three questions were profiling questions that characterized the respondents. These questions were designed to define a sample group, in order to help complete the analysis of other questions. The following five questions
were questions that investigated each of the preachers’ perceptions of the preaching ministry at Pure Heart. The next five questions examined the current state of the preaching ministry that is delivered in the field of ministry at Pure Heart. The last five questions examined how each preacher prepares for the sermons they deliver.

The sample groups presented and analyzed in this study were used as an indicator for more detailed analysis of the responses to the other questions. This provided a strong cross-section of categories such as the respondents’ position in church ministry, preaching philosophy, and experience. Due to the small sample size, time and resource limitations of this survey, it was difficult to fully reflect on all preachers and their ministries in Pure Heart Church solely by this one small sample group. Nevertheless, the analysis of this sample group provided interesting insights into the team preaching ministry of Pure Heart. In addition, several universal and applicable principles for preaching were found in this process.

Data Collection for the Survey

To collect data for this survey, a survey from Survey Monkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NGJCW83) was created and distributed via email link to the respondents. The data collection period for the questionnaire was from September 24, 2019 to October 31, 2019, about four weeks. Participants in the questionnaire were staff pastors of Pure Heart Church who regularly preached (at least a four times per year) in their current ministry. Participants were limited to those who could read and understand the questionnaire in English for the convenience of survey distribution. Five preachers were asked to participate in the survey via email and through direct contact from the Senior Pastor of Pure Heart Church. Only three of the five preachers participated in the survey and responded faithfully.
Respondents’ Profile of the Survey Research (Q1 ~ Q3)

To obtain the most accurate and insightful survey results, all respondents answered questions regarding their current ministry position. Preaching experience, preaching understanding, sermon preparation, and philosophy were also addressed. In this study, these indicators were not intended to distinguish respondents individually, but to extract a specific sample group from the same church to compare, contrast, and analyze the specific relationships that appear between each response and the different collective backgrounds of the respondent currently serving in some form of preaching ministry at Pure Heart Church. All the respondents in the survey were serving at Pure Heart Church in some form or capacity of preaching ministry, with all three being full-time pastoral staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions of the Respondents</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Pastoral Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay/Volunteer Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

196 Question 1. Are you a full-time pastoral staff member at Pure Heart Church?
Number of attendees in weekend worship services lead by respondents at Pure Heart197

The questionnaire provided to respondents focused on 5 different areas of attendance at Pure Heart Church. All 3 of the respondents (100%) indicated having more than 2,000 regular attendees in worship services. The respondents regularly preached in this same context. This data indicated that the respondents had large attendance numbers in the church ministry context of Pure Heart.

197 Question 2. How many people are regularly attending Weekend worship services in your preaching ministry?
Preaching frequency of the respondents

Two of the respondents (66.67%) answered that they were involved in some area of preaching ministry more than ten times per year. This was a slightly higher number than the one respondent who answered that they preach seven-to-nine times per year (33.33%). However, the difference between the sample group was small, considering that none of the respondents preached less than seven-to-nine times per year. Given these facts, the results of this survey can provide reasonable descriptions for the frequency and variety of preaching ministry that takes place at Pure Heart Church.

Table 3 - 3. Preaching Frequency in the Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 3 times per year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – 6 times per year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 – 9 times per year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times per year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3. How often do you preach at Pure Heart Church?
Survey Results on the Team Preaching Ministry

Awareness of the Team Preaching Ministry (Q4 ~ Q8)

Most important ministries of Pure Heart Church

From a practical standpoint, preaching is not the only effective ministry of Pure Heart Church, but one of a variety of ministries in the church. It is important to examine the interests of preachers in ministry, as often the pulpit leads and drives the mission and direction of a church. The answers of the respondents as preachers regarding the main ministry of the church are shown in Table 3-4. The results from this question were interesting, as only one respondent (33.33%) answered that preaching is the most important ministry. The ministry of discipleship was equal with one respondent (33.33%). Tied for third as the most important ministry among the answers was evangelism (33.33%). Coincidentally, all three ministries mentioned above are related to the ministry of teaching and preaching the Word of God. In other words, although all

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199 Question 4. What do you think are two of the most important ministries at Pure Heart Church?
the ministries mentioned in the question are essential to the church, this question showed that most pastors at Pure Heart are well aware that one of the most important ministries of the church today should be to teach and preach the Bible.

Table 3 - 4. Most Important Ministries of Pure Heart Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Children/Students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Discipleship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Fellowship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Food Pantry/Resource Center</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Healing/Recovery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Life Groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Local/Global Outreach</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ministry with the Deaf</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Pastoral Care/Prayer/Chaplains</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Preaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Serving</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Worship and Arts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 - 4. Most Important Ministries of Pure Heart Church
Most important purpose of preaching

There are various purposes associated with team preaching. The answers to the purpose of preaching from the preachers of Pure Heart Church in this survey were as follows (Table 3-8). A preacher who misunderstands the purpose of preaching cannot offer Christ-centered, Gospel-driven sermons. The obvious reason for preaching the Bible in this way is that the Bible was given to the preacher as God’s Word that must be proclaimed. Correctly proclaiming God’s Word, and for the right reasons, is essential. Unexpectedly, two of the respondents (66.67%) answered that interpreting and teaching the Bible correctly was the essential and core purpose of preaching, while one respondent identified that examining the solutions to the problems/worries in life that the congregation is experiencing, and to give hope/consolation was most important. Both of the areas chosen by the respondents can be regarded as responses preachers who clearly recognize the purpose of preaching would offer.

Table 3 - 5. Most Important Purpose of Preaching

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>Correctly interpreting and teaching the Bible as the Word of God, in order to fulfill the essential and core missiology of the church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>Defending the challenges of worldviews that seek to break down both the authority of the Bible and Christian doctrine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>Encouraging and promoting church growth by uplifting the faith of the congregation and strengthening communal solidarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Examining solutions to the problems/worries in life that the congregation is experiencing and to give hope/consolation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>Presenting moral, ethical, and righteous models of this present life to the congregation, in order to give hope and confidence in the afterlife.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5. What do you think is the most important purpose of preaching?
Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven preaching

In order to assess the understanding of Christ-centered, Gospel-driven preaching, the Pure Heart respondents were asked to give their best definition of said preaching. Interestingly, all three respondents defined preaching the gospel as Christ-centered, Gospel-driven preaching without any variation. Astonishingly, no other choices were selected for this question. This helps to show that each of the respondents essentially agree with and adhere to an understanding of Christ-centered, Gospel-driven preaching.

Table 3 - 6. Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven Preaching

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>All preaching that the pastor preaches.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Encouraging church growth</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Explaining every concept of the selected text(s).</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Giving hope and consolation to the congregation.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Pointing out sin and urging repentance.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Preaching in which the Bible is quoted.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 6. How would you define Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven preaching?
Essential principles of biblical interpretation

Christ-centered, Gospel-driven preaching comes from the right interpretation of the Bible. The interest in the biblical interpretative methodology relates to the quality of the preaching ministry. Therefore, the preacher should be able to learn and deal with some of the various and important interpretive methodologies for biblical interpretation. For the purpose of this survey, nine different interpretive methods were identified and explained. The respondents were asked what they regarded as the most important principles of biblical interpretation. In order to help the respondents to understand each interpretive method, a brief explanation was provided for each interpretive methodology. As a result, the following answers were obtained as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preaching the selected text line-by-line, precept upon precept, from beginning to end.</th>
<th>0 (0.0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Proclaiming the Gospel</td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Teaching Christian doctrines with the Scripture.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Teaching moral and ethical lessons and wisdoms from the text.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 - 6. Christ-Centered, Gospel Driven Preaching

202 Question 7. What do you think are five of the most essential principles of biblical interpretation?
shown in Table 3-7. As shown in the response results, the principle of a Literal Interpretation ranked first at 66.67%, with the Redemptive-Historical Interpretation (33.33%) in second. Allegorical, Figurative, Historical-Grammatical, Rhetorical, Structural, Theological, and Typological all had no responses in the survey.

Table 3-7. The Most Essential Principles of Biblical Interpretation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allegorical</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figurative</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical-Grammatical</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal</td>
<td>2 (66.67%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redemptive-Historical</td>
<td>1 (33.33%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typological</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 - 7. The Most Essential Principles of Biblical Interpretation
Most crucial element in preaching

Besides the most essential principles of biblical interpretation, respondents were also asked about the most crucial element in preaching. This is a very important question because the discussion of how to determine what is most important in preaching can often determine the method of preaching. To be specific, two of the respondents (66.67%) answered and agreed that the most crucial element in preaching is that the concept comes from the biblical text. However, one respondent (33.33%) said that the passage controls/guides the sermon. All three of the respondents do therefore agree that the least crucial elements in preaching are that the concepts are applied by the preacher and to the audience, and that the preacher communicates an idea, which takes into account that preaching comes from the biblical text and controls/guides the sermon.

Table 3 - 8. Most Crucial Element in Preaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The passage controls/guides the sermon</th>
<th>1 (33.33%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The preacher communicates an idea</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The concept comes from the biblical text</td>
<td>2 (66.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The concept is applied to the preacher</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The concept is applied to the audience</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

203 Question 8. What element is the most crucial element in preaching?
**General Situations of the Team Preaching Ministry (Q9 ~ Q13)**

Number of sermons per month

Pure Heart is a church with thousands of weekly attendants in worship services, which requires multiple services on multiple days of the week. Pure Heart utilizes Saturday nights and Sunday mornings as their delivery times of corporate preaching. Thus, to examine the distribution of preaching responsibilities on team preachers, the number of preaching sessions in a month was surveyed as shown in Table 3-9. Of the respondents, two (66.67%) preached sermons at least once a week. For comparison, the other respondent (33.33%) answered that they preach four times a week. These facts indicate that there is a good amount of preaching on a given week at Pure Heart, and that preaching responsibilities are delegated out to multiple staff pastors, providing relief to each of the preaching team pastors.

204 Question 9. How many sermons do you usually preach in a month?
Table 3 - 9. Number of Sermons per Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Sermons</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 times</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 times</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time spent in sermon preparation

Preparation for a sermon usually takes a significant amount of time. Interpretation and in-depth study, though very necessary, are also very time-consuming endeavors. In this regard, it is encouraging that 2 of respondents (66.67%) answered that they normally spent at least eleven hours preparing a sermon. The remaining respondent (33.33%) identified 6-10 hours of preparation time. This shows that Pure Heart preachers are engaging in significant sermon preparation.

Figure 3 – 9. Number of Sermons per Month

Question 10. How much time do you average each week in preparing sermons?
preparation time and not neglecting a vital element of their preaching ministry, while also leaving ample time to devote to their other ministry responsibilities.

Table 3 -10. Time Spent in Sermon Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 5 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15 hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 - 10. Time Spent in Sermon Preparation

Satisfaction with finished sermons

Preparing a sermon is a great responsibility and delivering the sermon that has had the appropriate amount of time placed into it should be the preacher's joy. As the preacher makes

206 Question 11. How satisfied are you with your finished sermons?
efforts to prepare a sermon, the self-satisfaction of delivering the sermon should be great. Table 3-11 indicates the respondents’ level of satisfaction with their sermons. All three of the respondents (100%) said that they were satisfied with their finished sermons. None of the respondents felt very satisfied with their finished sermons. All three respondents also did not answer below satisfied. This data leads us to believe that the amount of time spent in preparation and in-depth study could be satisfactory for team preachers at Pure Heart Church.

Table 3 - 11. Satisfaction with Finished Sermons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 - 11. Satisfaction with Finished Sermons
Struggle with sermon preparation

Respondents were asked how often they felt that they struggled in sermon preparation. All three of the respondents (100%) marked that they sometimes struggle with sermon preparation. Their responses follow (Table 3-12) and show a consistency to arrive right in the middle of the road with sometimes. This data helps to shape the potential future training within the CGES outline, in an attempt to lower the sermon struggle for each member of the preaching team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Struggle with Sermon Preparation</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 -12. Struggle with Sermon Preparation

207 Question 12. How often do you struggle with preparing a sermon?
Greatest problem faced while preparing a sermon

In the survey, there was a question about the greatest problem a preacher might experience during sermon preparation. The largest group of answers, at 66.67% of (2 respondents), was the amount of time involved in preparation. The remaining respondent (33.33%) identified that developing or writing a sermon outline was the greatest problem faced. As a result, one can conclude that the preachers’ problems in preparing sermons generally fall into the categories of time and writing of the sermon. This data helps to illuminate the need for the CGES outline, as it is designed to save preachers time in preparation and give them a working outline to help in the writing of the sermon.

Table 3 - 13. Greatest Problem Faced while Preparing a Sermon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greatest Problem Faced while Preparing a Sermon</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The amount of time involved in preparation</td>
<td>2 (66.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Selecting a text to preach</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Finding meaningful sermon points</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Developing or writing a sermon outline</td>
<td>1 (33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Finding outside materials to support your sermon</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13. What is the greatest problem you face in preparing your sermon?
Practical Efforts for the Team Preaching Ministry (Q14 ~ Q18)

How to choose a preaching text or topic

Preparation for preaching begins with selecting a text or topic from which to preach from. In the question related to selecting a topic/text, the answers of the respondents demonstrated two major categories. The first category (2 of the respondents), included preachers who preach according to a pre-established preaching plan based on a series or one or more books of the Bible divided by a certain amount. The other respondent established a specific preaching plan by selecting a topic and then looking for related Scriptures based on the situations and problems of the congregation. According to the results shown in Table 3-14, 66.67% of respondents selected B. These answers showed that the preacher usually determined the text or topic of a sermon according to a pre-established preaching plan, which establishes a pattern of preaching that is most followed at Pure Heart. The other 33.33% selected E. These results show that preaching according to the situations and problems of the congregation helped to drive the sermon.
preparation, which in turn establishes that a pre-established preaching plan is not currently the standard or requirement for the Pure Heart preaching team.

Table 3 - 14. How to Choose a Preaching Text or Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Preaching a text that I have personally been reading and/or studying in my personal growth time.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Preaching according to a pre-established preaching plan based on a series of one or more books of the Bible divided by a certain amount.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Preaching based on an outside curriculum that has been prepared and purchased.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Selecting a topic and then looking for related Scriptures based on recent social trends or issues.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Selecting a topic and then looking for related Scriptures based on the situations and problems of the congregation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Selecting a biblical text freely and then determining a sermon topic that supports the text.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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</table>

Figure 3 - 14. How to Choose a Preaching Text or Topic
Most important factor when preparing a sermon

The preacher is tasked with transferring the message of the Bible to the sermon, for God’s glory and the hearers’ life-transformation. In order to understand the Bible clearly and correctly, the preacher should engage in the study of the text. Respondents were asked what the most important aspect of sermon preparation was. Their responses to the question are summarized in Table 3-15. According to the results of the survey, all three of respondents (100%) selected connecting the biblical world to a current situation, circumstance, or context. Interestingly, none of the respondents found that searching for the person and work of Jesus Christ in the text was most important. This means that respondents felt that it was inappropriate or unnatural to link specific Christian doctrines, the Nature of God, and most importantly Jesus Christ with the biblical text. From this data, one could argue that the primary focus of Pure Heart preaching centers around situational application.

|   | Connecting the biblical world and text to a current situation, circumstance or context. |   | Searching for a specific Christian doctrine from the text. |   | Searching for something in the text that reveals the Nature of God. |   | Searching for the person and work of Jesus Christ in the text. |   | Studying exegesis or a commentary with the text |   |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---|________________________________________________________________|---|---------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| A | 3 (100%)                                                                                                                        | B | 0 (0.0%)                                                                | C | 0 (0.0%)                                                                 | D | 0 (0.0%)                                                                 | E | 0 (0.0%)                                                                 |   |

Table 3 - 15. The Most Important Factor in Preparing a Sermon

210 Question 15. What do you think is the most important factor when preparing a sermon?
Versatility in the biblical languages

The interest in the original biblical languages such as Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic when studying the biblical text is vitally important for preachers. Translated version of the Bible often fail fully describe the meanings and expressions found in the original languages. This question revealed that the respondents felt they were unable to adequately use the original languages on their own to prepare sermons and must rely on the use of helps. Their position regarding the importance of understanding biblical languages and their use of the languages in sermon preparation are shown in Table 3-16. According to the results of the survey, all three of the respondents (100%) selected using a dictionary of the original languages to search for the meaning of important words during sermon preparation. Pure Heart preachers had a certain knowledge about the original languages and could research several specific words, phrases and

211 Question 16. How versatile are you in the original biblical languages such as Greek or Hebrew?
clauses, but the original languages of the Bible were still difficult for them to use properly and in their entirety.

Table 3 - 16. Versatility in the Biblical Languages

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>I don’t know much of the original languages at all, and I don’t think I need to know them.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I don’t know much of the original languages at all, but I think I need to know them.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>I prepare sermons by using a dictionary of the original languages to search for meaning of important words.</td>
<td>3 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>I prepare sermons by studying about one or two verses that I consider important in the original languages.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>I prepare sermons by trying to read and understand most of the text in the original languages.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>I prepare sermons by examining the expression of the original text in detailed and analyzing the form and structure of its syntax.</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 - 16. Versatility in the Biblical Languages
A preacher’s knowledge, understanding and ability to grasp and use the original biblical languages correctly is incredibly helpful in Bible interpretation. However (from the facts thus far), Pure Heart preachers are not proficient in the original biblical languages. Thus, a question related to the usefulness of the original biblical languages was given in the survey. According to the survey, 66.67% of respondents agreed with the statement that the original languages of the Bible are helpful for preparing biblical preaching, although these preachers were admittedly not overly proficient in the original biblical languages. The other respondent was unsure of whether or not reading and studying the Bible in the original languages was helpful in preaching preparation, which could point to a lack of knowledge, skill or study experience regarding the original languages of the Bible. Based on the information ascertained from this study question, it is clear that the majority of Pure Heart Church preachers do believe or place high value on the knowledge of and ability to use the original biblical languages as a necessary piece in preaching preparation.

Table 3 - 17. Original Languages in Preaching Preparation

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(66.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
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212 Question 17. Would you agree that reading and studying the Bible in the original languages is helpful in preaching preparation?
Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons

The ability to purposefully look for and take the necessary steps to be prepared for sermon preparation is a task that takes effort and commitment from every preacher. From the responses in this survey, it is clear that the preachers at Pure Heart Church are aware of what they know and how they approach sermon preparation. What was also revealed is that they could use help in continuing to be molded and shaped to be sharper at their craft. In that respect, it is incredibly encouraging to find that 100% of the respondents answered the final question in this survey with a resounding “Yes” when asked if they would be interested in participating in further effective and helpful means for preparing biblical preaching. This data shows that the CGES outline could be of usefulness to the members of the preaching team.

Table 3 - 18. Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

213 Question 18. If you have a chance to learn more effective, helpful methods for preparing biblical preaching, would you like to participate?
This survey was conducted with the pastors from Pure Heart Church and consisted of three major parts related to the current team preaching ministry: the awareness of the team preaching ministry, the general situations of the team preaching ministry, and the practical efforts for the team preaching ministry. Through these, the motivation and basis for this thesis project were derived, and a practical solution was considered.

Evaluating Responses for the Awareness of the Team Preaching Ministry

All three of the pastors surveyed agreed that preaching and teaching the Bible was an important ministry of the church. However, only one of the pastors felt that preaching was the most important ministry of the church. Discipleship and Evangelism were both considered most important by the other two respondents, which makes sense due to the fact that both discipleship...
and evangelism have at their core, and require, teaching from the Scriptures. So, while we cannot say that the pastors of Pure Heart all agree that preaching is the most important ministry of the church, we can say that all of the pastors agree that the ministries of the church should be influenced by the Scriptures. Due to the vast differences in the respondent’s answers however, it is difficult to conclude that preaching drives the mission and direction of Pure Heart.

The ultimate reason to preach in the church is to proclaim the Gospel message. No other message brings life, forgiveness, restoration, and transformation. No other message should be communicated, as the mission of the church should be to introduce people to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Conveying this message through sound and proper homiletical methods helps to provide evidence of the position of the pastors in regard to the gospel message. Due to the fact that interpreting and teaching the Bible correctly, to give hope and offer solutions to the congregation’s problems, were the primary purposes identified by the respondents, we can conclude that the Pure Heart pastors clearly recognize the purpose of preaching.

All three of the preachers also had a clear understanding of Christ-centered, Gospel-driven preaching. Each of the respondents defined proclaiming the Gospel as the key element of Christ-centered, Gospel-driven preaching without any variation. Thus, we find that each of the preachers have some understanding of the importance of preaching the Gospel, as well as how to identify the core elements in a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven approach to preaching. This data is interesting, as not all of the respondents agreed that preaching was the most important ministry at Pure Heart.

Since the Gospel message is the key in preaching, Christ-centered, Gospel-driven preaching should come from the right interpretation of the Bible. The interest in the biblical interpretative methodology relates to the quality of the preaching ministry. Therefore, the
preacher should be able to learn and deal with some of the various and important interpretive methodologies for biblical interpretation. All three preachers had knowledge of various biblical interpretive principles and methodologies. The proper and most universal biblical interpretation principle should consider the meaning of the text itself, and the redemptive-historical context in which the text was given, which provides insights into the proper proclamation of the Gospel, through Jesus Christ, in the text.

The emphasis on the literal interpretation, followed by the redemptive-historical interpretation will help preachers avoid unnecessary prejudices and misconceptions that could greatly interfere with the Gospel message. Thus, to correctly and effectively draw out Christ and the Gospel from the biblical text, the preacher must have a grasp of the basic meaning in/of the biblical text. Next, they should grasp the redemptive-historical meaning, as both are necessary for the proclamation of a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven message. In this regard, there is a need for the further fleshing out and development of practical and specific guidelines for the preparation of biblical sermons that center on Christ and the Gospel.

Evaluating Responses for the General Situation of the Team Preaching Ministry

As mentioned, Pure Heart is a large that utilizes the weekend services to provide the majority of the preaching that helps to drive the mission, vision and values of the church. The survey responses reveal that a good amount of preaching happens during each weekend and that the preachers at Pure Heart have multiple opportunities during each month to preach. Also, the preaching responsibilities are delegate out to create a good balance of both opportunity and relief for those in the various preaching ministries. By utilizing the Saturday night and Sunday morning services, the preaching ministry and the preaching pastors are able have multiple
opportunities to study, prepare, and deliver messages that help to guide people to Christ through the Gospel.

In regard to the amount of time spent by the Pure Heart pastors to sermon study and preparation, the preaching pastors exhibited a significant amount of time dedicated to preparation of their sermons. Finding a balance between both study time and their other primary ministry roles is an area that the preaching pastor’s do well. From the survey results we find that the preaching pastors are not neglecting their other ministry duties, and yet are able to devote a significant and necessary amount of time each week to study and sermon preparation. These figures are incredibly encouraging as balance in ministry is of extreme importance, especially in a church the size of Pure Heart.

The level of satisfaction with the finished sermon from the Pure Heart pastors was not surprising, as each of the respondents claims identified that they were satisfied with their sermons. What was surprising was that none of the respondents felt that they were ever very satisfied with their finished sermons, even though they identified that they all put in a significant amount of time in study and preparation. The respondents also did not feel unsure, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with their finished sermons, providing enough room and opportunity for growth in their finished sermons, while not having to work up from a deficit. Since all three respondents did not answer below satisfied, this leads us to believe that the amount of time spent in preparation and in-depth study could be satisfactory for preachers at Pure Heart Church, but also opens the opportunity to examine if more time spent in preparation could change the respondents feelings about their level of satisfaction with the finished sermon outline.

The amount of struggle that the respondents experienced during sermon preparation fell into the sometimes category, which is consistent with the issues discussed above. From the
survey, the sometimes designation falls directly in the middle of the five options listed for the respondents to choose from. The fact that all three of the respondents answered the same way speaks to the symmetry and balance that is found in the team preaching ministry at Pure Heart. This again points out the comfortability that each of the preachers have in their preaching study and preparation, while also opening an opportunity for further and future growth.

The categories that the respondents felt they fell into during sermon preparation in regard to the greatest problem faced while preparing a sermon were the amount of time involved in preparation and the development or writing of the sermon. These two categories reveal that having a streamlined process for sermon preparation, via an outline template that pastors could work from in their preparation time would be highly valued, extremely relevant, and incredibly helpful in the sermon preparation process. By offering an outline template that each member of the preaching team could utilize in their sermon preparation, the satisfaction, time spent, and greatest challenge faced in sermon preparation could all be elevated. Doing so could afford each of the preaching pastors the opportunity to spend more quality time in study, while also opening up further opportunities for time management in their other respective ministries.

Evaluating Responses for the Practical Efforts for the Team Preaching Ministry

The results concerning how the preachers choose a preaching text or topic show that having a pre-established preaching plan is a somewhat effective strategy for sermon preparation. By selecting a topic related to the situations and problems of the congregation, shows that a current pre-established preaching plan is not currently the standard or requirement for the preaching team. Based on the previous results, however, these aspects may not be the most effective way in which the preachers could approach sermon preparation. Because all of the
respondents have identified only a satisfied feeling about their finished sermons, another method of preparation could be introduced and potentially implemented. Due to the fact that each of the respondent’s responses are closely tied together, creating a universal sermon template for the pastors at Pure Heart Church could offer preachers an opportunity to see and feel that their preaching preparation time could be much more enjoyable than previous plans or approaches.

According to the results of the survey, all three of the respondents selected connecting the biblical world to a current situation, circumstance, or context as most important. Interestingly, none of the respondents found that searching for the person and work of Jesus Christ in the text was most important. This means that respondents felt that it was inappropriate or unnatural to link specific Christian doctrines, the Nature of God, and most importantly Jesus Christ with biblical texts. From this data, one could argue that the primary focus of Pure Heart preaching centers around situational application, which would fall in line with the above-mentioned responses.

The positives that could potentially come from this approach could be connecting with people in the situations and circumstances that they are currently in, which could help the audience feel more connected to the Bible, the church, and the preacher. Also, this approach could help to establish a certain climate in the church, therefore drawing people of similar interests, with similar issues and situations into a larger community for help, comfort, and healing. The negatives that could potentially arise from this approach could be leaving Jesus Christ out of people’s lives and creating a culture where hurting people find comfort in relying on other hurting people to help them, which only provides a temporary solution to the pressing issues in the current church culture and climate. Also, when the focus of health and help is not centered around Jesus Christ and the Gospel, people have a tendency to look to anything and
everything else first, neglecting the very help that is given in the Scriptures and available through
the person and work of Christ. Finding a balance between assessing people’s felt needs while
also leading them to Christ in the particular text is a task that takes time, effort and direction,
which is exactly why a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven template should be incorporated into the
Pure Heart sermon preparation time.

A preacher’s knowledge, understanding and ability to grasp and use the original biblical
languages correctly is incredibly helpful in Bible interpretation. According to the results of the
survey, all three of the respondents selected using a dictionary of the original languages to search
for the meaning of important words during sermon preparation. Pure Heart preachers had a
certain knowledge about the original languages and could research several specific words,
phrases, and clauses, but the original languages of the Bible were still difficult for them to use
properly and in their entirety. However (from the responses thus far), Pure Heart preachers are
not proficient in the original biblical languages. Thus, a question related to the usefulness of the
original biblical languages was given in the survey. The majority of the respondents agree with
the statement that the original languages of the Bible are helpful for preparing biblical preaching,
although these preachers were admittedly not overly proficient in the original biblical languages.
The other respondent was unsure of whether or not reading and studying the Bible in the original
languages was helpful in preaching preparation, which could point to a lack of knowledge, skill
or study experience regarding the original languages of the Bible. From the information
ascertained from this study question, it is clear that the majority of Pure Heart preachers do
believe and place value on the knowledge of and ability to use the original biblical languages as
a necessary piece in preaching preparation, however, the lack of knowledge, skill or study
experience regarding the original languages can often interfere with preaching preparation.
In conclusion, the ability to purposefully look for and take the necessary steps to be prepared for sermon preparation is a task that takes effort and commitment from every preacher. From the responses in this survey, it is clear that the preachers at Pure Heart are aware of what they know and how they approach sermon preparation. Also revealed is that they could use help in continuing to be molded and shaped to be sharper at their craft. In that respect, it is incredibly encouraging to find that all of the respondents answered the final question in this survey with a resounding “Yes” when asked if they would be interested and participate in further effective and helpful means for preparing biblical preaching.

**Preparation for a Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven Team Preaching Ministry**

This survey revealed that preachers at Pure Heart Church find that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was the most important aspect of preaching preparation and sermon delivery. Several problems were seen in the process of sermon preparation. In particular, the time spent in preparation, the method of preparation, and the satisfaction of the finished sermon by the preachers. In order to more effectively guide the Pure Heart preachers into an effective homiletic process of sermon preparation: first, proper understanding and emphasis should be focused on the person and work of Christ in all sermon preparation and delivery; second, an intentional and deliberate guide to help preachers identify and draw out the Gospel in every sermon they prepare.

**Conditions for a Christ-Centered, Gospel Driven Methodology**

These are the conditions required for a proper methodology of preparing Christ-centered, Gospel driven sermons for a team preaching ministry. First, Christ should be the center of all
Scripture and the main thing of preaching. Many other identifying characteristics and attributes of God can be seen in the person and work of Christ. The Old Testament has much to communicate about Jesus as prophet, priest, and king and preachers should have these truth’s locked in when approaching preaching of the Old Testament. The New Testament, then, is the culmination of what the Old Testament promises, and throughout the New Testament we see both the four acts (Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration) of the story of God, and the full revelation of God’s plan and chosen means of accomplishing His mission. As both fully human and fully divine, the revealed Christ is both the creator and sustainer of life and should be the focus of all preaching.

Second, the Gospel message of salvation should be incorporated into all of preaching as well. The Gospel is what moves fallen sinners into faithful servants of Christ. The Gospel is the means in which God has chosen to redeem fallen humanity, and the message of the Gospel can be found in every section of Scripture. The four acts (Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration) of the story of God all contain elements of the message of the Gospel, so preachers should have no problem creatively moving the sermon from finding Jesus in the text, to explaining how the Gospel translates into that specific text. The goal should be what God, through the person of Christ, has done, is doing, and will do. This is the Gospel, as the Gospel reveals the person and work of Christ and how God accomplishes the salvation and restoration of people and their relationship with Himself.

Finally, both of these elements are essential for preaching. Preaching the message of the Gospel that has been ushered in by the person and work of Christ is a message that people need to hear. Being able to create a sermon outline that specifically asks the correct questions is key, so in order to ask the right questions and come to a real and viable conclusion, preachers should
start and finish with the Gospel and Jesus Christ. This approach to sermon preparation should not deviate from the subject of the biblical text, should unite all elements of the text, should reveal their meanings, and should point to the Gospel and Jesus Christ.

Conditions for a Christ-Centered, Gospel Driven Preparation Guide

Based on the guidelines for a proper Christ-centered, Gospel-driven methodology presented above, to provide an effective and systematic guide for preachers to utilize in sermon preparation, the following points should be considered. First, such a guide must cover all the practical steps of proper homiletics, hermeneutics, and interpretation in regard to the sermon preparation process. From the moment the preacher selects a topic or text from the Scriptures, the focus should be on finding Christ and the Gospel message in the text or topic. This cannot be an afterthought but must be at the heart of the message from the very beginning.

Second, the outline should be an easy and simple process to implement with a well-organized system of clearly defined sequences and steps, so that all the steps of preparing sermons should be seamlessly connected to each other (i.e. Gospel and Christ). Third, it should be easily applicable through solid and practical steps. To accomplish this, each step of the entire process should be simple, and not be too difficult, complicated, or complex. Regardless of how solid the methodology is, if the usefulness of the process is too time consuming, difficult to grasp or uncomfortable to apply practically to the preparation of a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven sermon, the preaching and preacher can suffer.
Chapter Four

Preaching the Gospel Through All of Scripture

The Gospel is the ultimate plan and proclamation of all that God has, is, and will be doing in the universe. The Gospel is the heart of the Bible. Everything in Scripture is either preparation for the Gospel, presentation of the Gospel, or participation in the Gospel. The Scriptures speak of God’s actions, from before creation to the final act of restoration in the future. The Bible is essentially a record of the acts of God. The focus of the Scriptures is to furnish us with a clear record of the redemptive actions God has done, while also providing insights into who God is and what God is like, as the record of God’s actions found in Scripture help to bring forth the proper understanding of the Trinitarian God and His actions. Its purpose is not to supply us with a compendium of timeless truths, but to tell us what God has done. It is not an unabridged collection of ethical and religious maxims, but a chronicle of


216 According to Carl F.H. Henry, “Christianity manifests its superiority by providing valid propositional information: God is sovereign, personal Spirit: he is causally related to the universe as the Creator of man and the world: he reveals his will intelligibly to chosen prophets and apostles: despite man’s moral revolt he shows his love in the offer of redemption: he is supremely revealed in Jesus Christ in once-for-all incarnation: he has coped decisively with the problem of human sin in the death and resurrection and ascension of the incarnate Logos.” Carl F.H. Henry, God, Revelation, and Authority (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 1999), 69.

217 Henry further explains, “Christianity is a religion of redemption, and it is equally an ethics of salvation. Christian salvation is no unmoral and unspiritual scheme. From start to finish, in and through the atonement, its ideal life is a life of vital ethical experience through a living union with Christ. While it may be true that examples can be found of those who presume on Divine goodness by living a life of unholiness while they fool themselves with the hope that they will escape the consequences of their sins through Christ’s sacrifice, this is not characteristic of the evangelical temper. Note the sobering word of James: “show me your works and I will show you your faith” (Jas. 2:18). The atonement is regarded as God’s counterstroke to sin. While the penal theory does not start out with the subjective significance of the atonement, nonetheless it firmly insists that the atonement must directly touch and transform the moral life of man.” Carl F.H. Henry, Christian Personal Ethics (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1977), 375.
God’s repeated interventions on behalf of man. God reveals Himself in redemptive activity, and this activity reaches its supreme climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is here that God’s self-disclosure bursts forth with unexcelled and unprecedented clarity.  

The revelation of God’s actions must be revealed if life transformation is going to take place. Revelation cannot take place in a vacuum, and there is no such thing as a true self-disclosure apart from its apprehension by another. William Temple speaks of revelation as consisting in “the intercourse of mind and event.” Emil Brunner concludes, “The fact of the illumination is therefore an integral part of the process of revelation.” The nature of proclamation and revelation intersect as they partake of the same nature. God reveals Himself in His actions and the redemptive activity of God in Christ Jesus is at the very heart of the kerygma. At this vital point, revelation and proclamation become one. Preaching is revelation. According to John Knox, “Preaching does more than recount and explain the ancient event. The Spirit makes the ancient event in a very real sense an event even now transpiring, and the preaching is a medium of the Spirit’s action in doing so. In the preaching, when it is truly itself, the event is continuing or is recurring. God’s revealing action in Christ is, still or again, actually taking place.” The essential nature of preaching, then, is the connecting of God’s redemptive activity.

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218 Ibid, 152.  
219 Ibid.  
222 According to Mounce, “We went on to say that revelation is the interplay between event and personal apprehension. It is incomplete without the response of faith. Thus, the problem becomes, how can God reveal Himself to me in the present through an event which took place in the past? How can revelation, which by definition is limited to the present, employ the once-for-all Self-disclosure of God in history? The answer lies in the distinctive nature of preaching. As the preacher proclaims the divine act of redemption, the barriers of time are somehow transcended, and the supreme event of the past is once again taking place. God’s historic Self Disclosure has become a present actuality.” Mounce, 152.  
actions, through the person and work of Christ, combined with or to humanities awareness of these actions and works. 224

Scripture has a clear and distinct focus on the problem humanity has with evil. A crisis event confronts every human with this truth, which can be remedied by and through the preaching of the Gospel, which is God’s action of offering broken humanity the opportunity to find rescue. 225 The Gospel message points humanity to the saving act of God and the genuineness of His love and forgiveness. It is this message that should be centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ, for humanity to fully embrace the action behind God’s work. The process of action and response is preaching, as preaching creates the connection for humanity to be rescued from itself and its newfound liberation in the redemption offered by the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. 226

The essential nature of the Gospel message is often hindered by humanities rebellion and lack of desire to hear the message, not necessarily the incapacity to grasp the absolute need for the saving message. It is not so much a question of not being able to understand, as it is of not

224 Mounce adds, “Thus, preaching is that timeless link between God’s great redemptive Act and man’s apprehension of it. It is the medium through which God contemporizes His historic Self disclosure and offers man the opportunity to respond in faith. Without response, revelation is incomplete. Without preaching, God’s mighty act remains an event in the past. What man desperately needs is a redemptive encounter in the ever present Now. Preaching answers to thus need by contemporizing the past and moving the individual to respond in faith. The contemporaneity of what took place long ago is an ultimate and inescapable miracle of Christianity. It defies explanation.” Mounce, 153.

225 According to Mounce, “We now more correctly understand preaching in terms of a crisis experience. It is a divine invasion that confronts man with external issues and demands decision. The basic presupposition of all Biblical preaching is that man is enslaved to evil. When the Gospel comes, it comes as deliverance. In the proclamation man is personally addressed by the eternal Word of God. He is offered deliverance. God speaks: man must respond. The demand for decision is inescapable.” Ibid., 154-155.

226 Mounce further explains, “The ultimate test of the genuineness of preaching is, does it really convey the saving action of God? A sermon may be true, interesting, and even vitally important, but unless something actually takes place, it is not preaching. True preaching is an event, an event that effectively communicate the power and redemptive activity of God. This, then, is preaching, the timeless link between act and response that prolongs and mediates the redemptive activity of God. Wherever preaching is true to its essential nature, this is what takes place.” Ibid., 155.
having the desire to understand. God speaks, but man stuffs his fingers into his ears. Communication is a theological problem. To proclaim the Gospel message of forgiveness, redemption, acceptance, recovery, and restoration is a high and lofty calling and responsibility, which requires an understanding of the theological issues that surround such calling. The depth of responsibility in proclaiming this Gospel message is unmatched in all of humanity, as the proclamation is not of self, but the reiteration of what God speaks. Preachers should understand that eternity hangs in the balance every time they stand in the pulpit, the eternal destiny of every listener must be examined and worked through. Messages that fail to highlight the rescuing power and redeeming action of God can leave the hearer without any hope or possibility of redemption. The responsibility and calling of the preacher, then, is to herald the Gospel message so that the hearer can experience a redemptive encounter with the holy and loving Redeemer. Preaching is more than mere obligation only. The measure of responsibility is also the measure of privilege. According to James Stewart, “When all is said and done, the

227 Mounce encourages preachers, “While we must do everything within our power to proclaim the message of divine deliverance with utmost clarity, the effective communication of that message is, ultimately, the work of God Himself. This does not lessen the responsibility of the preacher. On the contrary, it lays upon him the burden of so being taken up into his message that his proclamation of the Gospel becomes a part of that Gospel, a medium for the ongoing redemptive activity of God.” Ibid., 157-158.

228 Mounce continues, “To proclaim the message of divine deliverance is the most solemn responsibility ever entrusted to mortal man. When the preacher mounts the pulpit steps, he does so under obligation to mediate the presence of Almighty God. He is not there to air his own views or hold up a mirror to the times. It is not even enough that he should speak about God: he must allow God to speak. His words must bear the Divine Word. His voice must be God’s voice. He stands before a group of people whose one great need is to be ushered into the presence of God. If his pulpit has become no more than a platform for religious propaganda, he may either interest or bore his people, depending upon his innate ability, but he will never discharge his sacred obligation to mediate the Divine Presence.” Ibid., 158.

229 Mounce concludes, “This is a matter of awesome significance because it involves the eternal destiny of mankind. If God, in redeeming power, be not present in the proclamation of the Gospel, man will be swept into an eternity without God and without hope. Apart from an encounter, there can be no salvation. Apart from preaching (interpreted in its widest sense as the effective communication of the Gospel, either oral or written), there can be no redemptive encounter. The fearful responsibility of the Christian herald is so to proclaim the Gospel that “The Miracle” takes place, God is there confronting men in judgment and offering divine deliverance. To fail in this crucial obligation is to betray both God and man.” Ibid.
supreme need of the Church, is men on fire for Christ. Men who in the truest sense of the word are heralds of God.” The commission to preach, while a solemn trust, is also the greatest honor that can be bestowed upon a man.

Defining the Gospel

Definitions of the Gospel abound in all circles of Christendom, and rather than try and bring a new definition of the term, “Gospel” it seems more pertinent to identify what other great scholars, theologians, and preachers have determined as effective means to define this great word, idea, and message. According to Jared E. Alcantara, “the gospel is an announcement and a call from God through Jesus Christ that welcomes us into covenantal relationship.”

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231 Mounce asks the question, “What other calling elevates man to the role of co-worker with God in the impartation of eternal salvation? Who else can open his mouth and speak, knowing that his words will somehow convey the Divine Word? It has fallen to the preacher to mediate the saving actions of God. He is a priest whose message is the sacrament of salvation. As he by faith proclaims the great Act of God, he realizes that it is once again taking place. The Cross becomes a present reality. God is revealing Himself through Christ Jesus. Man is offered deliverance and moved to respond in faith. Without preaching, salvation would be theory only. It is the inestimable privilege of the preacher to proclaim in time that one great Act which alone gives meaning to time.” Mounce, 159.

232 According to Michael F. Bird, “The study of salvation is called soteriology. The gospel tells us that God saves in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; consequently, salvation is understood as the chief benefit of the gospel. Furthermore, salvation is more than the sojourn of souls into heaven; rather, it is holistic and includes the well-being of body, mind, and soul. Salvation is part of a story (redemptive history) and is applied to the believer in a particular process (order of salvation). The center of salvation is articulated in terms of an act of the Triune God that incorporates the work of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 490.

233 Karl Barth explains, “The Gospel speaks of God as He is: it is concerned with Him Himself and with Him only. It speaks of the Creator who shall be our Redeemer, and of the Redeemer who is our Creator. It is pregnant with our complete conversion; for it announces the transformation of our creature likeness into freedom. It proclaims the forgiveness of our sins, the victory of life over death, in fact, the restoration of everything that has been lost. It is the signal, the fire-alarm of a coming, new world.” Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 37-38.

233 According to Alcantara, “It is an announcement of the good news that the triune God is reconciling the world to himself through Christ-his life, death, and resurrection-instead of counting our sins against us (2 Cor. 5:16-21; Col. 1:19-20); and it is a call to individuals, systems, and the whole world to acknowledge and follow Jesus by responding to God’s grace through faith (Rom. 1:5; 5:2; Eph. 2:5-9) and by re-presenting Christlikeness through love (Ps. 89:1; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:10; 13:8; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:6; 1 Pet. 2:9-11).” Alcantara, 15.
to the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, “The gospel is the joyous proclamation of God’s redemptive activity in Christ Jesus on behalf of man enslaved by sin.” The Savior is the content of the gospel and salvation is the goal of the gospel.

**What the Gospel Is**

In the Forward to JD Greear’s work, *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary*, Dr. Tim Keller explains, “The underlying conviction in my preaching, pastoring, and writing is that the gospel—the eternally fascinating message—can change a heart, a community, and the world when it is recovered and applied. The change that takes place in a person’s heart and life once they have come to an understanding of and experience with the gospel is amazing, as both are necessary for transformation to occur.

Through Christ, God calls humankind out of sin, death, and destruction into repentance, faith,

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234 Walter A. Elwell identifies, “The English word ‘gospel’ (from the Anglo-Saxon *god-spell*, i.e., God-story) is the usual NT translation of the Greek *euangelion*. According to Tyndale, the renowned English Reformer and Bible translator; it signified ‘good, merry, glad and joyful tydinge, that maketh a mannes hert glad, and maketh hym synge, daunce, and leep for ioye (Prologue to NT). While his definition is more experiential that explicative, it has touched that inner quality which brings the word to life.” Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 1984), 472.

235 Bird, 494.

236 Keller explains, “The gospel is life-giving, because it generates changes that are received only by grace through faith. This foundational truth, however, gets bypassed, obscured, and forgotten, because, as Martin Luther noted, religion forms the default mode of the human heart. It is essential, then, that we distinguish religion from the gospel. Religion, as the default mode of our thinking and practices, is based upon performance: ‘I obey; therefore, I am accepted by God.’ The basic operating principle of the gospel, however, is, not surprisingly, an about-face, one of unmerited acceptance: ‘I am accepted by God through Christ; therefore, I obey.’ To truly understand this paradigm shift at a life-altering level requires that the gospel be explored and ‘looked into’ at every opportunity and in regular, systematic ways.” See the Forward in, JD Greear, *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), XIV.

237 Keller continues, “It is one thing to understand the gospel but is quite another to experience the gospel in such a way that it fundamentally changes us and becomes the source of our identity and security. It is one thing to grasp the essence of the gospel but quite another to think out its implications for all of life. We all struggle to explore the mysteries of the gospel on a regular basis and to allow its message to influence our thinking.” Ibid., XV.
and transformation. Although we wrestle and struggle and fall and fail, we do so grounded in a Gospel of grace and mercy that summons us out of our penchant for self-destruction.238

The Gospel is the good news239 that God has done something, something for those who could never do something for themselves. According to Mark 1:14-15, “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’”240 The Gospel is newsworthy because it offers new life for those dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-10),

238 Alcantara explains, “God graciously pulls us away from our subjection because of sin toward of life in the Spirit because of righteousness (Rom. 8:10-11). Life in the Spirit looks like Christ followers embodying the vision of God in the world through their character, conduct, and actions. That is to say, it looks like faith gone public. To be children of God means that we are partners in the mission of God in the world and that we reorient our lives around that mission. Those whom God has encountered through Christ in the Spirit cannot continue in complacency or indifference, living as if nothing radical had ‘altered the total human situation,’ but instead are compelled into mission, into a new way of living, being, and acting in the world.” Alcantara, 16-17.

239 Bird explains, “The words ‘gospel’ and ‘salvation’ go naturally together. In Isaiah, the good news that God is going to show his kingly power and deliver Israel from exile is given in the jubilant words: ‘How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, Your God reigns!’ (Isa. 52:7). Jesus taught that following him meant saving one’s life: ‘For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it’ (Mark 8:35). Paul’s main these in Romans is this: ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Rom. 1:16). In Ephesians, the apostle celebrates the evangelical experience of his audience with these words, ‘And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation’ (Eph. 1:13). In the Pastorals, Paul states that the grace appearing in Jesus Christ has made Christ the one who ‘has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel’ (2 Tim. 1:10). In Acts, salvation is linked to gospel preaching (e.g., Acts 2:21, 40, 47; 4:12; 11:14; 16:31), and Paul climatically tells the Corinthians: ‘By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you’ (1 Cor. 15:2). All of these verses show that our entry point into salvation must pass through Jesus Christ and the gospel that communicates his saving work. The New Testament knows of only one form of salvation: given in Christ, proclaimed in the gospel, and appropriated by faith.” Bird, 494.

Barth further explains, “The Gospel speaks of God as He is: it is concerned with Him Himself and with Him only. It speaks of the Creator who shall be our Redeemer, and of the Redeemer who is our Creator. It is pregnant with our complete conversion; for it announces the transformation of our creature likeness into freedom. It proclaims the forgiveness of our sins, the victory of life over death, in fact, the restoration of everything that has been lost. It is the signal, the fire-alarm of a coming, new world.” Barth, 37-38.

240 According to the ESV Study Bible, “These verses summarize Jesus’ preaching ministry. The gospel is the “good news” that the kingdom of God is at hand, meaning that God’s rule over people’s hearts and lives is now being established, and people should repent and believe in the gospel (on repentance and faith, see notes on Matt. 3:2; Acts 2:38). The kingdom is more than simply the rule of the Spirit within people, since the kingdom will ultimately include the restoration of all creation (Rev. 21:1). However, Jesus has not yet revealed the fact that the kingdom will come in stages. How Jesus relates to this kingdom will be seen in the following chapters. Initially, he is the one who proclaims the coming saving rule of God.”
freedom for those held in captivity (Isa. 58:6-7; Luke 4:18-19), and the promise of a new reality for a world bound to powers of an age that is passing away (John 3:17; Rom. 2:1-2; Eph. 6:12). According to JD Greear, “The gospel, and the gospel alone, has the power to produce love for God in the heart. Paul calls the gospel ‘God’s power for salvation’ (Rom. 1:16). There are only two things that Paul ever refers to as ‘the power of God.’ One is the gospel; the other is Christ Himself. As the story of this is proclaimed, the Spirit Himself makes the heart come alive to see the glory and beauty of God revealed in it. As we behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, Paul says, we are transformed into glory (2 Cor. 3:18-4:14).”

What the Gospel Is Not

The Gospel is not a suggestion, advice, or something we do for ourselves. The Gospel is something that has been done for us by God through the person and work of Jesus Christ, in which we now respond. What has been done? Simply put, rescue. A look at the gospels words in the New Testament show that we are rescued from “the coming wrath” at the end of history (1 Thess. 1:10). But this wrath is not an impersonal force—it is God’s wrath. We are out of fellowship with God; our relationship with him is broken. This broken and fractured

241 Alcantara., 16.
242 Greear, 18.
243 Anselm, 319-320.
244 According to Mark Driscoll, “Because death is the penalty for sinners, the only way that the death of the sinless Jesus can be understood is in terms of substitution. The sinless Jesus literally stood in our place to suffer and die for us. In doing so, Jesus is our savior who alone can take away the curse we deserve because of our sin.” Mark Driscoll, Vintage Jesus: Timeless Answers to Timely Questions (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 115.
245 Keller explains, “In perhaps the most thoroughgoing exposition of the gospel in the Bible, Paul identifies God’s wrath as the great problem of the human condition (Rom. 1:18-32). Here we see that the wrath of God has many ramifications. The background text is Genesis 3:17-19, in which God’s curse lies on the entire created order because of human sin. Because we are alienated from God, we are psychologically alienated within ourselves—we experience shame and fear (Gen. 3:10). Because we are alienated from God, we are also socially alienated from one another (v. 7 describes how Adam and Eve must put on clothing, and v. 16 speaks of alienation between genders; also notice the blame shifting in their dialog with God in vv. 11–13). Because we are alienated from God, we are also physically alienated from nature itself. We now experience sorrow, painful toil, physical
relationship that humanity has caused must be remedied and can only be remedied by a great God with an amazing message.

The Gospel is not about something we (all humanity) can do anything about on our own, as we are helpless. The Gospel is something that has been done for us, by an amazingly loving, faithful, generous, and caring God. While the Gospel is about what has been done for us through the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Gospel does in fact also result in a whole new way of life. The Gospel, its results, and its implications should be carefully related to each other—neither confused nor separated. But just as faith and works cannot be separated or confused, so the results of the Gospel must never be separated from or confused with the Gospel itself.

Through actions, works, and deeds apart of the Gospel, humans have created an impossible gap between their relationship with God. The Gospel, however, points humanity to the cross of Jesus Christ as the means in which God (because of his great love for us) restores the relationship that humans messed up. At the cross we see that the love of God is not merely sentimental but also degeneration, and death (vv.16–19). In fact, the ground itself is ‘cursed’ (v.17; see Rom. 8:18-25).” Timothy Keller, Shaped by the Gospel: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 28.

246 Keller continues, “True gospel belief will always and necessarily lead to good works, but salvation in no way comes through or because of good works. Faith and works must never be confused for one another, nor may they be separated (Eph. 2:8-10; Jas 2:14, 17–18, 20, 22, 24, 26). This grace and the good deeds that result must be both distinguished and connected.” Ibid., 30.

247 Keller further explains, “When Paul speaks of the renewed material creation, he states that the new heavens and new earth are guaranteed to us because on the cross Jesus restored our relationship with God as his true sons and daughters. Romans 8:1-25 teaches, remarkably, that the redemption of our bodies and of the entire physical world occurs when we receive ‘our adoption.’ As his children, we are guaranteed our future inheritance (Eph. 1:13–14, 18; Col 1:12; 3:24; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4), and because of that inheritance, the world is renewed. The future is ours because of Christ’s finished work in the past. We must not, then, give the impression that the gospel is simply a divine rehabilitation program for the world, but rather that it is an accomplished substitutionary work. We must not depict the gospel as primarily joining something (Christ’s kingdom program) but rather as receiving something (Christ’s finished work). If we make this error, the gospel becomes another kind of salvation by works instead of a salvation by faith.” Ibid., 31.
The love of God is shown at the cross, as God reconciles all of humanity through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**What the Gospel Affects**

The Gospel affects all of life because the Gospel brings a new and regenerated life to all who respond to its message. The transformation that takes place is one of re-birth, re-birth into the image of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote that we are to be transformed into the image of Christ and that the ultimate power source for this transformation is found in the Gospel (2 Cor. 3:18). According to Jerry Bridges, “God has called all believers to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). The process toward that goal is called by various names such as sanctification, growth in grace, or transformation (1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:18).

This process of transformation into the image of Christ begins at our birth (John 3:3-5) and continues until we die and enter into the presence of the Lord. At that time, according to Hebrews 12:23, our spirits will be made perfect. The transformation process will be complete.”

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248 According to Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, “When people speak of love, they usually mean an emotional love that feels affectionate but may not do anything to help the beloved. Thankfully, God does not merely feel loving toward us; his love actually compels him to act on our behalf so that we can be changed by his love. God has lovingly work out a way for our friendship with him to be reconciled. Through the cross, Jesus took away our sin so that we could be reconciled to God (Isa. 59:2; Hos. 5:6). Thankfully, God not only graciously takes away our sin, but mercifully extends himself to us, knowing that we desperately need him.” Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe* (Wheaton, IL: Crossways, 2010), 276.

249 Abraham Kuyper explains, “Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign overall, does not cry: ‘Mine!’” Abraham Kuyper, *A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

250 According to Jerry Bridges, “Transformation into the image of Jesus is much more than a change of outward conduct; rather it is a deep penetrating work of the Holy Spirit in the very core of our being, what the Bible calls the heart—the center of our intellect, affections, and will. It is what is sometimes called ‘a change from the inside out.’ But though the transformation process is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit, it very much involves our earnest, active pursuit of that holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Jerry Bridges, *The Transforming*
The Gospel affects preaching. Due to the importance of the Gospel, and the transforming power that it brings to broken, desperate souls, preachers should understand and embrace the truth of the Gospel and incorporate the Gospel into every message they preach. After all, what other message brings healing, restoration, reconciliation, and hope? If preachers simply preach general doctrine and ethics from Scripture, they are not preaching the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news that God has accomplished salvation for humanity through Christ in order to bring us into a right relationship with him, and eventually to destroy all the results of sin in the world. The Gospel should affect preaching, otherwise preachers can fail to share the good news with those who desperately need it, and settle for a cheap copy of works-based religion. Preachers should remember that the idolatry that exists in man’s heart always wants to lead him away from his Savior and back to self-reliance, no matter how pitiful that self-reliance is or how many times it has betrayed him. This truth is why the Gospel should always be preached.


251 According to Matt Chandler, “For some reason–namely, our depravity–we have a tendency to think that the cross saves us from past sins, but after we are saved, we have to take over and clean ourselves up. This sort of thinking is devastating to the soul. We call this the ‘assumed gospel,’ and it flourishes when well-meaning teachers, leaders, and preachers set out to see lives first and foremost conformed to a pattern of behavior (religion) and not transformed by the Holy Spirit’s power (gospel).” Matt Chandler, *The Explicit Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 14.

252 Keller explains, “Still, it can be rightly argued that in order to understand all this–who God is, why we need salvation, what he has done to save us–we must have knowledge of the basic teachings of the entire Bible. If we don’t understand, for example, that Jesus was not just a good man but the second person of the Trinity, or if we don’t understand what the ‘wrath of God’ means, it is impossible to understand what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Not only that, but the New Testament constantly explains the work of Christ in Old Testament terms–in the language of priesthood, sacrifice, and covenant. In other words, we must not just preach the Bible in general; we must preach the gospel. Yet unless those listening to the message understand the Bible in general, they won’t grasp the gospel. The more we understand the whole corpus of biblical doctrine, the more we will understand the gospel itself–and the more we understand the gospel, the more we will come to see that this is, in the end, what the Bible is really about. Biblical knowledge is necessary for the gospel and distinct from the gospel, yet it so often stands in when the gospel is not actually present that people have come to mistake its identity.” Keller, *Shaped by the Gospel: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*, 33-34.

253 Chandler explains, “Religion is usually the tool the self-righteous man uses to exalt himself. Again, this isn’t new; the Apostle Paul lays out in Philippians 3:4-9 his religious pedigree and practice as an example of what a man can accomplish with discipline and hard work. In that passage Paul states that all his religious efforts, exhaustive checklist of all his accomplishments included, amounts to nothing compared to the surpassing greatness of Christ. We are saved, sanctified, and sustained by what Jesus did for us on the cross and through the power of his
Preaching as a Faithful Steward of the Gospel

Knowing the audience helps preachers to identify the type of message they should craft and the direction to go in. Age, race, culture, sexual orientation, and denominational affiliation are great places to start when preachers seek to know their audience, but preachers also need to dig deeper and simpler. At its core, every audience will supply two types of people—believers and non-believers—yet both need the Gospel preached to them. For the non-believer, there aren’t a million things they need to do. There is one: repent of your sins and believe in Jesus. That means recognizing the spiritual bankruptcy, acknowledging the complete inability to save oneself, and coming to Jesus as the only hope of ever being forgiven and right before God.254 This is the Gospel message that should be communicated clearly when preaching.

Because of Jesus, and because believers are united to him by faith, redeemed humans can fight against the temptation to think salvation is somehow fragile or passing.255 The assurance that the Gospel brings to Christians can be preached faithfully, because the cross of Jesus stands like a mountain of granite across your life, immovably testifying to God’s love for you and his determination to bring you safely into his presence.256 It’s as Paul said in Romans: “If God is for resurrection. If you add to or subtract from the cross, even if it is to factor in biblically mandated religious practices like prayer and evangelism, you rob God of his glory and Christ of his sufficiency.” Chandler, 14-15.

254 According to Gilbert, “Becoming a Christian is not some laborious process. There’s nothing to earn. Jesus has already earned everything you need. What the gospel calls you to do is to turn your heart away from sin and toward Jesus in faith—that is, trust and reliance. It calls you to come to him and say, ‘I know I can’t save myself, Jesus, so I’m trusting you to do it for me.’” Gilbert, 116.

255 Gilbert continues, “Whether I feel it at any given moment, I can know—deep down beneath the swirling questions—that I belong to Jesus and that no one can snatch me out of his hand. That’s because the gospel tells me that my righteous standing before God is not grounded in checking off some spiritual bingo card. How ridiculous in light of what the gospel says about Jesus! Thank God, my relationship with him is not based on my fickle will or my ability to live righteously. No, God has already pronounced his verdict over me, and it is ‘FORGIVEN!’ Even more, the verdict will never change because it is grounded solely and forever in Jesus—his death on the cross in my place and his intercession for me even now before the throne of God.” Ibid., 116-117.

256 Ibid., 117.
us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things” (Rom. 8:31-32)? The Gospel of Jesus is perfectly clear; it is not something vague, nebulous, or indefinite. The Gospel is the particular message that was first of all preached by Christ himself, then faithfully preached by the apostles, and it has been preached throughout the running centuries. That is the specific message that we find in the Bible. The Bible does not leave room for neutrality as C.S. Lewis writes, “Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.” The Gospel is a specific message every preacher should be about in their preaching today, and for the rest of human history. Preaching is not merely instruction. Preaching is the instrument utilized by the Spirit to make us participants in Jesus’ obedience to the Father in our own social and historical context and–within that context–enabling us to trust in God, for: “we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom. 5:3-5). Preachers should understand that they preach a Gospel that is three–fold: offensive, hopeful, and transformational.

257 Lloyd-Jones explains, “This must be preached as a whole. I have no right to take parts and ignore the rest. I either preach the gospel or I do not preach the gospel. The apostle Paul in bidding farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus reminded them he had not failed to deliver unto them ‘all the counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27), and any man who preaches without delivering the whole counsel of God is a false prophet.” Martyn Lloyd–Jones, A Merciful and Faithful High Priest (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 17-18.

258 C.S. Lewis, God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 102.

Preaching an Offensive Gospel

The Gospel is Offensive. The Gospel deals with and exposes the truth of man’s sinful and fallen condition, both by nature and by choice. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” And just a few paragraphs earlier he says, “None is righteous, no, not one” (3:10). The Gospel of Jesus Christ is full of stumbling stones, and this is one of the largest. To human hearts that stubbornly think of themselves as basically good and self-sufficient, this idea that human beings are fundamentally sinful and rebellious is not merely scandalous. It is revolting.

The Gospel is an interruption. It interrupts our lives, our sinful habits, our selfishness and rebellion, redirecting our attention away from ourselves, to God and his work and Word. Sometimes the Gospel even interrupts our ways of “doing church.”

There really is no way around the offensive dimensions of the Gospel. According to 1 Corinthians 1:23, in preaching Christ crucified, we preach a message that is “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.” Those who take that message seriously will struggle with both its divine summons and its real implications. The Gospel scandalizes our sensibilities by exposing our idols, interrogating our priorities, and calling into question our alliances. More often than all of these, it confronts us in our sin and rebellion, the root cause of our persistent idolatry, misplaced desire, and false

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260 Gilbert notes, “That’s why it is so absolutely crucial that we understand both the nature and depth of our sin. If we approach the gospel thinking that sin is something else or something less than what it really is, we will badly misunderstand the good news of Jesus Christ.” Gilbert, 51.

261 According to Jared C. Wilson, “What we need is to repent of decades of relying on pragmatic methodology and materialist theology and to reclaim the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of salvation for anybody, anywhere, anytime. To be clear, our creativity and intelligence can certainly adorn the gospel of grace, but no amount of creativity and intelligence can awaken a dead soul. Sacrificial good works and biblical social justice can affirm the power and truth of the good news, but neither can awaken a dead soul. Only the foolishness of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:18), the good news that God forgives sin in Christ and transforms sinners by grace, can do that.” Jared C. Wilson, The Gospel–Driven Church: Uniting Church–Growth Dreams with the Metrics of Grace (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 76.
allegiance. One of the most frequent temptations pastors and church leaders face today is to replace a steady commitment to Gospel preaching and revival prayer with human ingenuity and industrious. The Gospel is Offensive.

**Preaching a Hopeful Gospel**

The Gospel is hopeful. While the Gospel offends and pushes against the delicate sensibilities of the human condition, it also offers hope. The Bible has supernatural power to address the human condition. Within the Scriptures is an essential message with the power to draw our focus to Jesus Christ and transform our hearts. The Gospel is the power of God. The Gospel offers hope to humans through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Christ, God chooses love over hate, adoption over rejection, and reconciliation over enmity. The psalmist declares that God is “compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love” (Ps. 103:8). God does not “treat us as our sins deserve” or count them against us (Ps. 103:10). God effects our deliverance through a person–Jesus Christ–the one whose death sets us free from death and whose resurrection sets us free for life. Hope resounds in a cross and in an empty tomb.

According to Alcantara, “The gospel offends because it forces us to tell the truth about the brokenness that exists in the world and in ourselves, that it is not just outside but also inside of us. Although we would prefer not to tell the truth about ourselves to ourselves, we will not fully know ourselves and our requisite need for God’s grace without seeing ourselves through truth telling. Sin prevents us from seeing ourselves, and it prevents us from wanting to see ourselves. In a sense, the gospel offends us because we do not wish to offend ourselves.” Alcantara, 19.

Wilson explains, “Can these coexist? Certainly. But we must also guard against allowing ourselves to replace the work that only the Holy Spirit can do. The Holy Spirit can do far more than we think or ask, and his timing may not always follow our goals or fit our plans.” Wilson, 77.

Wilson continues, “The gospel refers to the good news that God sent his Son Jesus to live a sinless life, die a substitutionary death, and rise from the dead so that sinners who repent and trust in Jesus will be forgiven and have eternal life. We can expand or shorten it, but this is the basic summation of the message we are called to share with others.” Ibid., 81.

According to Alcantara, “Jesus’s willingness to go to a cross bears witness to God’s willingness to suffer for humanity as a supreme mark of self-giving love. As predicted in Isaiah 53, the Messiah comes into the world as one “despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain” (Isa. 53:31 cf. also John 1:10-11). God enters into human suffering through self-donation (Phil. 2:9-11). God’s willingness to enter into and identify with humanity’s plight through the cross demonstrates God’s supreme and abiding commitment to
We live in a world fractured by violence, poverty, prejudice, and war. The Gospel speaks to these and many other realities as well. The Old Testament prophets announced hope in the promises of God, but they also told the truth about realities in the world. The New Testament identifies the hope of the promises of God being fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and told them: “thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” There it was, laid out in crystal clarity for the disciples–God’s grand plan to save a people for himself. And then, stunningly, Jesus added: “You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:46–48). God’s purpose was nothing less than the redemption of the world, and here was Jesus telling them that that purpose would be accomplished through them! The Gospel is Hopeful.

Preaching a Transformational Gospel

The Gospel is Transformational. It has the power to change individuals, families, friendships, communities, and even nations. As the Gospel opens up wounds in the human delivering it from despair and wooing it back into covenantal relationship (Hosea 2:14-15). Yet, Christians believe that the cross does not represent the final scene of a much larger story. Easter demonstrates God’s triumph over death, destruction, and evil (1 John 3:8). Resurrection hope springs forth from God’s vindication over death–both now and in the future. In the resurrection, God proclaims that not even death can defeat the divine purposes for the world. What God has accomplished at Easter previews what God will accomplish at the advent of the new heavens and the new earth.”

Alcantara continue, “Their truth telling took on various forms: they warned the nations of divine judgment for its disobedience; they lamented injustice in the land; they stood in solidarity with the oppressed in the society; and they spoke sharply against complacency and indifference. Christian preachers do not have the same vocation as Old Testament prophets, but we do have a responsibility to perform truth telling as they did–and, for that matter, as Jesus did.”

According to Gilbert, “It is through our proclaiming the gospel–whether through preaching or teaching or conversations over meals with friends, family members, and coworkers–that God has determined to save sinners. God has determined that the gospel will advance through the spoken words of his people–that is, through the mouths of those who have themselves embraced the good news about Jesus and have known the forgiveness that comes from him.”

Alcantara, 18.
conditions inability to save itself, the Gospel also offers hope in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation of man’s fractured relationship with God. These two realities—when confronted together—create an opportunity for the human condition to be transformed and regenerated into something spectacular. Notice that the Gospel is not something we do but something that is done by the triune God–Father, Son, and Spirit–working together on mission to redeem sinful, rebellious humanity and establish God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The Gospel of Jesus Christ should inform, influence, and drive everything we do.269

Theologically speaking, transformation takes place in justification, sanctification, and glorification.270 Justification means that in our standing before God, we are righteous in His sight. We are obviously not righteous in our daily experience. But when by faith we trust in Him, God regards us as righteous because He has credited to us the righteousness of Christ.271 Sanctification means to be “set apart.” The Holy Spirit is the guiding force helping to make the believer “holy” and “spiritual” (to reflect the character of God).272 Jesus Christ fulfills the grace

269 Wilson, 81-82.
270 Alcantara explains, “At its simplest, justification means that Christ—through his life, death, and resurrection—has reversed our verdict from ‘guilty’ to ‘innocent’ before God by declaring us righteous. Sanctification means steady growth in a day-to-day Christlikeness over time. Glorification represents the consummation of our salvation, when our earthly bodies are resurrected.” Alcantara, 18.
271 According to Bridges, “There is an old play on the word Justified, that it means ‘just as if I’d never sinned.’ That expression speaks to the forgiveness of our sins. When God charges our sins to Christ, they are no longer ours. He has removed them from us as far as the east is from the west (see Psalm 103:12). He remembers them no more (see Hebrews 8:12). The penalty has been paid. God’s justice is satisfied. His judicial wrath has been fully exhausted on His Son. Truly we stand before Him just as if we’d never sinned! But there is another play on the word Justification, that it also means ‘just as if I had always obeyed.’ That is also a glorious truth that is based on the perfect obedience of Christ–the obedience that was lived out over thirty-three years of real human life in a real world. Consider this: Jesus in His humanity was just as holy as God sitting on the throne. There was not one iota of difference. And what Jesus was in His life, we are in our standing before God because Jesus was our representative in both His life and death. So as far as our standing before God is concerned, when He lived a perfect life, we lived a perfect life. When He died on the cross, we died on the cross. All that Jesus did in both His sinless life and sin-bearing death, He did as our representative and substitute.” Bridges, 49-50.
272 Elmer L. Towns explains, “There is a threefold sanctification. First, the believer was sanctified (forgiven and set apart to God in salvation). Second, the believer is constantly being set apart from sin as he utilizes the means of grace in his life. Third, he will be completely sanctified when he meets the Lord either in the rapture, or at death.” Elmer L. Towns, *Theology for Today* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group, 2002), 302.
and truth promises of God, and as John Calvin explains, “the whole substance of our salvation is not to be sought anywhere else than in Christ.”

In doing so, we will desire to learn and grow in our understanding of the work of Jesus, as we are continually being sanctified. Again, Calvin instructs, “By partaking of him, we…receive double grace: namely, being reconciled to God through Christ’s blamelessness and purity of life.”

In evangelical theology today, we are increasingly in need of careful work showing not only what the Bible says about sanctification but also about how to think regarding the element of Christian witness and its relation to other strands of scriptural testimony, such as the work of Christ, the gift of grace, and so forth.

Glorification refers especially to the time when, at the Parousia, those who died in Christ and the living believers will be given the resurrection of the body—a final and full “redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23), preparatory for and suited to the final state of the Christian believer. In Jesus’ death and resurrection not only is the price of our sin paid, and our life after death secured, but the eternal life of God has truly come to this cursed earth; with the coming of the King, God’s kingdom has come into this world (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:40; 2 Cor. 4:10-11). Because of King Jesus there will be a physical life again after a period of physical death (1 Cor. 15:44-46; 2 Cor. 5:1-8).

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276 According to J.K. Grider, “As a theological term it is a synonym of immortality—when immortality is thought of as the glorification which believers will receive, and not, as erroneously thought of, as simply the continued existence of both the believers and the finally impenitent. Glorification, therefore, is only for believers.” J.K. Grider, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. ed. Walter A. Elwell. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 1984), 442-443.

277 Driscoll and Breshears believe, “The reality of the full unveiling of Jesus’ kingdom is both history-altering and mind-bending. Jesus’ people will enjoy a full life in body and spirit, delighting in an Edenic world where there is no sin, no curse, no death, and subsequently no tears. Life will be as it was when God last said all was
Practically speaking, transformation occurs when disciples learn from and follow in a direction they would rather not go (John 21:18). Jesus said, “Follow me” to Peter at the beginning of his journey in discipleship (Mark 1:17), and he said “Follow me” to Peter at the end (John 21:22). As Christians, we are a part of a family whose Father is God himself. We have been sent by the Spirit on a life-altering mission to see more and more people come to know Jesus and find eternal life and the peace that he offers. Faith and Repentance is what marks out those who are Christ’s people, or “Christians.” In other words, a Christian is one who turns away from sin and trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ—and nothing else—to save him from sin and the coming judgment. God’s love transforms us, protects us, and perfects us. Receiving and giving God’s love is what we were created to experience. It is what our human hearts have always desired. And as crazy as this may sound, God’s ongoing goal is not to change us. He already has. His goal is to mature us, to empower us to establish trusting relationships with him in all areas of our lives. The Gospel is Transformational.

‘very good.’ We will see the face of Jesus and rule with him in a perfect city on the new earth.” Driscoll and Breshears, 416.

278 Alcantara explains, “A disciple listens to and heeds the call of God, ‘Follow me,’ more than just the first time these words are uttered. One steadily moves out of self-centeredness and isolation toward other-centeredness and engagement in order to be transformed and transformative. To follow in the way of Jesus is to follow him wherever he wills to take us even if it means bearing ‘the disgrace he bore’ (Heb. 13:13).” Alcantara, 18.

279 According to Caesar Kalinowski, “It is Jesus who pursues, secures, and maintains our position in the family of God. He died that we might be restored to a right relationship with his Father, back into the family we were originally created to be part of. Jesus, our Servant King, gave us his indwelling Spirit and sent us on his mission. It’s all about Jesus.” Caesar Kalinowski, Transformed: A New Way of Being Christian (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 22.

280 Gilbert explains, “Mark tells us that Jesus began his ministry by preaching, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel’ (Mark 1:15). That command—repent and believe—is what God requires of us in response to the good news of Jesus. Throughout the New Testament, this is what we see the apostles calling people to do. Jesus called on his listeners to repent and believe the good news.” Gilbert, 72-73.

281 According to Kalinowski, “When I trust I am a new creation through the work of Jesus on the cross, I begin to live life closer to God, a life of fullness and peace. I live freer from the power of sin and am free to love without reservation. I learn to believe that all God’s power, love, truth, and righteousness already exist in me right now.” Kalinowski, Transformed: A New Way of Being Christian, 33.
Preaching the Gospel as a Four Act Drama

Everyone has a basic story, and our lives are wrapped up in stories. Therefore, faith in Jesus should be the means through which a Christian seeks to understand all of life and the whole of history. This is not just because the scriptural story is comprehensive, or because it happens to be the story that we have inherited, or because it is the story that works for us. We must take the Christian story seriously in this way because it is true and tells us truthfully the story of the whole of history, beginning with the creation and ending with the new creation.282

Borrowing from the work of Craig G. Bartholomew & Michael W. Goheen in *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*, who have suggested a six-act drama (Creation, Fall, Redemption Initiated, Redemption Accomplished, Mission of the Church, and Redemption Completed).283 This project proposes a modified four-act drama (Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration).284 This four-act drama is fueled by and centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, found exclusively in the story of God. It is because of this that the preacher should ask the question of every sermon, “Did the sermon show how the text testifies to Christ?”285 The purpose in doing so is to help preachers identify solutions on how to create sermons that are

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282 Bartholomew and Goheen explain, “This is the way the world is, and Christians should make sure that the story of the Bible is basic in their lives. The Bible provides us with the basic story that we need in order to understand our world and to live in it as God’s people. We know that it is one thing to confess the Bible to be the word of God, but often quite another thing to know how to read the Bible in a way that lets it influence the whole of our lives. There can easily be a gap between what we say we believe and how we live. If God has deliberately given us the Bible in the shape of a story, then only as we attend to it as story and actively appropriate it as our story will we feel the full impact of its authority and illumination in our lives.” Bartholomew and Goheen, 20-22.

283 Ibid., 27.


distinctly and decisively both Christ-centered and Gospel-driven. That the whole Bible testifies to Christ is what we mean when we say that Christ is in all the Scriptures.

Stories are the language of our world. They draw you in…you begin to feel what the characters feel…their pain becomes your pain…their victory becomes your victory. We enter the drama and it becomes part of our own experience. Stories are the most powerful form of communication we have as they speak to the mind, the body, and the emotions.286 As we enter deeply into the story of the Bible, God will be revealed to us. We will also find ourselves called to share in the mission of God and his purposes with the creation. After all, the Bible claims to be nothing less than God’s own true story of our world, and it calls us to appropriate this story for ourselves.287 The Bible is a unified book centered on Jesus Christ. The complete context—what we also call the canonical context—is where we look ahead to discover the fullness of God’s intent in light of the fullness of Scripture’s message.288 Greg Gilbert explains, “As Christians, we believe that God has spoken to us in his Word, the Bible. Furthermore, we believe that what God has said in the Bible is infallibly and inerrantly true, and therefore it leads us not to skepticism, despair, or uncertainty, but to confidence. And so, it is to God’s word that we look in

286 Caesar Kalinowski explains, “We live in story, and all of us have seem shaped by a dominate story. Is the story that most shapes your life and identity the story of God that is told throughout the Bible? Or is it a story from your culture, dysfunctional background or a stack of lies that makes up the primary narrative of your life? What we believe about God and what he is like will ultimately determine what we believe about ourselves and how life works. Part of gospel fluency comes from a clear understanding of the story of God and our ability to simply yet powerfully relate this story to circumstances in our life and the lives of others. We learn to find our place in, and see how our lives intersect with, God’s big story. We can learn to tell God’s story naturally and comfortably, like a servant, sharing a story so powerful that it changes lives.” Caesar Kalinowski, The Gospel Primer (Littleton, CO: Missio Publishing, 2013), 26-27.

287 Bartholomew and Goheen, 22.

288 Trent Hunter and Stephen Wellum, Christ from the Beginning to End: How the Full Story of Scripture Reveals the Full Glory of Christ (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 26-27.
order to find what he has said to us about his Son Jesus and about the good news of the Gospel.”

**The Gospel in Creation**

Understanding the Gospel from Genesis and the creation account is imperative for preaching. How we view Genesis impacts our belief system. The first three chapters clearly insist that an omnipotent and omniscient Creator brought a “very good” universe into existence by His word (Gen. 1:31; 2 Peter 3:5), set Adam and Eve as stewards over that creation (Gen. 1:26; Psalm 8:5-8), and then passed judgment on that creation when Adam and Eve rebelled against the Creator’s authority (Gen. 3:17-19; 1 Tim. 2:14). That historical framework helps us understand all of human history and our desperate need for Christ’s redemption. The Gospel message depends on who Jesus is as much as what Jesus has done.

In the New Testament we find that John begins his own account of the life of Jesus in a very profound way—from the Old Testament. Beginning in eternity past and echoing the very first words of the Bible, John identifies Jesus as the Word or Son from eternity, who has always existed in relation to God the Father: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). We see this “Word” in action all the way back in

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289 Gilbert, 26.

290 According to Henry M. Morris, “The world began when He (Jesus) created it (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-2). Through His work on the cross and subsequent burial and resurrection, the Lord Jesus opened the way through which fallen humanity can be redeemed (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). And His work will finally be consummated when He returns to claim His own and ‘every knee [will] bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue…confess that Jesus Christ is Lord’ (Philippians 2:10-11). It is the responsibility of all twice born to present the complete gospel message. If we neglect the creation, then we negate the omnipotence of God and nullify His omniscience. If we neglect the cross, then we eliminate the sinless substitution of the only righteous man who can satisfy the holiness of God and administer the justice of the only One able to justify. If we neglect the consummation promised by the Creator who died in our stead on the cross, then there is no hope of eternal life in absolute righteousness.” Henry M. Morris, *The Gospel Starts with Creation. Acts & Facts. 47* (9). Accessed January 16, 2020, https://www.icr.org/article/gospel-starts-with-creation.

291 Hunter and Wellum explain, “This Word is none other than God the Son, the one through whom the
Genesis 1 when we read, “And God said…” That Word who made us, and everything, is the very same Word who came and purchased our salvation. Genesis, beginning with the first chapter, is actually the beginning of God’s revelation to us of the person and work of the Son of God—our Savior, Jesus Christ. If we reject God’s revelation about our Savior in Genesis 1, we have only part of a Savior—and only part of Christ is no Christ at all! From the viewpoint of the Gospel, that which was from “the beginning” is related directly to that which continued in the coming and work of Jesus Christ in time—and still continues. In the sense and terms of the story of God, John 1:2 serves to declare that though the score of the prologue may be that of Genesis 1, the content is that of the Gospel.

Genesis 1–2 speak of God’s creation of the cosmos, with a focus on humanity. God created Adam and Eve who are without sin, or, to put it more positively, are moral beings who are innocent. They are in a harmonious relationship with God and thus with each other. They live in a land of abundance and delight (Eden), lacking nothing that they need. In a word, God “blessed” them (Gen. 1:22, 28; cf. 5:2), blessing being an important word in the book of Genesis. Those who are blessed by God have a vibrant and healthy relationship with him, with each other,

Father created the world. The Son is the agent of creation, the maker of the world, its life and light. The Son did not come into existence a long time ago; he has always existed in eternal relationship, fellowship, and communion with the Father and the Spirit.” Hunter and Wellum, 202.

According to Ian Taylor, “But what happens to Christ’s work of salvation if creation is not true? If evolution is true, then death came into the world long before the first humans and their sin. If death is not a result of sin, why did Christ have to receive the penalty of sin – death on a cross? So, in challenging human origins, evolution challenges the origin of sin and its effect on humanity. And in challenging this, evolution challenges the very reason Christ came to Earth! He becomes just a misguided being on the wrong planet! The Bible tells us that all Scripture was given to make us wise unto salvation. That includes Genesis. The first chapter of John’s Gospel tells us that all things were created through the Word – the Word who became flesh.” Ian Taylor, Creation and the Gospel. Accessed January 16, 2020, https://creationmoments.com/sermons/creation-and-the-gospel/.


and with the world in which they live. Significantly, the creation story climaxes with God’s rest on the seventh day (Gen. 2:1-3). This is one crucial way to communicate God’s goal for creation. “Rest” which refers to God’s full enjoyment of his handiwork, is an easy theme to miss, but it is not unimportant. “Rest” give us unique insights into the Bible’s storyline and that of redemptive history.

The Gospel in the Fall

Having established the Gospel in the creation account of Genesis 1-2, the story of God continues with the Fall of humanity. Genesis is a prequel to the main story of the Pentateuch (Exodus through Deuteronomy), giving the background to the events that led up to Israel’s dramatic deliverance. Genesis begins with an account of the creation of the cosmos and of humanity. Though created innocent, humanity chose to rebel against God and thus, as Paul says (Rom. 5:12-21), introduced sin and death into the world. The Bible say that we were created good. The human problem is rooted instead, in history and is directly related to the moral choice of the first man, Adam. Genesis 3 tells this story—a story necessary to make sense of the Bible’s

295 Tremper Longman III explains, “When creator God blessed Adam and Eve, they lived in a harmonious relationship with God and thus in a harmonious relationship with each other and their world. The name Eden, meaning ‘abundance’ or ‘luxury,’ conveys a harmony between humanity and the world as well. That harmony was fractured by their rebellion against God, and thus they forfeited a blessed existence. No longer was their relationship with God or with each other or even themselves harmonious.” Tremper Longman III, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 14.

296 According to Hunter and Wellum, “The seventh day of rest is an important type and pattern that begins in creation and is picked up in the Mosaic law in relation to the promised land and the Sabbath-day command (Josh. 21:43–45; Ex. 20:8–11; Ps. 95:11). More significant, God’s creation rest ultimately points forward to Jesus, who by his work brings salvation rest and restores us to full relationship with our covenant God (Matt. 11:28—0; Heb. 3:7–4:11).” Hunter and Wellum, 82.

297 Longman III, 1.
later salvation story and of our lives today. Death is a problem for us. As it turns out, death is also our problem. It started with human sin.298

The world was made for God’s glory, but his glory in creation was made manifest in man and woman, bearers of his image, who were created to take dominion over creation, to be the crown jewel of the material world. So, when sin entered us, it entered the world.299 One of Satan’s tricks is to convince us that God is holding out on us, that God doesn’t really love and care for us. This unfortunate reality is recorded in Genesis 3, when Satan approaches Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and suggests that if God really loved them, He would not keep anything from them and permit them to eat of the forbidden tree. “Now the serpent was craftier than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths” (Genesis 3:1-7).

298 Hunter and Wellum, 84.

299 Chandler explains, “Original sin has effects beyond humanity; it affects the world, the cosmos. ‘The whole creation has been groaning’ (Rom. 8:22). This is not just to remind us of the seriousness of rebellion against God but to indicate that human rebellion against God disrupts the natural order of everything. This is why a whole gospel must be explicitly about the restoration of God’s image bearers and also about the restoration of the entire theatre of his glory, the entire cosmos.” Chandler, 111.
The word transgression means rebellion against authority, in this case God’s authority. This is where it is helpful to see the holiness of God as speaking of His transcendent majesty. His supreme and authoritative rule. When we sin, we rebel against that authority (as Adam and Eve did). Sin is a willful rebellion against the supreme authority of the universe, a deliberate flouting of His moral law. All sin, then, is deserving of the severity of God, and no one is exempt from this. If we want to stay faithful to God, when things are good and especially in the hard times of life (when we face trials and temptations as Adam and Eve did), we need to explore three mistakes that Adam and Eve made. These three mistakes lead us to disobey God and miss out on a deeply fulfilling relationship with Jesus. By understanding these mistakes, hopefully we will be able to set some boundaries in our lives to keep us from learning the hard way.

First, not Believing God’s Word (Genesis 3:1-4). This was a huge mistake. Eve doubted and distorted what God had said. The serpent not only contradicts what God had said, but also goes on to present the fruit of the tree as something worth obtaining; by eating it, the couple will be like God, knowing good and evil. Adam and Eve make the mistake of believing the serpent and not believing God. Second, Believing a False Word (Genesis 3:5). Adam and Eve unfortunately learn their lesson the hard way. By obeying the serpent, they betray the trust placed in them by God. Before this event, Adam and Eve only knew what was good, what God had provided for them. But because they disobeyed God, they experienced the reality of evil, sin, and separation from God. Finally, basing Decisions on Physical Desires (Genesis 3:6-7). The fruit seemed good, it looked good and it may have even smelt and tasted good for a moment. But then reality set in on what they had done. They had replaced God as ultimate with something that was

300 Bridges, 33.
301 Chandler, 43.
temporal. The temporary satisfaction that the fruit brought didn’t last, and they knew that their physical desire had cost them something far more substantial than they had ever thought.

Because God designed that Adam would represent the entire human race, his sin was catastrophic not only for him but for us as “one trespass led to condemnation for all men” (Rom. 5:18). Our fellowship with God was broken. Instead of enjoying his holy pleasure, we instead face his righteous wrath. Through this sin, we all died spiritually (Rom. 3:1–20; Eph. 2:1–10) and the entire world was affected. God also cursed the world over which humanity had been set to reign as His lieutenants (Gen. 3:17–19). “The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it” (Rom. 8:20). And we all individually sin against God in our own lives “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

It's important for us to understand that God’s heart was broken because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, but he could not ignore what they had done. God always does what is good, right, and perfect and His perfect justice required that there be consequences for rebellion. So, God punished Adam and Eve by throwing them out of the Garden. No longer following God’s way, they were now subject to sickness, pain, and death. God continued to love Adam and Eve—he even created clothing for them out of animal skins so they would not be ashamed outside of the Garden.

However, the Bible also teaches that there has been an enduring effect of the sin of Adam and Eve recorded in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve experienced firsthand the fourfold effects of sin (Vertically, Horizontally, Internally, and Cosmically).\textsuperscript{302} Because of that sin, we are all born

\textsuperscript{302} Hunter and Wellum explains, “Vertically, they experienced alienation and condemnation for God. Horizontally, they experienced alienation from each other. Internally (and schizophrenically), the experienced alienation within themselves. Cosmically, they experienced alienation in the world they were created to rule. These four effects of sin play out across the Bible’s story, but they are immediately apparent from the very moment sin enters the world.” Hunter and Wellum, 87.
morally fallen. We are naturally turned away from God and toward sin in every area of life. We are not as bad as we possibly could be, but we are at no point as good as we ought to be. We are now all sinners, and we sin in all areas of life (Rom.3:23). We are corrupted and make the wrong choices. We are not holy and are in fact inclined to evil; we do not love God, and therefore we are under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse. We are guilty of sinning against God, fallen from His favor, under the curse of Genesis 3, and the promise of his right and just judgment of us in the future and forever is guaranteed to us “for the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23a). This is the state from which we need to be saved.

The goodness of God, however, is the great barrier against giving into temptation. Since God is good, we don’t need any other person, any other thing, or any other experience to meet our needs. The moment we start to doubt God’s goodness, we will be attracted to Satan’s offers; and our natural desires will reach out for the bait that the enemy puts in front of us. The challenge is to ask Jesus to be ultimate in our lives, as only Jesus can satisfy more than anything else. Even in the tragic tale of sin’s entrance into the world, God does not give up his purposes for his creation and his kingdom. Though Adam and Eve flee from him, God graciously takes the initiative to seek them out, offering the protoevangelium, the first Gospel.303

The Gospel in Redemption

The Old Testament makes it clear that we human beings rebelled against our creator. We refused to trust his goodness and chose to disobey his command. The Old Testament shows how

303 According to Bartholomew and Goheen, “In declaring judgment, God curses the serpent and promises to put enmity between the serpent’s offspring and that of the woman (Gen. 3:15). The woman’s offspring will crush the serpent’s head. God promises to extinguish the evil forces Adam and Eve have unleashed. This is the first biblical promise of the Gospel: Christ is to be ‘the seed of the woman’ and will defeat Satan, though at great cost to himself, in the ‘wounding’ of his ‘heel.’” Bartholomew and Goheen, 44.
deep-rooted is our sin, affecting every part of our personality, every generation, and every culture. Only when we know how big the problem is (from the Old Testament) can we understand the size of God’s solution to it through Christ in the New Testament. The Gospel is a true story based on events in history. It tells of a Creator-Redeemer who entered a broken, sinful world in order to rescue his creatures by literally becoming one of them.

The Old Testament proclaims God’s mighty acts of redemption. These acts reach a climax in the New Testament when God sends his Son. Redemptive history is the mighty river that runs from the old covenant to the new and holds the two together. It is true, of course, that there is progression in redemptive history, but it is one redemptive history. It is true that there is an old covenant and a new covenant, but it is one covenant of grace. It is true that the sacrifice of Christ brought an end to Old Testament worship with its blood sacrifices, but Christians are still required to bring sacrifices to the same God (Rom. 12:1). Progression in redemptive history takes place within the continuity of a single redemptive history.

In the Fall, we experience the bad news, the news that we have rebelled against God’s law is not what we want to hear, but truth often works like that. However, the Gospel ushers in the good news about Jesus. “But now,” the Apostle Paul says, in spite of our sin, “now the

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304 Wright explains, “God promised to turn the curse into blessing. He would do it through the people of Abraham first. But then, through Israel, he would bring blessing to all nations on earth and indeed ultimately restore the whole creation—a new heaven and a new earth (Isa. 65:17-25). That is the great saving plan of God for the world (the world of nations and the world of nature) which was accomplished by Christ in the New Testament. The New Testament gives us God’s final answer, but it is the Old Testament that tells us both the scale of the problem and the scale of God’s promise. So, we will understand the gospel in a far more full and comprehensive way when we see it first in the Old Testament.” Wright, 22.

305 According to Darrin Patrick, “This Creator-Redeemer entered this world as a screaming, slimy baby in a dirty, smelly manger overwhelmed by the scent of hay and animal dung. In the greatest paradox of all history, God, who is a being of spirit, became a being in flesh. Remaining a being of boundless power, he became weak and hungry and experience pain. He went from God of heaven out there to be the Lord of earth right here. God took the theory of his love for his people and wrapped it in skin and blood and gristle and bone.” Darrin Patrick, Church Planter: The Man, The Message, The Mission (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 107.

righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law” (Rom. 3:21). In other words, there is a way for human beings to be counted righteous before God instead of unrighteous, to be declared innocent instead of guilty, to be justified instead of condemned. And it has nothing to do with acting better or living a more righteous life.\textsuperscript{307} It is through the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus that sinners are set free and find redemption, and we respond by repenting of our sins and trusting our lives into Jesus’ hands. That means recognizing our spiritual bankruptcy, acknowledging our complete inability to save ourselves, and coming to Jesus as our only hope of ever being forgiven and right before God.\textsuperscript{308} Because of Jesus’ finished work on the cross, all those whom God has called to be his can be forgiven and restored to right relationship with God. As he hung on the cross at Calvary, Jesus bore all the horrible weight of the sin of God’s people. All their rebellion, all their disobedience, all their sin fell on his shoulders. And the curse that God had pronounced in Eden—the sentence of death—struck.\textsuperscript{309}

Thankfully, Jesus’ death on the cross is not the end of the story. What Jesus accomplished was something that only the Son of God could accomplish. Jesus became our

\textsuperscript{307} Gilbert explains, “Despite our rebellion against God, and in the face of a hopeless situation, we can be ‘justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ (Rom. 3:24). Through Christ’s sacrificial death and resurrection—because of his blood and his life—sinners may be saved from the condemnation our sins deserve. Paul tells his readers how they themselves can be included in this salvation. That’s what he writes about through the end of Romans chapter 3 and on into chapter 4. The salvation God has provided comes ‘through faith in Jesus Christ’ and it is ‘for all who believe’ (3:22). So how does this salvation become good news for me and not just for someone else? How do I come to be included in it? By believing in Jesus Christ. By trusting him and no other to save me.’” Gilbert, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{308} Gilbert continues, “Becoming a Christian is not some laborious process. There’s nothing to earn. Jesus has already earned everything you need. What the gospel calls you to do is to turn your heart away from sin and toward Jesus in faith—that it, trust and reliance. It calls you to come to him and say, ‘I know I can’t save myself, Jesus, so I’m trusting you to do it for me.’” Ibid., 116.

\textsuperscript{309} According to Gilbert, “This is why Jesus cried out in agony, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Matt. 27:46). God his Father, who is holy and righteous, whose eyes are too pure even to look on evil, looked at his Son, saw the sins of his Son’s people resting on his shoulders, turned away in disgust, and poured out his wrath on his own Son. Matthew writes that darkness covered the land for about three hours while Jesus hung on the cross. That was the darkness of judgment, the weight of the Father’s wrath falling on Jesus as he bore his people’s sins and died in their place.” Ibid., 67-68.
substitute, took our sin on himself, and after paying for our sins, was raised to life on the third day. The cross could not keep him, yet he stayed on it for us. The grave could not stop him, as his finished work reveals. Jesus is alive and well, he rose from the grave, destroying any doubt about what the Scriptures said about him. When breath entered his resurrected lungs again, when resurrection life electrified his glorified body, everything Jesus claimed was fully, finally, unquestionably, and irrevocably vindicated. Paul exults in Romans 8:33-34 over Jesus’ resurrection, and what the resurrection means for believers. God’s plan of salvation has been secured by the Son, who gave up his life to bring redemption to a broken people and a fractured world.

The Gospel in Restoration

God’s plan has always been to have for himself a people (Gen. 17:7; Exo. 6:7; Ezek. 34:24, 36:28; Jer. 7:23, 30:22, 31:33), a Gospel-driven church made up of Gospel-driven people who are passionate and on mission to share the good news of God’s work. The church is an embassy—the colony of heaven—to which the victims of Satan’s tyrannical reign flee to escape this present evil age. There is no other name of any other king upon whom we may call to deliver us from our most dangerous foes but this one who has descended and ascended and will come again for his own. When Adam sinned, God cursed the ground because of him (Gen. 3:17-19), which created a need for the restoration of all things that God had created. This curse

310 Ibid., 69-70.

311 According to Michael Horton, “Before it is called to do anything, the church is called to receive something—and not only once, but again and again: namely, the announcement that even in its weakness, suffering, half-heartedness, and a legacy of faith stained by unfaithfulness, Christ is king. Only because all authority has been entrusted to him is the church authorized to go into all the world with the Good News that Jesus Christ is Lord and the confidence that the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” Michael Horton, The Gospel-Driven Life: Being Good News People in a Bad News World (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 190.
affected not only Adam and Eve, but the entire created order. But, in Romans 8:21, the Apostle Paul promises a full and final restoration that God will bring, changing death and decay into glorious life and liberty. Paul explains that this will happen when we receive our resurrection bodies—in fact, he says that the creation is somehow longing for that day “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God... We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:19, 22-23).

According to Michael Horton, “God’s eternal Son is present at the beginning of the story of creation (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-20), He was the Rock struck for Israel’s sins (1 Cor. 10:4), and in the Bible’s closing book He is God’s last Word, ‘Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forever more, and I have the keys of Death and Hades’ (Rev. 1:17-18).”

Christians often talk about living with God “in heaven” forever. But in fact, the biblical teaching is richer than that: it tells us that there will be new heavens and a new earth—an entirely renewed creation—and we will live with God there. The Gospel is the consummation of the

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312 According to Wayne Grudem, “In this renewed creation, there will be no more thorns or thistles, no more floods or droughts, no more deserts or uninhabitable jungles, no more earthquakes or tornadoes, no more poisonous snakes or bees that sting or mushrooms that kill. There will be a productive earth, an earth that will blossom and produce food abundantly for our enjoyment.” Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 835-836.


314 Grudem continues, “The Lord promises through Isaiah, ‘For behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered’ (Isa. 65:17), and speaks of ‘the new heavens and the new earth which I will make’ (Isa. 66:22). Peter says, ‘according to his promise we wait for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells’ (2 Peter 3:13). In John’s vision of events to follow the final judgment, he says, ‘The I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away’ (Rev. 21:1). He goes on to tell us that there will also be a new kind of unification of heaven and earth, for he sees the holy city, the ‘new Jerusalem,’ coming ‘down out of heaven from God’ (Rev. 21:2), and hears a voice proclaiming that ‘the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them’ (v.3). So, there will be a joining of heaven and earth in this new creation, and there will live in the presence of God.” Grudem, 1158.
story of God, found in the re-birth or re-creation of an old, fallen humanity and world. What is amazing about Revelation 21 and 22 is the way that seemingly every strand of Scripture is drawn together and brought into its perfect conclusion. The story of God begins and culminates in and through Christ’s redemptive work, seen in the creation of heaven and earth. The first two chapters in Genesis give us the creation of the first heavens and earth, while the final two chapters of Revelation illuminate the final creation of a new heaven and earth. Coming back to our old homeland is in keeping not only with our human nature but also with the character of God, who always finishes what he starts. He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end” (Rev. 21:6).

The curse that Adam and Eve brought about in Genesis is now, through the person and work of Jesus Christ, fully defeated. When creation is recapitulated, the curse will be reversed. We are no longer living in paradise; our address is somewhere east of Eden. Humanity has fallen into sin and therefore has come under judgment. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they were banished from the garden. This was partly an act of grace, as God was waiting for the second Adam to bring salvation, but it is an exile, nonetheless. Our great sin has brought endless woe on the human race: guilt, alienation, slavery, warfare, and abuse. As the Godman, Jesus

315 Philip Graham Ryken explains, “The Book of Revelation contains roughly five hundred allusions to or quotations from the Old Testament. In the last two chapters, every major theme from Scripture reappears. Covenant, atonement, temple, and kingdom are all here. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are here, of course. Jesus Christ is here in his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices. We see heaven and earth, sin and salvation, creation and consummation. It is all here in these last two chapters. Philip Graham Ryken. “A New Heaven and A New Earth” in Coming Home: Essays on the New Heaven & New Earth, edited by D.A. Carson and Jeff Robinson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 121.

316 Ryken continues, “What other God could work such a perfect plan—bringing the Bible to such a fitting conclusion and the plan of salvation to such a magnificent culmination—except the God who has been there since before time began and who sees the end from the beginning? It is because God was always there that we find our end in our beginning, and our beginning in our end.” Ibid., 124.

317 According to Ryken, “But when we peek at the last pages of the Bible, we see how the story will end. The dreadful consequences of sin in a fallen world will be overcome; the curse will be reversed. Thus, Revelation 21 and 22 are full of images from Scripture of things that have been damaged and all but destroyed by sin, but one day
Christ has authority over life and death. By the power of his resurrection, he will never die again. And by that same power, he will raise every one of his followers to eternal life. The Gospel culminates in this truth, that the person and work of Jesus Christ is completely adequate to bring the restoration of all things. Jesus was only the first to rise. His plan is for all of his children to rise, and never to die again. No more death! The death of Christ is the death of death, and his resurrection is the birth of eternal life.318

All believers presently struggle with temptation and sin, but the temporary power of sin cannot keep us from an eternity with Christ and cannot take away the truth that one day Jesus will return and bring all his children into a final state of freedom and sinless perfection. A great change will take place—a total reversal. Whether we are talking about marriage, the city, physical pain, death, broken relationships, or international conflicts—anything that is wounded in this fallen world—the curse will be reversed.319 Due to Jesus’ finished work on the cross, all believers are filled with the Gospel hope that salvation has been accomplished and that believers now stand positionally justified in right relationship with God. The key for preaching the Gospel in Restoration should always focus on Jesus Christ. As Philip Graham Ryken puts it, “when salvation is consummated, then creation will be recapitulated, and the curse reversed. But at the center of it all will be the person of Jesus Christ, whose presence will make heaven to be heaven.”320 The Gospel is not just something that has been done for us, it is the something that will be restored.” Ibid., 124-125.

318 Ibid., 128.

319 Ryken further explains, “God’s plan is not simply to take us back somewhere. He does not intend simply to unwind or rewind something. He wants to carry things forward to absolute perfection. God will bring everything to the perfect conclusion that he always intended—something way above and far beyond anything we’ve ever seen before. The promise is not just being taken away from earth and heaven; it’s a new earth as well as a new heaven. God will not simply take us out of this world into another world, but he will make this world new.” Ibid., 132-133

320 Ibid., 134.
continues to forgive, challenge, change, and transform us. The Gospel will be the something that continues to sustain us for all eternity. The new heaven and the new earth will be everything that Revelation promises, and infinitely more—forever. The sufferings of persecution, sin, pain, and loss will last only a little while, but the triumph of our reign with Christ will last forever.321

321 Ryken concludes, “Eternity is essential to the blessedness of the new heaven and the new earth. If they did not last forever, then they could not captivate us with their blessing. But the repeated promise of Revelation is that all of these things will be ours forever. The people of God in glory will not know this bitterness feeling because when we get to heave, the blessings of God will be ours forever and ever, uninterrupted for all eternity. The Scripture says that ‘the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever’ (1 John 2:17). The new heaven and the new earth will be the last heaven and the last earth. They will remain in the brightness of their glory forever. This is why they are described in terms of gold and jewels—precious things from earth that point to the permanence of heaven. The brightness of that glory will be the radiant splendor of God himself. Since his glory will never fade, our glory will never be diminished. It truly will be an eternal glory—glory in absolute perfection extended out into eternity—a forever of ‘forevers’—a joy that will never, ever end.” Ibid., 136-137.
Chapter Five

Ten-Step Strategy for Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons: Steps and Applications

Five-step Process for Interpreting the Text

The Preparation for the CGES will focus on a ten-step process for writing a complete sermon outline. In this chapter, a preparation guide utilizing the CGES is presented and demonstrated with John 14:1-14 as an example. For this guide, the preparation process for preaching is divided into two parts: a five-step process for interpreting the text and a five-step process for developing and writing a CGES. The process of interpreting the text is based on the principles of the CGES as the key interpretive tool. Through this methodology, the elements of the text can be analyzed, interpreted, and integrated into the system to maximize both the time and work needed to complete a solid CGES.

322 The ten-step CGES preparation process proposed in this chapter is a method that strengthens the process of sermon preparation and the sermon outline/writing, by applying the principles and methodology of CGES. The use of CGES, is similar to the method or steps suggested by other scholars. Other well-organized proposals for the process of preaching preparation include the ten stages of sermon preparation proposed by Haddon W. Robinson, the seven-step method for biblical preaching by Ramesh Richard, and the 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching by Wayne McDill.
Step 1: The Scripture Text

The first step in preparing a CGES is choosing a Scripture text, and introducing the reader to that text. The basic principle to use when approaching the text is to find Jesus and the Gospel in the biblical text, by framing a single unit of thought. By doing this, the preacher is able to start the preparation of the sermon focused on the main thing. Engaging in this method will in turn help to direct and drive the sermon writing towards the CGES.

323 According to McDill, “You will choose a particular sermon text for any number of reasons. Whatever your plan, the beginning point is to select a legitimate text unit. You must not begin your selection of verses for a text just anywhere. The original writer wrote his material in units of thought that had beginnings and endings. Your preaching text should follow those divisions of the writer’s thought. There are several ways of identifying a text unit. One of the most obvious is by the theme or topic that the writer is treating. The theme can be detected by the repetition of certain related ideas or words. Seeing these relationships of ideas also helps in identifying the theme and structural boundaries of the text.” McDill, 17-18.

324 McDill proposes, “Three tasks that will allow you to complete a fruitful inductive analysis of the text: preparing a structural diagram of the text, recording your observations as to what the details in the text reveal, and raising questions that need answers for effective research.” McDill, 19. For an in depth process of these ideas, as well as practical examples, see Section 1: Text Analysis in McDill.

325 Chapell identifies, “Preachers determine the meaning of a passage by seeing not only how words are used in the context of a book or its passages but also how the passage functions in the entire scope of Scripture. An accurate interpretation requires preachers to ask, ‘How does this text disclose the meaning or the need of redemption?’ Failure to ask and to answer this question leads to preaching that is highly moralistic or legalistic because it focuses on the behaviors a particular passage teaches without disclosing how the biblical writer was relating those behaviors to the work of the Savior.” Chapell, 79-80.


327 McDill explains, “The purpose is to let the text speak. Your aim is to understand the intended message of the text writer. That means you are not primarily looking for a sermon. You are analyzing the text to understand it. An effective expository sermon will come only out of that understanding. The aim of your study in this phase is to examine every aspect of the text in order to come to an understanding of the writer’s meaning.” McDill, 18-19.

328 McDill offers both the Text Idea and the Sermon Idea as being of extreme importance. “The Text Idea is the core idea of the text worded as subject/modifier and stated as a complete, past-tense sentence. It contains reference to certain historical elements associated with the text–writer or speaker, secondary persons or readers, the tone or purpose of the passage, circumstances of the writing, and special literary features. The Sermon Idea has the same subject/modifier as the core of the text idea, worded as a present-tense, universal statement, without the historical elements of the text idea.” Ibid., 88.
Step 2: Identifying the Theme

Step two in preparing a CGES is the importance of discovering the theme of the entire Biblical book, regardless of whether the sermon is focused on one particular book of the Bible or if the sermon is a series or stand-alone sermon. Identifying the theme will help to identify and determine the sermon idea, as well as highlight the importance of context in preaching, as context is necessary to discern the writer’s central idea. The context supports the primary theme. An understanding of the overall theme of the book then provides guidance as we examine particular passages. If we are correct about the theme of a book, we will want to see how the specific text fits into that theme.

Step 3: Developing the Sermon Idea

The third step in preparing a CGES is developing the sermon idea. The sermon idea will serve to drive the point of the biblical text idea and sermon. The sermon idea should be simple enough to be remembered and should be one strong sentence that conveys the message.

Ibid., 78.
Ibid., 51.

McDill highlights, “An idea can be more easily worded by breaking it down into its component parts. This helps you identify the core of the text idea, which later becomes the basis for the sermon idea. Though it is best to state the text idea and the sermon idea as complete sentences, the concept at the heart of those sentences can be stated in two words. A sermon topic stated in one word is too general and broad. A general subject can be focused into a pointed idea by the use of a modifier to limit the scope. So, the clear wording of the text idea involves a subject and modifier. An idea is not really an idea unless it has both a subject, the central topic of the idea, and a modifier, the defining focus of the idea.” Ibid., 76.

McDill explains, “The text idea is a concept derived from the words of the biblical writer that the preacher takes to be the writer’s intended message to his original readers. The text idea is designed by two words carefully selected as subject and modifier. The one-word subject answers the question, ‘What is the writer talking about?’ It is the dominante theme of the text. The one-word modifier is a second theme that focuses and defines the subject. It answers the question, ‘How does the writer limit the scope of what he is talking about?’ The two themes in combination identify as precisely as possible to the preacher the idea presented in the text. The full statement of the text idea requires a complete past-tense sentence including the subject/modifier with the historical context from the text. The subject/modifier of the text idea becomes the subject/modifier of the sermon idea as the text shapes the sermon.” Ibid., 77.
All the other parts of the CGES methodology will be influenced by the sermon idea, so having a one sentence sermon idea is key. The preacher is welcome to add notes or anything else they find necessary once the sermon idea has been established, but again the sermon idea needs to be one strong sentence. Every writer on speech or homiletics emphasizes the importance of a single idea as the theme for any address. The speaker is urged to write a carefully worded sentence that expresses the idea.333

**Step 4: Analyzing and Explaining the Literary Features**

The fourth step in the CGES is to analyze and explain the literary features of the passage. Genre is one of the key elements in regard to the literary features of a passage. We should not think that the message of a text can be divorced from the literary form of the text. The text is analyzed along with a logical systematic flow, with the meaning of the text, as well as the author intended meaning, being grasped and explained.336 A basic principle of biblical

333 According to McDill, “The sermon idea is a universal principle that applies to everyone who might hear it instead of a particular message to the writer’s audience. It is a timeless truth that can be stated confidently in any generation instead of a historical statement for the biblical world. Thus, it is stated in present-tense language as a universal theological principle. You should be able to pull the sermon idea away from the rest of the sermon and state it as a complete idea of theological truth. It should stand on its own as true and clear, even without the sermon structure and development. Once clearly stated, this sermon idea guides the preparation of the sermon.” Ibid., 94.

334 McDill explains, “Literary features include recurring themes, the particular genre of a text, figurative language, or reference to other events or stories. Sometimes the literary features will not be the central element of the text but should be mentioned.” Ibid., 93.

335 McDill continues, “Like shelling pecans and throwing away the hulls, we may just want to get at the meat of the passage. But human communication does not work that way. The means of communication are so intertwined with the message of the text that the style and form of the writing becomes part of the message. In a larger sense we usually think of literary forms such as historical narrative, poetry, prophecy, gospel, parable, epistle, or apocalyptic material.” Ibid., 59.

336 McDill identifies, “The historical nature of the original writing of the text means that certain actors were involved. Consider first the writer of the text, particularly for epistles, psalms, prophetic books, and apocalyptic material. In these cases, the writer is the one expressing himself. In narrative texts the speaker or key character may be the important person who shapes the message. In the Gospels, you may be uncertain whether to refer to the Gospel writer as the key character or the speaker or actor in the narrative. It is legitimate to refer to either. As you read the text, you can discern the writer’s purpose in what he has said. In the epistles the purpose is often didactic; the writer is intending to teach theology. Sometimes it is exhortative; the writer is urging his readers to faith or action. Prophetic writers are warning against sin and judgment. The psalmists often express praise and call
hermeneutics is that the intended meaning of any passage is the meaning that is consistent with the sense of the literary context in which it occurs. In the story of God (which we have previously identified as the Drama of Scripture or Meta-Narrative), there consists of 4 Acts, like that of a play. Act 1, Creation (God creates everything, and it is very good); Act 2, Fall (We mess it up); Act 3, Redemption (through Jesus); Act 4, Restoration (Jesus will return to bring a full restoration of all things). Identifying where in the story of God the selected passage falls will help to establish further context, genre, and ultimately the literary features of the passage.

**Step 5: Establishing the Interrogative**

In this step, the preacher is asking who, what, when, where, why, and how questions. What is the text saying, and what reality is the text communicating? These kinds of questions will help the preacher to get a sense of the bigger questions in the Scripture and a better stance on how to communicate them. The content of preaching is what is there. Often, simply discerning and establishing the tone of the author can illuminate the attitude of the writer, which is apparent in the way he expresses himself. Is he rejoicing? Is he frustrated? Is he sorrowful? Is he affectionate? This tone may differ within the book and even within a preaching text.

on others to praise God. The Gospel writers generally intended with their accounts to demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of God. Key characters in a text may also reflect a purpose in what they say. In narrative passages the dialogue is often the key to interpretation. You can tell by the context what the nature of the speech is. Other than the writer or key character in the text, there will be readers, hearers, and other characters in the drama. Sometimes secondary characters will be individuals; sometimes groups. Sometimes they are named; sometimes only identified in general terms. The circumstances of the writing often have a real effect on the message of a text.” Ibid., 91–92.

337 Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, 214.

338 According to Klein et. al, “The sermon idea translated into a question by the use of one of the following: who, what, when, where, why, how. It then calls for various features of the text writer’s treatment of his theme.” Ibid., 65.


340 According to McDill, “Noting the tone of the writer will help understand his message. Remember, the
Five-step Process for Developing and Writing a CGES

After completing the process of interpreting the text by utilizing the five-step process above, the first step in writing a CGES is transitioning from Scripture text, theme, sermon idea, literary features, and the interrogative–into the body of the sermon manuscript. Creating a workable outline of the sermon is the next step in this process. Steven D. Mathewson argues that the sermon outline must be created with a clear structure. Haddon W. Robinson insists that the preacher should have a clear purpose and aim for effective and biblical preaching. The CGES outline helps to further this cause.

Step 1: Transitional Sentence

A transitional sentence is a statement designed to open the way into your sermon body and division statements, specifically by identifying a subject, a modifier and a predicate. The manner of his presentation becomes part of the message with the ideas. Different writers have different styles. A single writer may express himself in different as well. The factors of style can often be seen in a text–passion, zeal, harshness, formality, fluency, accusation, entreaty. Discerning the tone and style of the text will help you understand the meaning of the words the writer uses.” McDill, 59.


343 McDill identifies, “The transitional sentence is the fourth sentence in the traditional method designed to take the text writer’s idea safely from the text to the sermon. It answers the question raised in the interrogative and introduces the predicates of the sermon idea that will be found in the text treatment of that idea. The predicates are the answers to the question the interrogative raises and are the basis for your sermon division statements.” McDill, 111.

344 According to McDill, “An idea is not really an idea unless it has both a subject, the central topic of the idea, and a modifier, the defining focus of the idea. When we talk about the subject of a text, we mean the theme that, in one-word, best answers the question, ‘What is the writer talking about?’ The limiting element in formulating an idea is the modifier. This word clarifies the idea by answering the question, ‘How does the writer limit the scope of what he’s talking about?’ Since he doesn’t intend to say all that can possibly be said on his subject, what is the limiting factor in his discussion of the subject? The predicate is the part of the sentence that expresses the being or action of the subject and answers the question, ‘What is the writer saying about what he is talking about?’” Ibid., 76, 101.
interrogative and transitional sentences indicate how the homiletic idea is going to be developed in the body of the sermon. 

A Key Word is also a major part of the development of the transitional sentence. When completing the CGES, these elements are vital and should always be included.

**Step 2: Sermon Division Statements**

The sermon division statements make up the core of the CGES methodology and are one of the most important elements in sermon structure. The divisions of a sermon are the sections of the sermon body where the main treatment of the sermon idea is presented. Each of the divisions is related to the sermon idea as a logical aspect of its truth.

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345 According to James Braga, “The transitional sentence always contains a key word that will be a distinguishing feature of the main headings of the outline. The key word is a useful homiletic device that makes it possible to classify the main divisions of the outline in the transitional sentence. There must, of course, be structural unity in the outline, for without it there can be no key word to connect the transitional sentence to each main division and the main divisions to each other. Therefore, a good test of structural unity in an outline is to see if you can apply the same key word to each of the main divisions.” James Braga, *How to Prepare Bible Messages* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2005), 144-146.

346 McDill confirms, “The key word is a plural, abstract noun that names a category to classify the sermon division statements. The question you have attached to your sermon idea to make the interrogative will usually lead you easily to the appropriate key word. The key word identifies a set of ideas by classifying them as principles, advantages, certainties, changes, disciplines, evidences, evils, faults, and so on. Each of your division statements (your sermon points) is matched to the others as a principle, a certainty, or some other plural abstract noun. So, your division statements will be a set. Like a set of tires or a set of dishes, they will match. They will all complete the sermon idea and be stated in a similar fashion.” Ibid., 111.

347 According to McDill, “The divisions of the sermon are the sections of the sermon body where the main treatment of the sermon idea is presented. Each of the divisions is related to the sermon idea as a logical aspect of its truth.” Ibid., 101.

348 McDill highlights, “The subject answers the question, ‘What is the writer talking about?’ The modifier answers the question, ‘How does the writer limit the scope of what he is talking about?’ Finally, the predicates answer the question, ‘What is the writer saying about what he is talking about?’ The word predicate is a grammatical term referring to that part of a sentence that expresses the being or action of the subject.” Ibid.

349 According to McDill, “The divisions of the sermon are the sections of the sermon body where the main treatment of the sermon idea is presented. Each of the divisions is related to the sermon idea as a logical aspect of its truth.” Ibid., 101.

350 McDill again confirms, “The division statements are sentences that express the idea to be treated in that section. These statements, like the sermon idea, are complete sentences in the present tense that express universal theological truths. Division statements reflect the text writer’s treatment of his subject. They complete the text-to-sermon bridge by expressing the predicates of the sermon idea as they are revealed in the text.” Ibid., 101.
statements can be written in any number of ways. They can be questions. They can be commands. They can be short phrases or complete sentences. They can be mixed so that they do not seem to belong together. But these various forms are not all of equal value.351 Once the sermon division statements and the sermon divisions have been established, preachers then move into the explanation and illustration phase. Explanation is sermon development that aims for an understanding of biblical and homiletical concepts by using background and interpretation material. Illustration is the function of sermon development that illuminates the sermon idea for the imagination of the hearer, giving the biblical truth a familiar enough image that the listener can see it in his mind.352

The persuasive elements within the explanation and illustration sections of the CGES help the listener to conceptualize the ideas within the body of the sermon, in order to help persuade them to action. Division statements need explaining, and you will want to explain how your text is the basis for the principles you state in your outline.353 Illustration serves to clarify the textual truth in the mind of the hearer with images that appeal to the imagination.354 Once these persuasive elements have been established, the preacher is then able to craft as many of these combinations as necessary to create the complete CGES outline.

In the examples given in the Appendix, several different sermon division statements, sermon divisions, explanations, illustrations, and transitional sentences are used. The examples

352 Ibid., 125.
353 According to McDill, “You may also want to explain further what you mean by your statement. You will go to the text and point to significant words and phrases. You will give historical background and other fruit of your textual study. You may resketch the narrative of your text. All of this is explanation. It is aimed at establishing the basic concepts in the mind of your hearer.” Ibid., 126.
354 McDill further explains, “The word illustration is from Latin, lustrare, to illuminate. It means ‘to throw light on an idea, to illuminate it.’ A sermon illustration is any word picture that gives the biblical truth a familiar enough image that the listener can see it in his mind.” Ibid., 126-127.
given are in order to help the preacher get a better idea of how this methodology looks and operates. Restating the transitional sentence once again (at the end of the body of the sermon) helps to move the sermon to the Conclusion, Argumentation, and Application. The preacher does not need to work up a new transitional sentence, he simply needs to restate the original transitional statement in the CGES outline.

**Step 3: Introduction and Conclusion**

Once the work of heavy lifting has been done, it’s time to develop the Introduction, and then to bring the sermon to a Conclusion. Great things can be accomplished in sermons through Introductions. The sermon Introduction should arouse interest in the message. According to Jay Adams, “The purpose of an introduction is to lead the congregation into the matter to be discussed. If it fails to do that, it fails. An introduction must indicate what a message will be about. An introduction that arouses interest but does not focus attention on the subject actually gives listeners a false lead. Confusion and resentment can result. It is imperative to keep in mind that while the preacher has studied, prayed, developed, edited, and finalized the entire sermon, the congregation typically has very little idea as to the direction.

355 According to Mark Dever, “Each preacher will develop his own style, of course, but introductions should not be thrown away as if they don’t matter or are not spiritually useful. On the contrary, introductions form a kind of funnel for the congregation’s interest. They draw together all the disparate and conflicting focuses that mark your congregation and pull attention to the themes you’re going to be preaching on.” Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 103.

356 Chapell explains, “An introduction should present listeners with an arresting thought that draws them away from apathy or competing interests and makes them say, ‘Hey! I need to hear this.’ An introduction may pique curiosity, concern, mirth, or wonder, but no matter what avenue a preacher takes, the task remains the same: Get their attention! If the opening sentence does not stimulate interest when it stands alone, reject it. Make the opening words count.” Chapell, 239.

357 Adams, 59.

358 Chapell, 240.

359 William L. Hogan encourages, “You must remember that you come to the pulpit having spent hours in the study pouring over the passage on which you are to preach. You have been thinking over your subject for days, or weeks, perhaps even for years. But your people have probably not thought about it at all. Indeed, they may not
begin with a thought-provoking question, a story, a quotation, an anecdote, or a host of other attention-getting alternatives. Still, the introduction succeeds only when at its end the central thought in listeners’ minds is the subject of the sermon.

The purpose of the conclusion is to conclude—not merely to stop. In the conclusion, the preacher is preparing the listener to respond with action, by means of volition or of thinking. A conclusion is a sermon’s destination. Ending contents are alive—packed with tension, drama, energy, and emotion. The conclusion in the CGES is not the stopping point of the sermon, it is another aspect of transitioning from information to application. Whatever direction the preacher takes, it is imperative that he sets up the listeners for a call to action.

even know what it is going to be before you stand up and speak (pray that they will know after you have finished). The chasm separating their thoughts from biblical ideas may be vast. In the introduction you must enter their world and persuade them to go with you into the world of biblical truth, and specifically the truth that is the burden of the sermon.” William L. Hogan, “It Is My Pleasure to Introduce…,” *Expositor* 1, no. 3 (August 1987): 1.

360 Chapell explains, “An introduction may illustrate, demonstrate, state, imply, indicate by contrast, or in some other way signal what a preacher will address. By the conclusion of the introduction, however, every listener should know what the message is about.” Chapell, 240.

361 According to Robinson, “You should conclude, and the conclusion should produce a feeling of finality. Like an able lawyer, a minister asks for a verdict. Your congregation should see your idea entire and complete, and they should know and feel what God’s truth demands of them. Directly or indirectly, the conclusion answers the question, ‘So what? What difference does this make?’ And your people face another question as a result of an effective conclusion: ‘Am I willing to allow God to make that difference in my experience?’” Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 176.

362 Dever explains, “Ideally we as preachers want the conclusion of our sermon to be weighty. We want it to bring the full weight and force of our message down, like a wedge, into the hardened sinner’s heart, the complacent Christian’s will, or the wounded saint’s soul. It needn’t be anything loud or dramatic and shouldn’t be anything that would distract from the points we’ve been making from the Scriptures. It should simply drive those points further in with one final, heavy statement or question.” Dever and Gilbert, 117.

363 Chapell continues, “This never means bombast and does not necessitate grandiloquence, since deep feeling and powerful thought are often expressed in the most quiet, sincere terms. Masterful conclusions sometimes thunder, and other times they crackle with an electricity barely audible to the ears, but the best endings always soundly register in the heart.” Chapell, 254.
Step 4: Argumentation

One of the unique aspects of the CGES is that the conclusion is not the end of the sermon. Application and Argumentation are essentially the “so what” of the CGES outline. The Argumentation functions in sermon development to guide sermon ideas through the rational barriers in the thinking of the hearer by giving him reasons to accept those ideas as valid and relevant.364 Sermons must have a persuasive element in the argumentation,365 as all sermons are designed to persuade.366 Argumentation must continually focus on God’s grace, and deliberately avoid moralism, ethical rules or behavior. A continual focus on why Jesus is so important, and why the Gospel message is continually “good news”367 is essential when making an argumentative case. Our works do not cause God’s love, and our weaknesses do not jeopardize it. This does not mean that sin has no effect in the lives of believers. We may experience divine discipline as a result of our sin or simply have to face the natural and painful consequences of

364 Ibid., 125.

365 According to Chapell, “Commanding people to do what is right without explaining why or how inevitably hurts them because they are left to consider their works and abilities as the cause of God’s acceptance or affection. As a result, much well-intended instruction dispensed with the motive of helping people hurts them. If all they hear are the ‘shoulds’ (i.e. what you should do), believers will either face despair or feign self-righteousness. Healing of the soul begins with the message that God graciously accepts our works offered to him in the love and thanksgiving that results from apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ.” Chapell, 318.

366 McDill explains, “But if you are to be persuasive, you will have to make a case for your ideas. You will have to demonstrate that your point is reasonable and worthy of belief, that what you are saying makes sense Argument is that part of your support material in which you give reasons for accepting the principles you are presenting.” McDill, 127.

367 According to Chapell, “Christians cannot gain or earn any more of God’s love because grace has already granted and secured all the love there is to have. We may experience more of God’s blessings and sense more of his fellowship as a result of our obedience, but we do not risk God’s rejection because we have not progressed sufficiently in holiness.” Chapell, 319.
ignoring the standards that God gives for our good. As in any aspect of sermon preparation, balance is needed in regard to the argumentations well.

**Step 5: Application**

Application is the form of development that presents the implications of sermon ideas for human experience, which is the final step in the CGES outline. It can be descriptive in analyzing contemporary life or prescriptive in advocating certain behavior. Application presents the implications of biblical truth for the contemporary audience. Application helps guide the listener to acknowledge what the Gospel has, is, and will continue to do in direct application to what they know to be true in the here and now. The Gospel message is a vital aspect of the Application, as it requires a response. Self-consciousness often threatens our presenting Christ

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368 Chapell concludes, “Preaching that is faithful to these biblical truths never prods believers toward holiness with the threat of divine retribution, for to do so would make our works rather than his grace the foundation of our relationship with God. The guilt of our past, present, and future sin was placed upon Christ in his sacrifice on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 10:10-12; 1 Pet. 3:18). We may properly feel remorse for the sin we commit, but this subjective guilt that we feel and that grives the Holy Spirit does not annul the finished work of Christ, which removes all objective guilt from our account.” Chapell, 319.

369 Devers encourages, “The main message we need to apply every time we preach is the gospel. Some people do not yet know the good news of Jesus Christ. Some people who have been sitting under your preaching may have been distracted, or asleep, or daydreaming, or otherwise not paying attention. They need to be informed of the gospel. They need to be told. Others may have heard, understood, and perhaps even genuinely have accepted the truth of the gospel but now find themselves struggling with doubt about the very matters you were addressing (or assuming) in your message. Such people need to be urged to believe the truth of the good news of Christ.” Dever and Gilbert, 115.

370 McDill explains, “Application is a call for action, for putting the principles of Scripture to work in our lives. It deals with attitudes, behavior, speech, lifestyle, and personal identity. It appeals to the conscience, to values, to conviction, to commitment to Christ.” Ibid., 125.

371 According to Clowney, “We live in a world that is groaning, awaiting the redemption of the sons of God. We ourselves groan in the midst of sorrows and suffering. But the Holy Spirit groans in us and with us. Nothing can separate us from our Savior’s love. We cast our cares on him, for he cares for us.” Clowney, 56-57.

372 Dever explains, “Ideally we as preachers want the conclusion of our sermon to be weighty. We want it to bring the full weight and force of our message down, like a wedge, into the hardened sinner’s heart, the complacent Christian’s will, or the wounded saint’s soul. It needn’t be anything loud or dramatic and shouldn’t be anything that would distract from the points we’ve been making from the Scriptures. It should simply drive those points further in with one final, heavy statement or question.” Dever and Gilbert, 117.
in our sermons. We cannot hold him forth if we lack awareness of his presence, which must be communicated in application. Faith in our hearers should be the natural outcome of preaching, as it seems reasonable to press for change in the hearer, whether that change is born of faith or not. The overarching aim of preaching is to call for faith in the hearer. Preaching for faith means planning every element of sermon design to achieve that aim. In the application phase, the concepts of faith and obedience must be illuminated, as they are so inseparable in Scripture as to be two sides of one idea. There can be no authentic obedience without faith, just as there can be no authentic faith that does not result in obedience. It is vital, therefore, that we look carefully at our preaching aims. Every desired result of application in the lives of the people we serve should spring from faith. Any other motivation—guilt, fear, pity, religious duty, dedication—is dead and carnal without faith. Paul even writes that “whatever is not from faith is sin” (Rom.

374 Clowney explains, “Looking to the Lord himself is the answer. Turn the eyes of your hearers to look at him. Use dialogue. What are your hearers saying to the Lord? Quote what they may be thinking. Think of how the Lord’s Word is addressed to a person in the congregation or audience. Imagine what some of your hearers may be saying to the Lord and declare answers from his Word. You are mediating a conversation of a saint and a sinner to the Lord himself. Remember that his word does not return empty, and that he is speaking it. Keep your language vivid, not by illustrations and figures of speech that steal attention from him, but by vivid references to what the Lord says and does.” Clowney, 58.

375 McDill reveals, “I have since come to the conclusion that the fundamental objective of preaching is faith. That is the one response over all others we want to see in our hearers. Most of us, however, take such an idea for granted. While we may agree that faith is the desired response, we really do not plan our sermons for faith. We aim at other responses more likely to produce immediate and outward results. Or we aim at no particular response at all.” McDill, 188-189.

376 According to McDill, “Since biblical faith is objective, the focus of preaching must be the object of faith, the person of God. The preacher enhances faith by pointing his hearers to God, his character, his capabilities, his intentions, and his record. Not only does the preacher plan his sermons for faith; he also examines his own philosophy of ministry and his understanding of the Christian life for the centrality of faith. Preaching for faith requires a foundation of faith in the preacher.” Ibid., 189.

377 McDill continues, “True conversion comes only through faith. ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household’ (Acts 16:31 NIV) The only acceptable relationship with God is by trust in him. ‘But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him’ (Heb. 11:6). Faith is the basis for every aspect of the life of a believer. ‘The righteous will live by his faith’ (Hab. 2:4 NIV).” Ibid., 189-190.
14:23). Even though human motives are always mixed, our response to God must be based finally on our trust in him as he makes himself known in Christ.378

378 McDill concludes, “How does one get such faith? It is a gift from God. And God’s method of giving it is clear. ‘Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ’ (Rom. 10:17 NASB). This is because the message God has for man concerns himself as he is revealed in Christ. That divine truth has an impact at the deepest level of man’s spirit. ‘It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes’ (Rom. 1:16 NASB). Ibid., 190.
Example of the CGES: John 14:1-14

This section provides an example of preparing a CGES for John 14:1-14 according to the steps previously presented.

Step 1: The Scripture Text

The chosen text was John 14:1-14. This section of Scripture examines how Jesus Himself claimed to be “The One Path to The Father.” Reading from the ESV, we pickup in John 14, beginning in verse 1. Jesus is speaking to His disciples and He says:

1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” 8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me,

379 For the CGES Model, this section of Scripture was chosen to preach from based on the preacher’s own personal quiet time. As McDill explains (see Step 1: The Scripture Text), a text can be chosen for a number of reasons, and for the purpose of this example/template, this section of Scripture just happened to be the source of personal study.
or else believe on account of the works themselves. 12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.380

Introduction

This week I’ve been on the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia working on my Doctoral studies. It has been a great week full of information, new classmates, new ideas, new theories, and new challenges. Coming from Grand Canyon University, I thought I was aware of how large the Liberty campus would be, but I was mistaken, I had no idea how big Liberty actually was. I was pleasantly surprised at the size of this institution, but that was also an issue.

To get anywhere on GCU’s campus you can pretty much walk, but at Liberty that idea is a little harder. In fact, on my first day I asked several people where certain places were, and they all gave me really good directions. My follow up to them was, “Can I walk it?” This seemed like a reasonable question, but each time I asked I was given that, “Well you could but why would you” look? Once I started getting around that first day, I began to understand the looks that I had been getting. Because of the size of Liberty, taking the buses around was much more convenient and much more time saving. I could have tried to walk around and find my way on my own, but that would have ended badly for me, probably lost in a place that I wouldn’t know how to get out of.

Haven’t we all been in that spot at one time or another, where we wanted to go somewhere but in order to get there, we needed directions and help? Maybe it was driving with our spouse to

380 The CGES Model does not require the preacher write out the text he is using to preach from in his outline, however, it is recommended. Doing so keeps the Scripture text central, easy to access, and as my great professor of Homiletics, Dr. Kevin King has said in class, “Repetition is the recipe for retention.” Due to this particular text being primarily Jesus speaking, the idea of using red lettering for Jesus’ words helps to identify his words from others in the text.
a party at a new friend’s house, maybe it was transporting our kids to a practice or a game for the first time, or maybe it was trusting Uber to pick us up and take us to a destination that we just didn’t want to drive to. Haven’t we all started out going one way and been turned around so much that we found ourselves so lost that we needed to reach out to Siri or Google maps or even call that friend to direct us to the right path? Routes that without help, we just wouldn’t be able to find. We have all, at one time or another, become reliant on someone or something to get us to a destination. This was the case for me this last week, as I quickly became reliant on the Liberty Transit System to get me to the destination I needed.

In this same way, aren’t we all searching for a way to connect with and find the path to God? I mean, we are all here today for some reason, right? You didn’t just come to church because you were looking for kicks on a Sunday morning. You didn’t carve out an hour and a half of your day because you just happened to have that extra time this week. My guess is you are here for the same reason that I’m here, because we are looking to connect with God. We are trying to find the path or way to God, because we all sense that we are (or could be) missing something.

Step 2: Identifying the Theme

The theme of John’s Gospel is that Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God. By believing in Jesus, people can have eternal life (John 20:30–31).

Step 3: Developing the Sermon Idea

“The One Path to The Father is accessible through Jesus as our Prophet, Priest and King.” Jesus is the only mediator between God and man that can usher in people to experience relationship with the Father. In our text today, Jesus is preparing his followers for the upcoming turmoil that will culminate with his death on the cross, and He comforts them with the truth that because of
what is about to transpire, the Father has a place prepared for the faithful elect, where Jesus will ultimately welcome and accept His people into the heavenly realm for eternity.

**Step 4: Analyzing and Explaining the Literary Features**

The main genre is gospel, which combines three ingredients—what Jesus did, what Jesus said (discourse and dialogue), and then people’s response to Jesus. We’ve been talking about the Story of God, which is known as the Drama of Scripture or Meta-Narrative. It consists of 4 Acts, like that of a play. Act 1, Creation (God creates everything, and it is very good); Act 2, Fall (We mess it up); Act 3, Redemption (through Jesus Christ); Act 4, Restoration (Jesus will return to bring a full Restoration of all things). We pick up in our passage today at the end of Act 2, right on the edge of Act 3 where Jesus is preparing to go to the cross and usher in the Redemption of God’s chosen people.

**Step 5: Establishing the Interrogative**

Having withdrawn from the crowds of Jerusalem, Jesus pours his time and efforts into his motley crew of disciples—whose lives and witness will be an extension of His own. Jesus begins His Farewell Discourse in Chapter 13 as He prepares his new messianic community, represented by the Twelve (minus Judas), for the time subsequent to his exaltation to the Father. The community is first cleansed both literally and symbolically through the foot washing (13:1–17), and then figuratively through the removal of Judas the betrayer (13:18–30).

Jesus then gives a new commandment, which can be understood only in light of the finished work of Christ, which we now know to be fulfilled because we have the complete, inerrant Scriptures. God has always called his people to a life of neighborly love (Lev. 19:18), reaffirmed by Jesus as the second great commandment in Matthew 22:36–40. But the new commandment presupposes a new paradigm. The greatness of Jesus’ love for us is now the motivation for our
loving others. If we truly and deeply love Jesus, we will love what and whom he loves—the unlovely, the oppressed, those very different from us, and those whose actions have maybe even damaged us.

Jesus then identifies that Peter will deny His Lord very soon, which must have been heart wrenching for Peter to hear, but even in that difficult situation and circumstance, there is something comforting to me about seeing how slow the disciples were to understand Jesus’ teaching and how reluctant they were of the depth of their own their brokenness (sound familiar to anyone besides just me)? If Jesus could care for these, then there is hope for frail and faulty people like us. Jesus is the patient teacher, the wonderful and merciful Savior. As in Peter’s life, Jesus not only foresees our betrayals; he also foresees our forgiveness and our restoration.

The cross, where Jesus is actually heading, looms large in the context of John 14. After Jesus explains to his disciples that the upcoming events of his life are going to take a seemingly radical detour, even to the point of his closest followers denying any affiliation with him, Jesus helps to comfort his followers with the truth of who He is and what He is about to do for them. Even with the agony of the cross at the forefront of Jesus’ mind, Christ takes the time to comfort His closest followers and prepare them for the eternity that the Father has prepared for those whom he has called.

**Step 6: Transitional Sentence**

In *Comforting* his disciples, Jesus gives us an extraordinary summary of who He is (King), What He is Like (Priest), and What He is Going to Do (Prophet).

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381 The Key Word in the CGES for this sermon is “Comforting” as Jesus knows the havoc that is about to befall him and his followers.
Step 7: Sermon Division Statements

Body

Sermon Division Statement - “The One Path to the Father is accessible through Jesus as our Prophet, Priest and King.” In verses 1-4 we see “Jesus as our Prophet,” in verses 5-11 we see “Jesus as our Priest” and in verses 12-14 we see “Jesus as our King.”

Sermon Division 1 (v.1-4): The One Path to the Father is accessible through Jesus as our Prophet!” (Subject: Belief; Modifier: Trust; Predicate: Destination).

“1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.”

Explanation

Because of the impending trials that the disciples are going to endure when Jesus goes to the cross, the Savior comforts his followers by addressing where their angst is, in their hearts. The disciples are troubled-not because they are rushing toward guilt, pain, shame, or crucifixion, but because they are confused, uncertain of what Jesus means, and threatened by references to his imminent departure.

The way in which Jesus is expecting the disciples to calm their hearts is to believe and trust

In the CGES Model, the SDS is going to help establish and drive the sermon and how the sermon is structured. For this text, the SDS is focused on Jesus being our Prophet, Priest, and King. By establishing the SDS, the Sermon Divisions will each correspond with a section of biblical text, as the sections highlight the offices Jesus exhibits throughout the text.

Developing the Sermon Divisions for this sermon and Scripture are based on both the Key Word and the Sermon Division Statement. Verses 1-4 specifically speak to Jesus’ “Prophet” office, while the other sections of Scripture (which are highlighted below) also speak to the other two specific offices. By establishing these “Comforting” roles, it is easy to come up with a working SD for each of the sections of this text, as they each pertain to one aspect of the “offices” of Jesus.
in him, because Jesus establishes that they have already believed and trusted in God the Father. Jesus offers an invitation to the disciples to extend the object of their faith beyond God the Father, as they have known him in the past, to Jesus as well, for they need to link Jesus with the Father as an appropriate object of faith. Because Jesus invariably speaks the words of God and performs the acts of God, should he not be trusted like God? Because Jesus is going away, the disciples need to have a deep, personal trust in what Jesus is about to endure, because Jesus is going to be going somewhere after his death, to the Father.

**Illustration**

As Prophet, Jesus pronounced an end to all our sin. In the Old Testament, the prophet was the mouthpiece of God to the people. In fact, the prophet often prefaced his words by saying, “Thus says the Lord.” As God’s mouthpiece, the prophet spoke the words of indictment against the people for their sin (Isa. 1:4) and called them to repentance (Isa. 1:18). The prophet also pronounced the forgiveness and pardon of God (Isa. 40:1–2).

Jesus, as the final and sufficient Prophet, has done all of these for us. He came not just proclaiming the Word of God; He is the Word of God (John 1:1). He came to the world because of sin (Matt. 1:21). He proclaimed our need to repent and believe on Him (Mark 1:15). And He proclaimed our pardon and forgiveness for sin (Col. 1:14).

**Sermon Division 2 (v.5-11): The One Path to the Father is accessible through Jesus as our Priest!” (Subject: Presence; Modifier: Fulfillment; Predicate: Example).**

5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough
for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Explanation

After explaining that the disciples can and should be secure in what is about to happen, Jesus shares the reason why his going will be to the disciples’ benefit and advantage. Jesus is going away because he is going to prepare a place for them, a place with the Father in the Father’s house, which is heaven. Not only is he going to prepare a place for them, but he will also be the one who returns to take his disciples back with him for eternity.

Since heaven is in the Father’s house, it would make sense that it’s a place that is full of great joy, peace and love. But even in partially understanding where the disciples will be going, Thomas shows an amazing picture of love, when he stops Jesus to ask a very important question in verse 5, essentially, where is Jesus going?

The disturbing part of his question shows the lack of truly understanding what Jesus was speaking about. Jesus has just explained where they all will be going, yet in Thomas’ reply, he and the other disciples have not actually come to grips with what Jesus has said about their final destination. Jesus doesn’t simply teach the way or the point, he in fact is the way. There is only one way, and that way is Jesus. Only because Jesus is the truth and the life can Jesus be the way for others to come to God, the way for his disciples to attain the many dwelling places in the Father’s house, and therefore the answer to Thomas’s question.
Illustration

As Priest, Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for all our sin. In the Old Testament, the high priest was the mediator between the holy God and His sinful people. As mediator, the high priest entered the Holy Place and offered a sacrifice to God on behalf of the people once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:34). He sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat “because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins” (Lev. 16:16). This he did year after year after year.

Christ, as our Mediator and High Priest, not only offered the sacrifice (once and for all), but He is the sacrifice. Like the high priest of old, Christ entered the Holy Place, but unlike the high priest, He entered to offer Himself. He had to enter only one time, for He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat.

Sermon Division 3 (v.12-14): “The One Path to The Father is accessible through Jesus as our King!” (Subject: Faith; Modifier: Request; Predicate: Results)

12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

Explanation

Jesus, as King, appeals for faith in the disciples. The appeal concludes in vv. 12-14 by focusing on the fruitfulness that anyone who has faith in Jesus will enjoy. The promise Jesus gives is staggering: the person with such faith, will do what Jesus has been doing and will do even greater things—not because he is greater, but because Jesus is greater than any other Prophet, Priest or King and He is going to the Father.
Illustration

As King, Jesus rules in such a way as not to allow sin to reign over us any longer. In the Old Testament, the monarchy was established for the peace, prosperity, and welfare of the nation. The prototype king was David. No king was ever as beloved as he was. He was God’s vice-regent among the people. With David on the throne, the nation of Israel could say, “All is well.” Few things comfort a nation more than having a ruler of righteousness and strength sitting on the throne of power. It was said of David that he “reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people” (2 Sam. 8:15). However, we have a King greater than David. Christ came in the line of David as David’s son and yet also as David’s Lord (Matt. 22:42–45). He is “the ruler of kings on earth” (Rev. 1:5) and “King of kings and Lord of lords” (19:16), including David. He rules with perfect justice and equity. As our King, He has fought our battles and now rules in such a way that sin never can reign over us (Rom. 6:7–14).

Transitional Sentence

In Comforting his disciples, Jesus gives us an extraordinary summary of who He is (King), What He is Like (Priest), and What He is Going to Do (Prophet).

Step 8: Conclusion

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. By boldly affirming these three categories, we can see how Jesus fulfills the three main offices God provided for his covenant people: prophet, priest, and king. As prophet, Jesus is the truth of the Father—he is the Word made flesh, the final word God has spoken to his people (Heb. 1:2). As priest, Jesus is the way to the Father—he is both the sacrifice for our sins and the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 12:24). As king, Jesus is the life from the sovereign giver of life, the eternal Father—who gives life now and in the coming age for eternity (Heb. 6:5). He is the King whom the Father has already installed in Zion (Ps. 2:6) and the
ruler over the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5).

**Step 9: Argumentation**

No matter where you are on this path called life, I’m here to tell you that:

- Jesus Lived the Life None of Us Could Live (Perfect & Sinless).
- Jesus Died the Death We All Deserve to Die (Due to our Nature and Choice to Sin).
- Jesus was Raised on the Third Day (Defeating Satan, Sin and Death).
- Jesus Ascended to the Right Hand of the Father (Preparing an Eternal Place in Paradise for us).

Don’t miss what Jesus actually has said today. If we love him, we will obey him. Jesus does not say if we obey him, he will love us. The gospel turns everything right side up. We can do nothing to earn or maintain a relationship with God. Our obedience merits us nothing; but our obedience is an essential affirmation of our love for Jesus. It is by Jesus’ obedience that we are saved, and it is by our obedience, compelled by a love for Christ, that we express our gratitude for so great a salvation.

Jesus calls for and provides the stability to follow him into the relationship of becoming a disciple. As Jesus deals with the head, heart and hands of the disciple, the relationship and complete trust of the disciple begins to rest in the hope that Jesus has and will accomplish all that he has promised to the disciples he has chosen.

**Step 10: Application**

Jesus is teaching his disciples’ (and us) to imitate the things he did in his life and ministry. The disciples’ (and our) greater works are possible because Jesus is going to the Father, subsequent to his finished work on the cross. So, how well are we following Jesus? Would you say you are a “Silent” disciple (like the silent 9), checking out Jesus, watching Him, taking notes and showing some interest in Him? Are you a “Thomas like” disciple, fully loving Jesus and
looking to continue pursuing Him? Are you a “Phillip like” disciple, needing more and more signs, because you just can’t fully believe and commit? Are you not a disciple at all?

Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is who He says He is, that He did what He said He would do? If you do, be encouraged today that Jesus has forgiven your sins and wants you to walk closely with Him as His disciple. Jesus is preparing a place for you that is more amazing than your greatest dream vacation spot, where sin and death and pain and loneliness and all the garbage in this world does not exists. Jesus is your Prophet, Priest and King who has blazed the trail for you and when He returns, He will take you to the Father on that very path. The Father’s house is an amazing place and we will be going there for all of eternity, because of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

If you can’t answer that question with a yes, then maybe it’s time to accept that you need Jesus. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Maybe it’s time to accept that you are lost without Jesus showing you the path. Maybe it’s time to stop saying no and start living a life of passion, hope, love, grace, forgiveness, freedom and excitement because Jesus has made it possible for you to be reconciled to a God who loves you more than you can possibly think or imagine. Today is the day! You are not here by accident; you were brought to this place for a purpose and that purpose is to meet Jesus. As we close today, I want to give you the opportunity to say yes to Jesus. The way we do that here is to come down to the front of the stage and pray with one of our prayer team members. Jesus says in Matthew 10:32-33, “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

Now is the time, don’t deny Jesus any longer. If you want to say yes to Jesus, if you’re
ready to repent and turn away from your sins, ready to profess Jesus as Lord and be completely forgiven of all your sins past, present and future; then please make your way down to the front of the stage, so that we can pray together for Jesus to become your Lord and Savior. If you came with somebody as a guest bring them with you. If you brought someone who wants to come down and accept Jesus, please come down with them. If you are unable to come down, or are watching online, then simply bow your heads and we will pray together for you to accept Christ, so that we can celebrate together the new life that Jesus offers as our Prophet, Priest and King!
Chapter Six

Conclusion

Preaching is one of the greatest callings that a Christian can have, as preaching helps to illuminate the mind, open the heart, and convince the will of its need for a Savior. The goal in preaching is to help people become more like Jesus Christ. In order for people to become more like Christ, preachers should guide people to an understanding of what the Bible is, as the Scriptures are the specific way God has chosen to reveal himself to all of humanity. The Scriptures primary purpose is to reveal who God is, what God is like, and what God has done for all of humanity.384 This is most easily seen when a sermon incorporates both Jesus Christ and the Gospel. According to Bartholomew & Goheen, “Genesis 1 introduces us to God as the infinite, eternal, uncreated person who by his creative actions brings the whole of creation into existence.”385 The Bible is the story of God, set up in essentially four acts (Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration) that all reveal God to us. Jesus is the star of this drama and the Gospel is the way in which our hero Jesus accomplishes all that God the Father tasked him with.

When preachers preach from the four act drama, they begin with Creation (God creates everything good), then move to the Fall (humanity messes things up), then Redemption (Jesus steps into human history to pay the penalty for the rebellion of humanity) and concludes with Restoration (Jesus will return to recreate everything back to the perfect state that the Father had intended). To preach the Gospel in a penetrating way, then, you do not merely want to talk about an abstract concept of forgiveness and acceptance. Preachers should show their listeners Jesus

384 McDill, 105-107.
385 Bartholomew and Goheen, 168.
himself and all that he came to do for us. To preach the Gospel every time is to preach Christ every time, from every passage. Only when we preach Christ every time can we show how the whole Bible fits together. Preachers help people to see that spiritual formation is a process and journey, that takes time and pressure throughout the entirety of the Christian life. If preaching, in its authentic biblical, apostolic (and Reformational) sense, is to be recovered (and continually focused on), it will also be necessary to recover an enduring commitment to Christ-centered, Gospel-driven, expository preaching. According to Sidney Greidanus, “The Old Testament proclaims God’s mighty acts of redemption. These acts reach a climax in the New Testament when God sends his Son. Redemptive history is the mighty river that runs from the old covenant to the new and holds the two together.” The focus of a CGES will not only strengthen the Scriptural text, but also provide preachers with an opportunity to maximize their time and energy in sermon preparation.

Summary

The purpose of this thesis project was to propose an effective strategy for preparing Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons (CGES). This is accomplished by developing an effective methodology for redemptive sermon preparation. The process and methodology for such a process is based on the principles of CGES as the key preparation tool, seen as a sermon outline, to help preachers in their study and development of a biblical sermon manuscript. Through this methodology, the elements of the text are analyzed, interpreted, and

386 Keller, Preaching: Communicating Faith in a Skeptical Age, 56-57.
387 Gordon, 92.
388 Greidanus, Preaching Christ from the Old Testament, 48.
integrated into the system to maximize both the time and effort needed to complete a solid CGES, as this method helps to provide a set of lens that will enable preachers to keep proper focus when preparing sermons.

Examining and studying the Scriptures, with the correct lens, will ultimately bring preachers to the same conclusion that Jesus and the Apostles came to, that preaching Christ in all of Scripture is actually biblical. Central to the biblical story is the person and work of Jesus Christ, as both the Old and New Testament’s plainly and clearly speak about him. The Old Testament in terms of the future according to prophecy, while the New Testament in terms of the fulfillment of God’s plan in redemptive history. Without Jesus, the biblical story has no discernable direction, purpose, or fulfillment as Jesus is the central figure in the entire biblical narrative.389

Foundational to understanding the whole story of the Bible is the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, future return, and reign of King Jesus. The preacher should realize that faith comes by hearing, as the apostle declared, and specifically that it is by hearing the Word of the Lord. And we know that Paul spoke a relentless rhetorical question, “And how can they hear without a preacher” (Rom. 10:14)?390 Preaching Christ as the central figure in Scripture is the means in which people can hear the Gospel message and faith can be stirred and summoned through the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

The preaching of the life-transforming message of the Gospel is the most important reason the church exists today. Without the clear communication of the Gospel, lives cannot be changed, and relationships cannot be restored. The Gospel-centered preaching ministry that

389 Kim, 58.
390 Kalas, 130.
interprets and delivers the Bible as the Word of God should have a proper methodology to start from and be systematically designed specifically to be an easy and manageable process for study. Doing so provides a way for the correct message to be delivered from the pulpit. The CGES system and method highlight these truths and provide the preacher the opportunity to develop sermons that are both Christ-centered and Gospel-driven.

The Gospel is the good news that God has done something, something for those who could never do something for themselves. The Gospel is newsworthy because it offers new life for those dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-10), freedom for those held in captivity (Isa. 58:6-7; Luke 4:18-19), and the promise of a new reality for a world bound to powers of an age that is passing away (John 3:17; Rom. 2:1-2; Eph. 6:12). The Gospel is not a suggestion, advice, or something we do for ourselves. The Gospel is something that has been done for us by God through the person and work of Jesus Christ, in which we now respond. The Gospel is not about something we (all humanity) can do anything about on our own, as we are helpless. The Gospel is something that has been done for us, by an amazingly loving, faithful, generous and caring God. While the Gospel is about what has been done for us through the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Gospel does in fact result in a whole new way of life.

The Gospel affects all of life because the Gospel brings a new and regenerated life to all who respond to its message. The transformation that takes place is one of re-birth, re-birth into the image of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote that we are to be transformed into the image of Christ and that the ultimate power source for this transformation is found in the Gospel (2 Cor. 3:18). The Gospel affects preaching. Due to the importance of the Gospel, and the transforming power that it brings to broken, desperate souls, preachers should understand and embrace the

391 Alcantara, 16.
truth of the Gospel and incorporate the Gospel into every message they preach. The Gospel is not just something that has been done for us, it is the something that continues to forgive, challenge, change, and transform us, and it will be the something that continues to sustain us for all eternity.

All preaching should illuminate, identify, discern, and distinguish both Jesus Christ and the Gospel. The CGES system provides the potential to establish both elements (Jesus and the Gospel) and should be utilized to maximize the opportunity for life-transformation in both the preacher and the hearers of the message. Because the Gospel is progressive, it is not a one-time event, and as such should be communicated clearly in every sermon. The effects of the Gospel can only be transmitted through the person and work of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father alone. No other message has the power to change lives so radically. Preachers need to examine their own preaching homiletic and system, then willfully and skillfully incorporate the CGES system. Doing so will ensure that all preaching continues to identify Christ and the Gospel, as the Scriptures are all about both the person and work of the Son of God. The CGES will help preachers establish the necessary sermon outlines to further the message of the Gospel in preaching, by illuminating the person and work of Jesus Christ into every sermon they will ever preach. Doing so glorifies God and brings life-transformation to the pinnacle of His creation.

392 Chandler, 14.
APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

THE PRIORITY OF HOMILETICS IN PREACHING TEAMS: A STRATEGY FOR AN EFFECTIVE HOMILETICAL PROCESS FOR CHRIST-CENTERED, GOSPEL-DRIVEN, EXPOSITORY SERMONS

Bob C. Greene
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study on team preaching. This study will focus on sermon preparation regarding redemptive or non-redemptive sermons. You were selected as a possible participant because you are part of the preaching team at Pure Heart Church. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Bob Greene, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to propose an effective strategy for preparing Christ-Centered, Gospel-Driven, Expository Sermons by developing an effective methodology for redemptive sermon preparation.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an online survey of twenty questions. There will be four different sections containing only multiple-choice questions. The survey should take a maximum of thirty minutes.

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; however, there may be benefits to society that include a proper homiletical approach and methodology for redemptive sermon preparation.

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 will have access to the records.

- Participants will access the survey online with full anonymity. All answers given by respondents will be emailed directly to the researcher via Survey Monkey.
• Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

• Only the researcher will have access to these results.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Pure Heart Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting your survey without affecting those relationships.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Bob Greene. You may ask any questions at any point; you are encouraged to contact him at (480) 272-0469 or bgreene@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty chair, Dr. Kevin King, at klkingsr@liberty.edu.

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.

**IRB Protocol Number:** 3894.092019

**IRB Approved Date:** September 20, 2019
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey does not have questions requiring correct answers, so there are no true or false questions and no right or wrong answers. Please carefully answer each question honestly and personally. This survey should not take more than thirty minutes for you to complete.

I. Personal Reflection

1. Are you a full-time pastoral staff member at Pure Heart Church?
   A. Yes
   B. No

2. How many people are regularly attending Weekend worship services in your preaching ministry?
   A. Less than 50
   B. 51 - 500
   C. 501 – 1,000
   D. 1,001 - 2,000
   E. More than 2,000

3. How often do you preach at Pure Heart Church?
   A. 1-3 times per year
   B. 4-6 times per year
   C. 7-9 times per year
   D. More than 10 times per year

II. Team Preaching Ministry

4. What do you think are two of the most important ministries at Pure Heart Church?
   A. Children/Students
   B. Discipleship
   C. Evangelism
   D. Fellowship
   E. Food Pantry/Resource Center
   F. Healing/Recovery
   G. Life Groups
   H. Local/Global Outreach
   I. Ministry with the Deaf
   J. Pastoral Care/Prayer/Chaplains
   K. Preaching
   L. Serving
M. Worship and Arts

5. What do you think is the most important purpose of preaching?
   A. A textually accurate discussion of biblical commands.
   B. Defending the challenges of worldviews that seek to break down both the authority of the Bible and Christian doctrine.
   C. Encouraging the congregation to see the Bible as the Story of God.
   D. Examining solutions to the problems/worries in life that the congregation is experiencing and to give hope/consolation.
   E. Intentionally seeking to identify Christ and the redemptive purpose in every text.
   F. Presenting moral, ethical, and righteous models of this present life to the congregation, in order to give hope and confidence in the afterlife.

6. How would you define Christ-Centered, Gospel Driven preaching? Please check all that apply.
   A. All preaching that the pastor preaches.
   B. Encouraging church growth.
   C. Explaining every concept of the selected text(s).
   D. Giving hope and consolation to the congregation.
   E. Pointing out sin and urging repentance.
   F. Preaching in which the Bible is quoted.
   G. Preaching the selected text line-by-line, precept upon precept, from beginning to end.
   H. Proclaiming the Gospel.
   I. Teaching Christian doctrines with the Scripture.
   J. Teaching moral and ethical lessons and wisdoms from the text.

7. What do you think are five of the most essential principles of biblical interpretation?
   A. Allegorical interpretation (exegesis that assumes that the Bible has various levels of meaning and tends to focus on the spiritual sense, which includes the allegorical sense, the moral sense, and the anagogical sense, as opposed to the literal sense).
   B. Figurative interpretation (not to be understood or communicated literally).
   C. Historical-Grammatical interpretation (hermeneutical method that strives to discover the biblical authors' original intended meaning in the text. The significance of the text is essentially the application or contextualization of the principles from text).
   D. Literal interpretation (verbal/plenary inspiration, according to which not only the biblical message but also the individual words in which that message was delivered or written down were divinely chosen).
   E. Redemptive-Historical interpretation (Old Testament narratives are not primarily to be moral examples, but as revelations of the coming Messiah, that served as types and shadows pointing forward in history to the time when Israel’s Messiah would be revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
   F. Rhetorical interpretation (an artistically structured instrument for communication).
   G. Structural interpretation (how the elements of the biblical languages relate to each other in the present).
H. Theological interpretation (consciously seeking to do justice to the perceived theological nature of the texts and embrace the influence of theology).
I. Typological interpretation (concerning the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament. Events, persons, or statements in the Old Testament are seen as types pre-figuring or superseded by antitypes, events or aspects of Christ or his revelation described in the New Testament).

8. What element is the most crucial element in preaching?
   A. The passage controls/guides the sermon.
   B. The preacher communicates an idea.
   C. The concept comes from the biblical text.
   D. The concept is applied to the preacher.
   E. The concept is applied to the audience.

III. The General Situation of the Team Preaching Ministry

9. How many sermons do you usually preach in a month?
   A. 1
   B. 2
   C. 3
   D. 4
   E. 5 or more

10. How much time do you average each week in preparing sermons?
    A. Less than 2 hours
    B. 3 - 5 hours
    C. 6 - 10 hours
    D. 11 - 15 hours
    E. 16 - 20 hours
    F. More than 20 hours

11. How satisfied are you with your finished sermons?
    A. Very satisfied
    B. Satisfied
    C. Unsure
    D. Dissatisfied
    E. Very dissatisfied

12. How often do you struggle with preparing a sermon?
    A. Always
    B. Often
    C. Sometimes
    D. Rarely
    E. Never
13. What is the greatest problem you face in preparing your sermon?
   A. The amount of time involved in preparation
   B. Selecting a text to preach
   C. Finding meaningful sermon points
   D. Developing or writing a sermon outline
   E. Finding outside materials to support your sermon

IV. The Practical Efforts for the Team Preaching Ministry.

14. How do you choose your preaching text or topic?
   A. Preaching a text that I have personally been reading and/or studying in my personal growth time.
   B. Preaching according to a pre-established preaching plan based on a series of one or more books of the Bible divided by a certain amount.
   C. Preaching based on an outside curriculum that has been prepared and purchased.
   D. Selecting a topic and then looking for related Scriptures based on recent social trends or issues.
   E. Selecting a topic and then looking for related Scriptures based on the situations and problems of the congregation.
   F. Selecting a biblical text freely and then determining a sermon topic that supports the text.

15. What do you think is most important factor when preparing a sermon?
   A. Connecting the biblical world and text to a current situation, circumstance or context.
   B. Searching for a specific Christian doctrine from the text.
   C. Searching for something in the text that reveals the Nature of God.
   D. Searching for the person and work of Jesus Christ in the text.

16. How versatile are you in the biblical languages (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic)?
   A. I don’t know much of the original languages at all, and I don’t think I need to know them.
   B. I don’t know much of the original languages at all, but I think I need to know them.
   C. I prepare sermons by using a dictionary of the original languages to search for the meaning of important words.
   D. I prepare sermons by studying about one or two verses that I consider important in the original languages.
   E. I prepare sermons by trying to read and understand most of the text in the original languages.
   F. I prepare sermons by examining the expression of the original text in detail and analyzing the form and structure of its syntax.

17. Would you agree that reading and studying the Bible in the original languages is helpful in preaching preparation?
   A. Strongly agree
B.  Agree
C.  Unsure
D.  Disagree
E.  Strongly disagree

18. If given the chance to learn effective, helpful methods for preparing Christ-Centered, Gospel Drive sermons, would you like to participate?
   A.  Yes.
   B.  No.
   C.  Unsure.
APPENDIX C

Example Template for Preaching on Jonah 3:1-10

As a possible Old Testament example, a complete CGES sermon template and outline on Jonah 3:1-10 is presented to show the finished product of writing a sermon in the CGES format:

Restoring Rebutke

*Jonah 3:1-10*

Introduction

We continue our sermon series, “Mission Impossible: The Journey of Jonah.” We pick up in chapter three where we will see how God’s supernatural power broke Jonah’s heart and restored a once disobedient prophet back to a servant of the most high. God can change any heart, if we only cry out to Him and repent. Repentance is a miraculous work of God. It’s never earned, as it is a gift from a loving Father. Today we will see how the power of God often works in spite of the weakness of His called, chosen people. Picking up in Jonah 3, beginning in verse 1:

1 Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. 4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. 6 The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let
them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.” When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

If you remember from our first few weeks, or if you are new to our series, the reason that God sent Jonah (and commissions us) to preach is because the people were relentless and persistent in their sins, they were totally depraved (there was nothing they could to obtain God’s mercy), and they needed a Savior. God hadn’t forgotten them. He chose to provide them (through Jonah’s preaching) the opportunity to repent, just like He does for people today.

We have learned that Jonah was a reluctant prophet given a mission he didn’t want to do. He chose to run away from God rather than obey. Like Jonah, we may have to do things in life that we don’t want to do. Sometimes we find ourselves wanting to react like Jonah. But it is always better to obey God than to defy Him and run away. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.” The Bible clearly explains that God has a plan and purpose for our lives. Are we willing to trust that He has our best interest in mind? If we do, the Bible promises in Ephesians 3:20 that, “God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work in us.”

We have examined that it is God’s Grace and Mercy that saves sinners. His love continues to convict, rebuke, forgive and cleanse any who would call upon His Son Jesus. If you have things in your life today that need to be thrown out, ask God to deal with them and ask Him to help you believe that He has good things in store for us. Remember not to let the situations or circumstances
you are currently in effect your faith in God’s purpose, plan and will for your life.

Through Jonah’s unfaithfulness, the pagan sailors accepted God and faithfully vowed to serve Him. Last week we learned that God always uses our triumphs and mistakes to help others come to know Him. It is God’s Grace and Mercy that saves sinners.

Sermon Idea

The hope of mercy is the great guide to repentance and restoration. When we bow ourselves down at Jesus’ feet, seeking His free grace, He looks upon us with compassion. God spared Nineveh, as He desires to spare us from any and all judgment, all we need to do is confess our sin, repent and turn away from our sin, believe in Jesus as Savior, and receive Him as Lord.

Theme

The book of Jonah engages readers to deep theological reflection on the compassionate character of God, and in self-reflection on the degree to which their own character reflects this compassion, to the end that they become vehicles of this compassion in the world that God has made and so deeply cares about (ESV Study Bible).

Literary Features

The book of Jonah is a literary masterpiece. The author employs structure, humor, hyperbole, irony, double entendre, and literary figures like merism to communicate his message with great rhetorical power.

The main category for the book is satire—the exposure of human vice or folly. The four elements of satire take the following form in the book of Jonah: (1) the object of attack is Jonah and what he represents—a bigotry and ethnocentrism that regarded God as the exclusive property of the believing community (in the OT, the nation of Israel); (2) the satiric vehicle is narrative or story; (3) the satiric norm or standard by which Jonah's bad attitudes are judged is the character of
God, who is portrayed as a God of universal mercy, whose mercy is not limited by national boundaries; (4) the satiric tone is laughing, with Jonah emerging as a laughable figure—someone who runs away from God and is caught by a fish, and as a childish and pouting prophet who prefers death over life without his shade tree (ESV Study Bible).

Three stylistic techniques are especially important. (1) The gigantesque motif—the motif of the unexpectedly large (e.g., the magnitude of the task assigned to Jonah, of the fish that swallows him, and of the repentance that Jonah's eight-word sermon accomplishes). (2) A pervasive irony (e.g., the ironic discrepancy between Jonah's prophetic vocation and his ignominious behavior, and the ironic impossibility of fleeing from the presence of God). (3) Humor, as Jonah's behavior is not only ignominious but also ridiculous.

It’s important to remember the Drama of Scripture or Meta-Narrative. It consists of 4 Acts, like that of a play. Act 1, Creation (God creates everything, and it is very good); Act 2, Fall (We mess it up); Act 3, Redemption (through Jesus); and Act 4, Restoration (Jesus will return to bring a full Restoration of all things). We pick up in our passage today in the midst of Act 2.

**Interrogative**

God shows His grace by giving Jonah a second chance to preach, commissioning him again to go to Nineveh. This time Jonah was not disobedient, and he accepted God’s call. He faithfully and boldly delivers God’s message. Has God given you second chances? What did you do with this opportunity? What happened when you were faithful? What happened when you were unfaithful?

**Transitional Sentence**

The Lord is a God of boundless Compassion not just for “us” (Jonah and the Israelites) but also for “them” (the pagan sailors and Ninevites).
Body

Sermon Division Statements- “The Gospel is the message of Second Chances (v.1-3), Simplicity (v.4-5), Repentance (v.6-8), and Forgiveness (v.9-10).”

Sermon Division 1 (v.1-4): “The Gospel is the message of Second Chances” (Subject: Grace; Modifier: Calling; Predicate: Opportunity).

1 Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth.

Explanation

God gives second chances. God shows His grace to Jonah by giving Jonah a second chance to obey God’s calling and by commissioning Jonah again to go to Nineveh. This time Jonah was not disobedient, he accepted God’s call. He faithfully and boldly delivers God’s message.

Illustration

We see three important things from Scripture that highlight the Gospel being a message of Second Chances:

1) The Nature of Repentance…It’s the change of cognition and volition (our minds and will), and a return to our mission of obedience to God’s will and direction. The Gospel directs us to Repentance.

2) The Benefit of Affliction…It brings us back to the place we had run from before, in order to teach and grow us in obedience to God’s direction. The Gospel explains the “why” of our Affliction in Disobedience.
3) **The Results of Affliction**...It teaches us to go where God directs and to obey what God says the first time that He directs us. The Gospel encourages us to trust in God’s Faithfulness to change us.

**Sermon Division 2 (v.4-5): “The Gospel is the message of Simplicity” (Subject: Change; Modifier: Belief; Predicate: Response).**

4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” s And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

**Explanation**

Jonah’s message, while short and simple, accomplishes God’s intended purpose. The purpose is Grace, offering all people the opportunity to repent and avoid judgment.

**Illustration**

The preaching of God’s word always engages people with eternal issues. It lifts our horizons from the immediate interests of our lives to the imminent and overwhelming reality of either everlasting destruction or eternal life. “Whatever you are doing now,” Jonah was saying, “you need to realize that you will soon face the judgment of God—and that day is nearer than you think.”

**Sermon Division 3 (v.6-8): “The Gospel is the message of Repentance” (Subject: Repentance; Modifier: Change; Predicate: Example).**

6 The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, s but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and
let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.”

**Explanation**

Sin should break our hearts, because everything is affected by sin. This illumination of the Gospel broke the king of Nineveh, so much that he exchanged his royal robes for sackcloth and ashes. The practice of this was to show mourning and repentance (turning away from) previous sins and actions (2 Kings 19:1-2, Isaiah 58:5-9, Joel 1:13-14, 2:12-18, Job 42:6). The remorse of the king at Nineveh’s previous wickedness and way of life was so great that everyone, even the animals, were not allowed to eat.

**Illustration**

The good news of the Gospel is that God has poured out on Jesus the wrath that we deserve, so that we may not perish. The death and resurrection of Jesus give us every reason to hope in the mercy of God!

**Sermon Division 4 (v.9-10): “The Gospel is the message of Forgiveness”** (Subject: Hope; Modifier: Compassion; Predicate: Relief).

9 Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”

10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

**Explanation**

Repentance brings restoration and forgiveness. The reversal of destruction relied solely on God’s grace, mercy, plan, purpose, and will. God sometimes uses judgment with the intent of offering forgiveness, which includes an offer of mercy and grace. The Ninevites truly repented. God wants people to repent, and when they do, He forgives every sin. He is waiting and He wants
to forgive us, all we have to do is accept and receive the forgiveness the Jesus Christ offers.

Illustration

The people of Nineveh responded in heartfelt belief and they gave up their evil ways. The proclaimed word of God brought belief (v.5), ignited prayer (v.8), and produced repentance (v.10) in people who had expressed no prior interest in God. Again, we learn from the converted hearts of these cruel pagans that true faith requires a supernatural work of God to change hearts, which is why the message of the Gospel is so important.

Transitional Sentence

The Lord is a God of boundless Compassion not just for “us” (Jonah and the Israelites) but also for “them” (the pagan sailors and Ninevites).

Conclusion

Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. Neither can exist without the other. Repentance is possible only when faith is present through the person and work of Jesus Christ; and where there is faith, repentance will also be found. Faith comes from a spiritual awakening to our own need and to God’s glory. Repentance is a gift from God (Acts 11:18) that flows from faith; it is the evidence of genuine faith and a response to the Gospel.

Argumentation

The hope of mercy is the great guide to repentance and restoration. When we bow ourselves down at God’s feet seeking His free grace, He looks upon us with compassion. He spared Nineveh, as He desires to spare us from any and all judgment, all we need to do is confess our sin, repent, turn away from our sin, believe in Jesus as Savior, and receive Him as Lord.
Application

The nature of repentance is the change of our minds and will, and a return to our mission of obedience to God’s will and direction.

No matter where you are in the journey of your life, it is imperative that you know:

• Jesus Lived the Life None of Us Could Live (Perfect & Sinless)
• Jesus Died the Death We All Deserve to Die (Due to our Nature and Choice to Sin)
• Jesus was Raised on the Third Day (Defeating Satan, Sin and Death)
• Jesus Ascended to the Right Hand of the Father (Preparing an Eternal Place in Paradise for us)

The Gospel message is simple. The message accomplishes God’s intended purpose. The purpose is Grace, giving people the opportunity to repent before judgment. God always gives everyone the opportunity to repent, no matter how bad they think they are. Who are we sharing this amazing truth with? What relationships are you developing to be able to share this truth? How can we be living this truth out tangibly?
APPENDIX D

Example Template for Preaching on John 14:1-14

As a possible New Testament example, a complete CGES sermon template and outline on John 1:1-14 is presented to show the finished product of writing a sermon in the CGES format as follows:

The One Path to The Father
John 14:1-14

Step 1: The Scripture Text

The chosen text was John 14:1-14. This section of Scripture examines how Jesus Himself claimed to be “The One Path to The Father.” Reading from the ESV, we pickup in John 14, beginning in verse 1. Jesus is speaking to His disciples and He says:

1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” 8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me,
or else believe on account of the works themselves. 12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Introduction

This week I’ve been on the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia working on my Doctoral studies. It has been a great week full of information, new classmates, new ideas, new theories, and new challenges. Coming from Grand Canyon University, I thought I was aware of how large the Liberty campus would be, but I was mistaken, I had no idea how big Liberty actually was. I was pleasantly surprised at the size of this institution, but that was also an issue.

To get anywhere on GCU’s campus you can pretty much walk, but at Liberty that idea is a little harder. In fact, on my first day I asked several people where certain places were, and they all gave me really good directions. My follow up to them was, “Can I walk it?” This seemed like a reasonable question, but each time I asked I was given that, “Well you could but why would you look?” Once I started getting around that first day, I began to understand the looks that I had been getting. Because of the size of Liberty, taking the buses around was much more convenient and much more time saving. I could have tried to walk around and find my way on my own, but that would have ended badly for me, probably lost in a place that I wouldn’t know how to get out of.

Haven’t we all been in that spot at one time or another, where we wanted to go somewhere but in order to get there, we needed directions and help? Maybe it was driving with our spouse to a party at a new friends house, maybe it was transporting our kids to a practice or a game for the first time, or maybe it was trusting Uber to pick us up and take us to a destination that we just didn’t want to drive to. Haven’t we all started out going one way and been turned around so much
that we found ourselves so lost that we needed to reach out to Siri or Google maps or even call that friend to direct us to the right path. Routes that without help, we just wouldn’t be able to find. We have all, at one time or another, become reliant on someone or something to get us to a destination. This was the case for me this week, as I quickly became reliant on the Liberty Transit System to get me to the destination I needed.

In this same way, aren’t we all searching for a way to connect with and find the path to God? I mean, we are all here today for some reason, right? You didn’t just come to church because you were looking for kicks on a Sunday morning. You didn’t carve out an hour and a half of your day because you just happened to have that extra time this week. My guess is you are here for the same reason that I’m here, because you and I are looking to connect with God. We are trying to find the path or way to God, because we all sense that we are (or could be) missing something.

Step 2: Identifying the Theme

The theme of John’s Gospel is that Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God. By believing in Jesus, people can have eternal life (John 20:30–31).

Step 3: Developing the Sermon Idea

“The One Path to The Father is accessible through Jesus as our Prophet, Priest and King.” Jesus is the only mediator between God and man that can usher in people to experience relationship with the Father. In our text today, Jesus is preparing his followers for the upcoming turmoil that will culminate with his death on the cross, and He comforts them with the truth that because of what is about to transpire, the Father has a place prepared for the faithful elect, where Jesus will ultimately welcome and accept His people into the heavenly realm for eternity.
Step 4: Analyzing and Explaining the Literary Features

The main genre is gospel, which combines three ingredients—what Jesus did, what Jesus said (discourse and dialogue), and then people’s response to Jesus. We’ve been talking about the Story of God, which is known as the Drama of Scripture or Meta-Narrative. It consists of 4 Acts, like that of a play. Act 1, Creation (God creates everything, and it is very good); Act 2, Fall (We mess it up); Act 3, Redemption (through Jesus); and Act 4, Restoration (Jesus will return to bring a full Restoration of all things). We pick up in our passage today at the end of Act 2, right on the edge of Act 3 where Jesus is preparing to go to the cross and usher in the Redemption of God’s chosen people.

Step 5: Establishing the Interrogative

Having withdrawn from the crowds of Jerusalem, Jesus pours his time and efforts into his motley crew of disciples—whose lives and witness will be an extension of His own. Jesus begins His Farewell Discourse in Chapter 13 as He prepares his new messianic community, represented by the Twelve (minus Judas), for the time subsequent to his exaltation to the Father. The community is first cleansed both literally and symbolically through the foot washing (13:1–17), and then figuratively through the removal of Judas the betrayer (13:18–30).

Jesus then gives a New Commandment, which can be understood only in light of the finished work of Christ, which we now know to be fulfilled because we have the complete, inerrant Scriptures. God has always called his people to a life of neighborly love (Lev. 19:18), reaffirmed by Jesus as the second great commandment in Matthew 22:36–40. But the new commandment presupposes a new paradigm. The greatness of Jesus’ love for us is now the motivation for our loving others. If we truly and deeply love Jesus, we will love what and whom he loves—the unlovely, the oppressed, those very different from us, and those whose actions have maybe even
damaged us.

Jesus then identifies that Peter will deny His Lord very soon, which must have been heart wrenching for Peter to hear, but even in that difficult situation and circumstance, there is something comforting to me about seeing how slow the disciples were to understand Jesus’ teaching and how reluctant they were of the depth of their own their brokenness (sound familiar to anyone besides just me)? If Jesus could care for these, then there is hope for frail and faulty people like us. Jesus is the patient teacher, the wonderful and merciful Savior. As in Peter’s life, Jesus not only foresees our betrayals; he also foresees our forgiveness and our restoration.

The cross, where Jesus is actually heading, looms large in the context of John 14. After Jesus explains to his disciples that the upcoming events of his life are going to take a seemingly radical detour, even to the point of his closest followers denying any affiliation with him, Jesus helps to comfort his followers with the truth of who He is and what He is about to do for them. Even with the agony of the cross at the forefront of Jesus’ mind, Christ takes the time to comfort His closest followers and prepare them for the eternity that the Father has prepared for those whom he has called.

**Step 6: Transitional Sentence**

In *Comforting* his disciples, Jesus gives us an extraordinary summary of who He is (King), What He is Like (Priest), and What He is Going to Do (Prophet).

**Step 7: Sermon Division Statements**

**Body**

**Sermon Division Statement**- “The One Path to the Father is accessible through Jesus as our Prophet, Priest and King.” In verses 1-4 we see “Jesus as our Prophet,” in verses 5-11 we see “Jesus as our Priest” and in verses 12-14 we see “Jesus as our King.”
Sermon Division 1 (v.1-4): The One Path to the Father is accessible through Jesus as our Prophet!” (Subject: Belief; Modifier: Trust; Predicate: Destination).

“1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.”

Explanation

Because of the impending trials that the disciples are going to endure when Jesus goes to the cross, the Savior comforts his followers by addressing where their angst is, in their hearts. The disciples are troubled—not because they are rushing toward guilt, pain, shame, or crucifixion, but because they are confused, uncertain of what Jesus means, and threatened by references to his imminent departure.

The way in which Jesus is expecting the disciples to calm their hearts is to believe and trust in him, because Jesus establishes that they have already believed and trusted in God the Father. Jesus offers an invitation to the disciples to extend the object of their faith beyond God the Father, as they have known him in the past, to Jesus as well, for they need to link Jesus with the Father as an appropriate object of faith. Because Jesus invariably speaks the words of God and performs the acts of God, should he not be trusted like God? Because Jesus is going away, the disciples need to have a deep, personal trust in what Jesus is about to endure, because Jesus is going to be going somewhere after his death, to the Father.

Illustration

As Prophet, Jesus pronounced an end to all our sin. In the Old Testament, the prophet was the mouthpiece of God to the people. In fact, the prophet often prefaced his words by saying, “Thus
says the Lord.” As God’s mouthpiece, the prophet spoke the words of indictment against the people for their sin (Isa. 1:4) and called them to repentance (Isa. 1:18). The prophet also pronounced the forgiveness and pardon of God (Isa. 40:1–2).

Jesus, as the final and sufficient Prophet, has done all of these for us. He came not just proclaiming the Word of God; He is the Word of God (John 1:1). He came to the world because of sin (Matt. 1:21). He proclaimed our need to repent and believe on Him (Mark 1:15). And He proclaimed our pardon and forgiveness for sin (Col. 1:14).

Sermon Division 2 (v.5-11): The One Path to the Father is accessible through Jesus as our Priest!” (Subject: Presence; Modifier: Fulfillment; Predicate: Example).

5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”
6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”
8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”
9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Explanation

After explaining that the disciples can and should be secure in what is about to happen, Jesus shares the reason why his going will be to the disciples’ benefit and advantage. Jesus is going away because he is going to prepare a place for them, a place with the Father in the Father’s house, which is heaven. Not only is he going to prepare a place for them, but he will also be the one who
returns to take his disciples back with him for eternity.

Since heaven is in the Father’s house, it would make sense that it’s a place that is full of great joy, peace and love. But even in partially understanding where the disciples will be going, Thomas shows an amazing picture of love, when he stops Jesus to ask a very important question in verse 5, essentially, where is Jesus going?

The disturbing part of his question shows the lack of truly understanding what Jesus was speaking about. Jesus has just explained where they all will be going yet in Thomas’ reply, he and the other disciples have not actually come to grips with what Jesus has said about their final destination. Jesus doesn’t simply teach the way or the point he in fact is the way. There is only one way, and that way is Jesus. Only because Jesus is the truth and the life can Jesus be the way for others to come to God, the way for his disciples to attain the many dwelling-places in the Father’s house, and therefore the answer to Thomas’s question.

Illustration

As Priest, Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for all our sin. In the Old Testament, the high priest was the mediator between the holy God and His sinful people. As mediator, the high priest entered the Holy Place and offered a sacrifice to God on behalf of the people once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:34). He sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat “because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins” (Lev. 16:16). This he did year after year after year.

Christ, as our Mediator and High Priest, not only offered the sacrifice (once and for all), but He is the sacrifice. Like the high priest of old, Christ entered the Holy Place, but unlike the high priest, He entered to offer Himself. He had to enter only one time, for He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat.
Sermon Division 3 (v.12-14): “The One Path to The Father is accessible through Jesus as our King!” (Subject: Faith; Modifier: Request; Predicate: Results)

12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

Explanation

Jesus, as King, appeals for faith in the disciples. The appeal concludes in vv. 12-14 by focusing on the fruitfulness that anyone who has faith in Jesus will enjoy. The promise Jesus gives is staggering: the person with such faith, will do what Jesus has been doing and will do even greater things—not because he is greater, but because Jesus is greater than any other Prophet, Priest or King and He going to the Father.

Illustration

As King, Jesus rules in such a way as not to allow sin to reign over us any longer. In the Old Testament, the monarchy was established for the peace, prosperity, and welfare of the nation. The prototype king was David. No king was ever as beloved as he was. He was God’s vice-regent among the people. With David on the throne, the nation of Israel could say, “All is well.” Few things comfort a nation more than having a ruler of righteousness and strength sitting on the throne of power. It was said of David that he “reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people” (2 Sam. 8:15). However, we have a King greater than David. Christ came in the line of David as David’s son and yet also as David’s Lord (Matt. 22:42–45). He is “the ruler of kings on earth” (Rev. 1:5) and “King of kings and Lord of lords” (19:16), including David. He rules with perfect justice and equity. As our King, He has fought our battles and now rules in such
a way that sin never can reign over us (Rom. 6:7–14).

Transitional Sentence

In Comforting his disciples, Jesus gives us an extraordinary summary of who He is (King), What He is Like (Priest), and What He is Going to Do (Prophet).

Step 8: Conclusion

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. By boldly affirming these three categories, we can see how Jesus fulfills the three main offices God provided for his covenant people: prophet, priest, and king. As prophet, Jesus is the truth of the Father—he is the Word made flesh, the final word God has spoken to his people (Heb. 1:2). As priest, Jesus is the way to the Father—he is both the sacrifice for our sins and the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 12:24). As king, Jesus is the life from the sovereign giver of life, the eternal Father—who gives life now and in the coming age for eternity (Heb. 6:5). He is the King whom the Father has already installed in Zion (Ps. 2:6) and the ruler over the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5).

Step 9: Argumentation

No matter where you are on this path called life, I’m here to tell you that:

• Jesus Lived the Life None of Us Could Live (Perfect & Sinless).

• Jesus Died the Death We All Deserve to Die (Due to our Nature and Choice to Sin).

• Jesus was Raised on the Third Day (Defeating Satan, Sin and Death).

• Jesus Ascended to the Right Hand of the Father (Preparing an Eternal Place in Paradise for us).

Don’t miss what Jesus actually has said today. If we love him, we will obey him. Jesus does not say if we obey him, he will love us. The gospel turns everything right side up. We can do nothing to earn or maintain a relationship with God. Our obedience merits us nothing; but our obedience is an essential affirmation of our love for Jesus. It is by Jesus’ obedience that we are
saved, and it is by our obedience, compelled by a love for Christ, that we express our gratitude for so great a salvation.

Jesus calls for and provides the stability to follow him into the relationship of becoming a disciple. As Jesus deals with the head, heart and hands of the disciple, the relationship and complete trust of the disciple begins to rest in the hope that Jesus has and will accomplish all that he has promised to the disciples he has chosen.

**Step 10: Application**

Jesus is teaching his disciples’ (and us) to imitate the things he did in his life and ministry. The disciples’ (and our) greater works are possible because Jesus is going to the Father, subsequent to his finished work on the cross. So, how well are we following Jesus? Would you say you are a “Silent” disciple (like the silent 9), checking out Jesus, watching Him, taking notes and showing some interest in Him? Are you a “Thomas like” disciple, fully loving Jesus and looking to continue pursuing Him? Are you a “Phillip like” disciple, needing more and more signs, because you just can’t fully believe and commit? Are you not a disciple at all?

Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus is who He says He is, that He did what He said He would do? If you do, be encouraged today that Jesus has forgiven your sins and wants you to walk closely with Him as His disciple. Jesus is preparing a place for you that is more amazing than your greatest dream vacation spot, where sin and death and pain and loneliness and all the garbage in this world does not exists. Jesus is your Prophet, Priest and King who has blazed the trail for you and when He returns, He will take you to the Father on that very path. The Father’s house is an amazing place and we will be going there for all of eternity, because of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

If you can’t answer that question with a yes, then maybe it’s time to accept that you need
Jesus. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Maybe it’s time to accept that you are lost without Jesus showing you the path. Maybe it’s time to stop saying no and start living a life of passion, hope, love, grace, forgiveness, freedom and excitement because Jesus has made it possible for you to be reconciled to a God who loves you more than you can possibly think or imagine. Today is the day! You are not here by accident; you were brought to this place for a purpose and that purpose is to meet Jesus. As we close today, I want to give you the opportunity to say yes to Jesus. The way we do that here is to come down to the front of the stage and pray with one of our prayer team members. Jesus says in Matthew 10:32-33, “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

Now is the time, don’t deny Jesus any longer. If you want to say yes to Jesus, if you’re ready to repent and turn away from your sins, ready to profess Jesus as Lord and be completed forgiven of all your sins past, present and future; then please make your way down to the front of the stage, so that we can pray together for Jesus to become your Lord and Savior. If you came with somebody as a guest bring them with you. If you brought someone who wants to come down and accept Jesus, please come down with them. If you are unable to come down, or are watching online, then simply bow your heads and we will pray together for you to accept Christ, so that we can celebrate together the new life that Jesus offers as our Prophet, Priest and King!
APPENDIX E

GCES Template for Sermon Preparation

As an example, a blank CGES template is provided below for sermon preparation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sermon Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripture Passage</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Introduction

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### Sermon Idea

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### Theme

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### Literary Features

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Interrogative

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______________________________

Transitional Sentence

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Body

Sermon Division Statements- __________________________

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Sermon Division 1 (v.): __________________________

Scripture Passage: __________________________

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Explanation

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Illustration


Sermon Division 2 (v.):

Scripture Passage:

Explanation


Illustration


Sermon Division 3 (v.):

Scripture Passage:


BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Beeke, Joel R. *Living for God’s Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust, 2008).


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**Journals and Articles**


Dunaetz, David R. & Kenneth E. Priddy “Pastoral Attitudes that Predict Numerical Church Growth.” *GCRJ* Volume 6, Number 1, 2013.

Hogan, William L. “It Is My Pleasure to Introduce…” *Expositor* 1, no. 3 (August 1987).


Osborne, Grant R. “Genre Criticism-Sensus Literalis” In *Trinity Journal, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*. Volume 4, Number 2, 1983.


Online Resources


September 20, 2019

Bob Greene

Dear Bob Greene,

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 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.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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