Lighthouse Bible Institute

Week 7

BIBLICAL PREACHING & TEACHING: Making Dry Bones Live

Lesson Goal: Develop major sermon divisions with supporting material that explains the text, clarifies its meaning, establishes its truth, and applies it to hearers.

I. Introduction — From Outline to Living Message

A. An outline is not the completed sermon, but provides the structure for the sermon. The outline must be developed to read, explain, and help listeners apply the Word to their lives.

- **Nehemiah 8:4–8 —** ***4*** *So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.* ***5*** *And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.* ***6*** *And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.* ***7*** *Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites,* ***helped the people to understand the Law****; and the people stood in their place.* ***8*** ***So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading****.*
  1. They read the Word — Scripture was the foundation.
  2. They explained the Word — The meaning was made understandable.
  3. They helped people understand — Their goal was not merely to communicate information, but to bring the people to a clear understanding of God's truth.

B. The preacher/teacher's responsibility is not simply to organize biblical truth, but to communicate it clearly and effectively.

1. The outline provides the structure of the message, but supporting material helps bring that message to life.
2. Haddon Robinson compares the outline to a skeleton. Just as a skeleton needs flesh to form a living body, a sermon outline needs development to become a complete message.
3. The goal is not merely to fill time or make the sermon interesting, but to help listeners understand, believe, and respond to God's Word.

II. 8 Tools to Utilize when Developing a Sermon

- What do you think of the following statement by H. Robinson: "A mist in the pulpit can easily become a fog in the pew."[1]
- Using the following tools helps you communicate more clearly so people can understand the most important truth in their lives, which is God's Word.

A. _____ – Saying the same thing in the same words.

- It is always good to repeat your key text more than once when speaking.

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[1] Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, Fourth Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2025), 98.

- Repetition is like playing "replay" on your TV after a good play; you want to see it again. When something is that important, repeat it; it also helps people "catch up" to the sermon. Have you ever taken notes and they state the point only once, and it is a full sentence? You cannot follow their thought because you are trying to remember what the full point was.

B. _____ – Communicating the same truth in different words to make its meaning clearer.

1. Restatement is like playing "replay" on a football play from multiple angles.
2. This is the skill you want to develop.
3. The more you understand something yourself, the more you are able to restate it in other terms; things you don't know well are usually things you can only "state" but not "restate" by giving multiple angles to clarify its meaning.
4. Example: Salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9).
   a. Salvation is God's gift, not something we earn.
   b. We are saved by what Christ has done, not by what we have done.
   c. Good works are the result of salvation, not the means of obtaining it.

C. _____ - Making the meaning of a biblical statement clear by showing what it means, why it means that, and how it fits within the passage.

1. Never assume your audience understands a biblical statement simply because you have read it.
2. Explain the historical setting, context, grammar, or reasoning of the passage when necessary.
3. Example: "You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). Explain what the significance of salt was in that day and why Jesus uses it to describe His disciples.
4. Example: Prodigal Son (Luke 15)
   a. Explain the significance of the younger son requesting his inheritance while his father was still alive.
   b. Explain why feeding pigs was especially degrading for a Jewish son, since pigs were considered unclean under Jewish law.
   c. Explain the significance of the father running to meet his son.
   d. Explain how the best robe, ring, sandals, and fatted calf communicated restoration, belonging, and celebration.

D. _____ - Explaining the meaning of an important word or term and clarifying its proper use in context.

1. Define theological terms that may be unfamiliar to your listeners, such as justification, sanctification, propitiation, or redemption.
2. Avoid merely giving a dictionary definition; explain the word in language your audience understands.
3. Example: What does grace mean?
   a. **χάρις** (*charis)* – Used 156 times in the NT; Paul uses it 100 times (24 in Romans). **It has a range of meanings,** as it was used in formal greetings (like Shalom in the OT); Paul often greeted people (Grace and peace…).
   b. **In the context of salvation**, grace refers to the undeserved and unmerited favor of God toward the sinner who can do nothing to earn it.[2]

[2] Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 477.

c. **MacArthur – "***Grace is unmerited, unearned favor, in which a believer himself does not and cannot contribute anything of worth."*[3]
d. **(Illustration) It is also why it is called a "gift";** you don't earn a "gift" you receive a gift; you earn a wage, but you receive a gift.
e. **(restatement) Grace means that God deals with his people not on the basis of their merit or worthiness,** what they deserve, but simply according to their need; in other words, **he deals with them on the basis of his goodness and generosity.**[4]
f. **(restatement) Grace is the choice of God, not the earnings of man.**
g. **Toews – "Grace denotes the action of a stronger person** who voluntarily chooses to come to the aid of a weaker person. The stronger person often is God; God acts to supply grace to the weak or needy." [5]
h. **Grace is defined in the New Dictionary of Theology as**, "The grace of God is first of all the free act by which he reaches out to sinful human beings and rescues them from condemnation, even though they have done nothing to deserve this favour."[6]
i. **Dockery – "Grace declares that salvation** is not the culmination of **humanity's quest for God** but that it resides in **the initiative of God toward men** and women (Eph 1:4–7)."[7]
j. S.M. Baugh – "It is typical to hear divine grace defined as **"God's undeserved favor,"** but this does not capture the idea communicated here in Eph 2…rather it is actually God's favor granted **to those who deserve his wrath (v. 3). It is not just undeserved, as if the people whom God befriends were neutral.** It is act of immense favor bestowed on those who lie under God's just condemnation as transgressors and sinners. **Hence, a better quick definition is: God's favor despite man's sinfulness.**[8]

E. _____ **information** – Providing relevant historical, geographical, cultural, or other facts that help listeners understand the passage.
1. Background information can clarify details that would otherwise be unfamiliar to a modern audience.
2. Include facts that illuminate the biblical text, not merely interesting information that demonstrates your research.
3. Example: Explaining the hostility between Jews and Samaritans helps listeners understand the significance of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4).

F. _____ - Using the words of another person to clarify, reinforce, or emphasize a biblical truth.
1. Quotations from theologians, pastors, historical figures, or other reliable sources can express a truth memorably.

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[3] John F. MacArthur Jr., *Romans*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 20.

[4] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 265.

[5] John E. Toews, *Romans*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2004), 382.

[6] G. L. Bray, "Grace," in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, ed. Martin Davie et al. (London; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press; InterVarsity Press, 2016), 376.

[7] David S. Dockery, ed., *Holman Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1992), 831.

v. verse

[8] S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 159–60.

2. Quotations should support the biblical message, never replace the explanation of Scripture.
3. Use quotations sparingly, accurately, and with appropriate citation.

G. _____ – Retelling an event or series of events in a way that helps listeners understand and follow what happened.

1. Narration is especially helpful when preaching historical or narrative passages of Scripture.
2. Rather than simply reading the events, the preacher helps listeners follow the setting, people, circumstances, and progression of the account.
3. Rather than merely listing the events, help listeners follow the unfolding story:
   a. The rebellion: A young man demands his inheritance, leaves his father's home, and wastes everything in reckless living.
   b. The ruin: His money runs out, a famine strikes, and he finds himself hungry, desperate, and feeding pigs.
   c. The realization: Coming to his senses, he remembers his father's goodness and determines to return home and confess his sin.
   d. The return: As he approaches home, his father sees him from a distance, runs to meet him, embraces him, and kisses him.
   e. The restoration: Instead of treating him as a hired servant, his father welcomes him as a son and calls for a celebration.
4. Narration moves listeners through the story, while explanation helps them understand its meaning. The two work together in effective expository preaching.

H. _____ - Using an example, analogy, experience, or story to help listeners picture and understand a biblical truth.

1. Illustrations help move a truth from the abstract to the concrete, making it easier to understand and remember.
2. Illustrations make the sermon more interesting, impactful, and memorable. Often someone will say, "that was a great sermon" and immediately reference some illustration that really impacted or stood out to them.
3. Illustrations are critical to a good expository message. Spurgeon likens a sermon without illustrations to a building without windows, it will support the structure but it does not let light in.[9]
   a. Spurgeon – "*A building without windows would be a prison rather than a house, for it would be quite dark, and no one would care to take it upon lease; and, in the same way, a discourse without a parable is prosy and dull, and involves a grievous weariness of the flesh…. Our congregations hear us with pleasure when we give them a fair measure of imagery: when an anecdote is being told they rest, take breath, and give play to their imaginations, and thus prepare themselves for the sterner work which lies before them in listening to our profounder expositions."*[10]
4. Jesus utilized parables, a common Jewish teaching method, to illuminate truths he was sharing.
   a. Jesus depicted God as a merciful Savior in Luke 15 by using the image of God as a Shepherd seeking a lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7); a woman seeking one lost coin (Luke 15:8–

[9] David C. Deuel, "Expository Preaching from Old Testament Narrative," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 292.

[10] C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students: Third Series* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 2.

10); and a father waiting patiently for the return of one son and taking the initiative to reconcile the other (Luke 15:11–32).

b. The Lord also elucidated truth about Himself with the image of water (John 4), light (John 8:12), a vine (John 15), a gate (John 10), a Shepherd (John 10:27-28), etc.

5. Start by looking for illustrations from Scripture itself to elucidate the message. Let Scripture illustrate Scripture. The Bible provides examples, contrasts, narratives, and events that can clarify and reinforce the truth being preached.

a. What is a good passage that can illustration Ephesians 2:8-9? Prodigal son (Luke 15); repentant tax collector (Luke 18:9-14);

b. What is a good passage that can illustration Ephesians 2:10? James 2; Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus)

i. _____ — Genuine saving faith demonstrates itself through good works. James uses Abraham and Rahab as examples of faith expressed through obedience.

ii. _____ (Luke 19:1–10) — His changed behavior demonstrated the transforming work of salvation

6. Illustrations may also come from history, personal experiences, everyday life, or observations. However, these should generally be secondary to illustrations drawn from Scripture.

a. Use personal illustrations sparingly. The congregation should leave knowing more about God's Word than about the preacher's personal life.

b. Every illustration should serve the biblical message, not merely entertain the audience or draw attention to the preacher.

c. Remember: The illustration is the servant of the text, never the master of the sermon.

III. Developing the Message Toward Application

A. The preacher must move beyond explaining what the passage meant to showing how its truth should affect the lives of listeners today. They must move from information to transformation.

B. Faithful preaching does more than organize biblical information. The preacher communicates God's Word so people understand its meaning, recognize its authority, and respond in faith and obedience.

- Every preacher/teacher should have the heart of Paul in Colossians 1:28: **Colossians 1:28 — [28]** *Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

C. Application should flow from the meaning and purpose of the biblical passage, not from the preacher's personal opinions.

D. Ask three questions:

1. What does this passage teach?

2. What should my listeners believe, change, or do because of this truth?

3. How can I communicate that response specifically and biblically?

E. Example: Ephesians 2:8–10

1. Unbeliever: Stop trusting your religious accomplishments and place your faith in Christ.

2. Believer: Recognize that your good works are the fruit of salvation, not the basis of your acceptance before God.

3. Church: Pursue the good works God has prepared for His people rather than treating grace as an excuse for spiritual inactivity.

Assignments

- **Today**:
  - Complete Quiz 7
  - Turn in Homework from week 6 (Developing message outline)
  - Give your practice presentation (those who have not done so yet).
- **Due Next Class (November 7th)**
  - **Homework** — Complete your sermon outline for your selected biblical passage. Include your Big Idea, major points, and supporting material (explanation, illustrations, and application).
  - **Read Chapter 10** of Haddon Robinson's Biblical Preaching in preparation for next week's lesson.
  - Begin practicing your message aloud, working toward a clear and faithful 10-minute presentation.
  - **Due Week 8: Submit your completed sermon outline.**

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