



Preparation and Delivery of Sermons

Lesson 3

Understanding Expository Preaching

I. A PREACHER IS ACTING AS A SPOKESPERSON FOR GOD.

A. The assignment is to faithfully and clearly convey God's message or Word to an audience.

1. In no place or sense does the Bible suggest that the messenger is to create a new message or insert his own ideas or opinions. The messenger is never given the liberty to do so. To the contrary he is forbidden to do so.
2. The preacher is simply the transmitter of God's message to the intended audience.
3. The words of God to Jeremiah are typical and indicative of the relationship between God and His messenger's. *"Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and **proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee**"* (Jeremiah 19:1-2). (Emphasis mine.) See also Jeremiah 26:2, Jeremiah 27:17, Numbers 22:18, 1 Kings 22:14, Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, 2 Timothy 4:2.

B. Preachers tend to take great liberties with God's Word.

1. Most feel little, if any, obligation to stay with a text and actually teach/preach what is there.
2. Eisegesis (reading into or imposing ideas that are not in the text) is rampant in teaching/preaching. God gives no one the liberty to eisegete His Word.
 - a) Sometimes the ideas are good and true. They may be substantiated by some other biblical text however they are not in the text under consideration.
 - b) It is fundamentally dishonest to impose an idea (however good and true) when that idea is not in that text. This suggests that the text under consideration supports the idea when it does not.
3. Enormous heresies have grown out of this approach.

C. The assignment to deliver the Word of Almighty God is a grave responsibility and carries tremendous liability.

1. We think of attorneys and judges, who for motives of personal wealth, power, fame or some other reason distort the truth in attacking the reputation and personal wealth of people and reduce them to shame, as reprehensible and as criminals.
2. Our view of quack medical doctors, who through incompetence or arrogance, hazard the health and life of someone, is one of scorn and rage.
3. Should accountability be any less for a preacher or teacher, who through (1) negligence, (2) lack of skill or (3) selfish greed, makes havoc and ruin of the lives of those who come to them?
4. Preachers and teachers can be guilty of spiritual malpractice.
 - a) They are held to a higher standard. Luke 12:48
 - b) They have special accountability. James 3:1. Hebrews 13:17.

5. Physicians of the soul are accountable unto God (a much higher court) and will face His judgment:
 - a) For any perversion of the truth, however witless.
 - b) For any negligence.
 - c) For any incompetence or lack of skill.

II. DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING EXPOSITION.

A. Definition. To uncover, expose, show forth what is already there.

1. Exposition presupposes an exegetical process to extract the God-intended meaning of Scripture and an explanation of that meaning in a contemporary way.
2. Expository preaching/teaching is:
 - a) “An outgrowth of a man’s immersing himself within a passage in intensive study, finding the proper limits of that passage, finding the argument of the passage, organizing a sermon outline drawn directly from the passage and then endeavoring to set forth to his hearers the message of that passage in such a manner as to change their lives.” Luke E. Kauffman
 - b) “A discourse that expounds a passage of Scripture, organizes it around a central theme and main divisions which issue forth from the given text, and then decisively applies its message to the listeners.” Jerry Vines.

B. Three types of preaching.

1. **Topical.** A series of Bible verses that loosely connect to a theme.
2. **Textual.** A short text or passage that serves as a gateway into whatever subject the messenger chooses to address.
3. **Expository.**
 - a) Focuses primarily on the text under consideration within its context.
 - b) It usually concentrates on a single text of Scripture but it is possible for a thematic/theological or historical/biographical message to be expository. These have a broader textual base.

C. Trends in today’s preaching/teaching.

1. Experience centered sermons and lessons.
2. Practical rather than biblical.
3. The emphasis is on consumer satisfaction and contemporary relevancy.

D. Minimal elements in expository preaching/teaching.

1. The message/lesson finds its sole source in Scripture.
2. The message/lesson is extracted from Scripture through careful exegesis.
3. The message/lesson preparation correctly interprets Scripture in its normal sense and its context.
4. The message/lesson clearly explains the original God-intended meaning of Scripture.
5. The message/lesson applies the Scriptural meaning for today.

E. Ten things expository preaching is not.

1. It is not a commentary running from word to word and verse to verse without unity, outline and pervasive drive.
2. It is not rambling comments and offhand remarks about a passage without a background or thorough exegesis and logical order.
3. It is not a mass of disconnected suggestions and inferences based on the surface meaning of a passage but not sustained by a depth-and-breath study of the text.
4. It is not pure exegesis, no matter how scholarly, if it lacks a theme, thesis, outline and development.
5. It is not a mere structural outline of a passage with a few supporting comments but without other rhetorical and sermonic elements.
6. It is not a topical homily (a sermon about something in the Bible; a long and dull talk on what is right and wrong) using scattered parts of the passage but omitting discussion of other equally important parts.
7. It is not a chopped-up collection of grammatical findings and quotations from commentaries without a fusing of these elements into a smooth, flowing, interesting and compelling message.
8. It is not a Sunday-school-lesson type of discussion that has an outline of the contents, informality and fervency but lacks sermonic structure and rhetorical ingredients.
9. It is not a Bible reading that links a number of scattered passages treating a common theme but fails to handle any of them in a thorough, grammatical and contextual manner.
10. It is not the ordinary devotional or prayer-meeting talk that combines running commentary, rambling remarks, disconnected suggestions and personal reactions into a semi-inspirational discussion but lacks the benefit of the basic exegetical-contextual study and persuasive elements.

F. Expository message checklist.

1. It must be based upon a passage from the Bible. The actual meaning of the passage must be found.
2. The meaning must be related to the immediate and general context of the passage.
3. The eternal, timeless truths in the passage must be elucidated (*made clear; explained*).
4. The truths must be gathered around a compelling theme.
5. The main divisions of the sermon must be drawn from the structure of the passage itself.
6. Every possible method to apply the truths must be utilized.
7. The hearers must be called to obey these truths and to live them out in daily life.

Recommended resources:

MacArthur, Jr., John. *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*. Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1992.

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic. 2002.