

A SERMON EVALUATION GUIDE
FOR A PASTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN SPAIN

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ABSTRACT

A Sermon Evaluation Guide for a Pastoral Fellowship in Spain

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This project offers a sermon evaluation guide. The guide is for sermon evaluations between qualified men, whether that be for mutual sharpening or for a counselor-counselee relationship.

Chapter one states the need for and benefit of sermon evaluations. Chapter two gives biblical warrant for them, and chapter three shows the basis for them. The development of the guide for sermon evaluations has been based in part on chapter two and primarily on chapter three. Chapter four shows the results and analysis of the carried-out sermon evaluation. Chapter five presents the project's conclusions. The project results indicate that even when men know how to preach, this type of sermon evaluation is valuable. Consequently, those results affirm the project's thesis.

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Chapter I

PROSPECTUS

The Lord has entrusted pastors with a high calling, by His grace and for His glory. Pastors have been entrusted with the task of working hard to correctly handle “the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).¹ May this project and its sermon evaluation guide contribute to help pastors better handle God’s Word.

Contextual Need

The rationale for this project comes out of a combination of circumstances. There are four lines of reasoning for it, not ranked in priority order. The first two reasons come out of the Doctorate of Ministry in Expository Preaching classroom experiences at Virginia Beach Theological Seminary. The third reason comes from experience living in two different Spanish-speaking countries. The fourth and final reason regards a tendency in preaching today.

First, what contributed in part to the understanding of a need for this project is that I have gained much from sermon evaluation feedback, even though I have had very excellent and thorough seminary training. The circumstances in which I profited from sermon evaluations have been in this DMin program. Part of our assignments were to evaluate the sermons of certain well-known expositors, and also to get evaluated by professors who are proficient in the science and art of preaching. I have found that those

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations are from the Christian Standard Bible, (2017).

assignments were the richest part of the program, though the rest of the modular teaching and assignments also were very profitable.

Second, the need for sermon evaluation is shared with other DMin classmates as well. In one instance during a DMin module, as sermon evaluations and critiques were conducted toward a student after he had preached expositionally from a text, he was asked the question, “Where was the main idea of your sermon?” The point was that the audience had missed what the main idea was, as it was not clearly articulated. The student under evaluation was a seminary trained and seasoned pastor.

The point is that though one may be trained and seasoned, this exercise proves to be fruitful for the students, though at times excruciating for one’s pride. Also, at the end of the day, regardless of experience or education, what matters is sermon output, and sermon evaluation can significantly enhance preaching.

Third, there is a great need for strengthening preaching in the Dominican Republic, and sermon evaluations have contributed to strengthening preaching there. I served as a missionary in the Dominican Republic for five years, directing a small Bible college named Seminario Bautista Internacional (SBI), in which the main ministry is training pastors and other gospel workers. Those sermon evaluations took place between some seminary students and teachers.² The evaluations were an added benefit to the students’ seminary training.

Sermon evaluations are better as part of seminary or post-seminary continued education, but they can be beneficial for those who cannot attend seminary as well. The need for sermon feedback is even greater in the Dominican Republic, as there are

² In the Latin world, seminary can refer to any level of theological education. This institution has an undergraduate level of theological education.

relatively fewer opportunities to get training in the Latin world compared to the USA because of various circumstances. For instance, many pastors in the Latin World have limited finances and cannot access more expensive and better-quality theological education. Also, since they are in ministry full-time and also work a day job, they have a hard time committing to opportunities for advanced theological training. What frequently happens in the Dominican Republic, for instance, is that Dominicans become pastors, and only afterwards do they start chipping away at some form of theological education, whether formal or informal. For those who have only been able to obtain institute level education, or other limited training options, submitting oneself to a sermon evaluation can go a long way. Praise God that though there are challenges, there are now more good theological education opportunities.

Lastly, there appears to be a growing awareness of the need for pastors to submit themselves to sermon evaluations due to their value and due to how they impact one's preaching and can bless God's people. So, beyond the conversation of much or little theological training, there is a sense of need for sermon evaluation for pastors in their pulpits as it is beneficial to preaching. This can be seen in a few ways. First, The Master's Seminary offers a sermon critique service, which started in 2021.³ Second, 9Marks has produced a considerable amount of material which is about or includes sermon evaluation over the last decade or so.⁴ Third, while not a sermon evaluation service, Simeon Trust,

³ Austin Duncan, "The Master's Seminary Opens The MacArthur Center for Expository Preaching," The Master's Seminary, June 9, 2021, <https://tms.edu/news/the-masters-seminary-opens-the-macarthur-center-for-expository-preaching/>.

⁴ Mark Dever and Greg Gilbert, *Preach: Theology Meets Practice* (Nashville: B&H, 2012), 131-208; Keith Collier, "How to Evaluate Your Pastor's Sermons," *9marks*, last modified 2015, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.9marks.org/article/how-to-evaluate-your-pastors-sermons-2/>; Bob Johnson, "The Value and Challenge of Sermon Review," *9Marks*, last modified 2015, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.9marks.org/article/the-value-and-challenge-of-sermon-review/>; Jeff Lacine, "How to

which was started in 2001, provides preaching workshops, and as part of its training, its participants present how they would preach a certain passage and receive feedback.⁵

Relevant Literature

There are different categories of relevant literature about sermon evaluations.

There is one formally academic and extensive resource that deals with sermon evaluations.⁶ Several preaching books that include a chapter on sermon evaluation have been written.⁷ Lastly, many sermon evaluation articles are available.⁸

In addition to the resources that explain either how to conduct a sermon evaluation or why it is beneficial to do so, there are several available sermon evaluation templates. A select few are chosen as distinguished amongst sources.⁹

Critique Sermons,” *9Marks*, last modified 2017, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.9marks.org/article/sermoncritique/>.

⁵ “A Brief History,” Charles Simeon Trust, accessed November, 8, 2022, <https://simeontrust.org/about/a-brief-history/>.

⁶ Kevin F. Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church” (DMin Diss, Wake Forest, NC, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019).

⁷ Chris Rappazini, “The Value of Sermon Feedback” in Gibson, Scott, ed., *Training Preachers* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 150–163; Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit* (Chicago: Moody, 2017), 167–183; Gary Millar and Phil Campbell, *Saving Eutychus* (n.p.: Matthias Media, 2013), 111–120; John Vawter, “The Agony and Ecstasy of Feedback,” in Haddon W. Robinson and Craig Brian Larson, eds., *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 695–697; William Willimon, “Getting the Feedback You Need,” in *ibid.*, 698–700; Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 3rd ed. (Baker Academic, 2014), 229–245; R. Clifford Jones, “Evaluating The Sermon,” *Preaching.Com*, 2005, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.preaching.com/articles/evaluating-the-sermon-ten-elements-to-consider-after-you-preach/>.

⁸ Tim Wheelless, “Sermon Critique,” 2019, <https://preachingsource.com/blog/sermon-critique/>; Mark Vroegop, “Discipling and Developing Leaders Through a Sermon Application Team,” *9Marks*, 2020, <https://www.9marks.org/article/discipling-and-developing-leaders-through-a-sermon-application-team/>; Erik Raymond, “Do You Invite Critique of Your Sermons?,” *The Gospel Coalition*, accessed November 20, 2022, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/do-you-invite-critique-of-your-sermons/>; Peter Mead, “Practice Makes . . . ?,” *Biblical Preaching*, 2009, <https://biblicalpreaching.net/2009/12/10/practice-makes/>; Russell Moore, “Good News for Bad Preachers,” 2012, <https://www.russellmoore.com/2012/08/14/good-news-for-bad-preachers/>; Jones, “Evaluating The Sermon”; Collier, “How to Evaluate Your Pastor’s Sermons”; Lacine, “How to Critique Sermons”; Johnson, “The Value and Challenge of Sermon Review.”

⁹ Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 133–38; Scott M. Gibson, “The Value of Sermon Feedback,” in Gibson, Scott, *Training Preachers*, 191–95; Vines and Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit*, 219–20; Haddon Robinson,

Finally, and importantly, beyond the sermon evaluation resources and the sermon evaluation templates, an important component of the sermon evaluation is looking at key homiletical resources. Those resources reflect expertise on preaching and so provide a sound basis for this project's guide for sermon evaluation. Rogers identifies a short list of key expository preaching books for preparation or "content,"¹⁰ and he also has a key shortlist for expository sermon "delivery."¹¹ This project builds on Rogers' list but also adds other core resources.¹²

"A Comprehensive Check-Up," in Robinson and Larson, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, 701; Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 139–69; Al Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1996), 141–45; Trinity Bible Church, "Sermon Evaluation Form," 9Marks, 2018, <https://www.9marks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sermon-Evaluation-June-2018.pdf>; Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, "Sermon Evaluation Form," cbtseminary, 2018, <https://cbtseminary.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sermon-Evaluation-Form.pdf>; Calvin Theological Seminary, "Sermon Evaluation Forms," Center for Excellence in Preaching, n.p., <https://cepreaching.org/resources/sermon-evaluation-form/>; Lancaster Seminary, "Sermon Evaluation Form," lancasterseminary, n.p., https://courses.lancasterseminary.edu/pluginfile.php/9272/mod_resource/content/0/017_SERMON_EVALUATION_FORM.pdf; Daniel Akin, "Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching," *Old Resource_454 Class Notes Biblical Preaching 4020*, n.p., https://www.danielakin.com/wp-content/uploads/old%5CResource_454%5CClass%20Notes%20Biblical%20Preaching%204020%20Book%202%20Sec.%2035%20Improving%20and%20Evaluating%20Your%20Preaching.pdf.

¹⁰ Rogers, "Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church," 42–57.

¹¹ Rogers, "Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church," 114–17.

¹² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*; Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018); Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010); Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001); Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2017); John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Donald Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2007); Tony Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor* (Nashville: B&H, 2016); Terry G. Carter, Scott Duvall, and Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2005); John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, kindle ed. (n.p.: Titus Books, 2014); Wayne McDill, *The Moment of Truth: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1999); Wilbur Ellsworth, *The Power of Speaking God's Word*, 2001; Daniel L. Akin, Bill Curtis, and Stephen Rummage, *Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011); Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*.

Method of Study

The way this project will proceed is to first look at the biblical grounds for a sermon evaluation, which will be done in chapter 2. In chapter 3, the project will use distinguished preaching textbooks and sermon evaluation guides and templates as a basis for establishing its sermon evaluation guide. The idea is that the guide used for conducting a sermon evaluation will be based on reflections and conclusions from the previous two chapters. The guide will consist of two parts: the template, which is the succinct one-page guide, and there will also be an explanatory guide which will explain the template and sermon evaluation process. Third, this guide will be tested via feedback mechanisms, which will be elaborated in chapter 4. Those mechanisms will have questions about the content and delivery of preaching as well as the degree to which the sermon evaluation has or has not helped it. There will be two feedback mechanisms which will be administered to a select group of pastors in Spain in order to evaluate the efficiency of the sermon evaluation guide and its template. The men who complete the first feedback mechanism will be asked to commit to completing a second one. With these two results, there will be a baseline to document the impact of the sermon evaluation on preaching. The process will follow this order: secure commitment for the sermon evaluation, first feedback mechanism, sermon evaluation, second feedback mechanism, and comparison of the two feedback results. Furthermore, since the preaching will be in Spanish, the feedback mechanism, sermon evaluation sheet, and its accompanying guide will be translated into Spanish and added to this project as appendices. The results will then be retranslated into English. Lastly, the project's conclusion will be chapter 5.

Thesis and Argumentation

The thesis for this project is that sermon evaluations improve preaching. As the project is not merely philosophical, but ministerial, the principled thesis is that since sermon evaluations improve preaching, pastors should then submit themselves and their preaching to those evaluations. The thesis applied to the project's audience is that the group of constituent pastors in Spain should submit themselves to sermon evaluations as they have the potential to improve their preaching. One caveat that must be given is that not all sermon evaluations will help one's preaching, but the kind delineated in this project should improve one's preaching.

The argumentation supporting this thesis flows from what has been said in the method of study. First, looking at the biblical grounds, there indeed are biblical principles that warrant a sermon evaluation.

Second, and at the heart of this project, is the development of a sermon evaluation guide. The argument that an evaluation improves preaching is directly linked to what is evaluated in terms of preaching content and delivery, and to who does the evaluation. Therefore, the resources used in developing the sermon evaluation criterion are important. In light of that, distinguished expository preaching books and sermon evaluation resources are a key basis, beyond the biblical foundations, for constructing this sermon evaluation template and guide.

Lastly, this particular sermon evaluation guide will be put to test by means of two feedback mechanisms. The feedback mechanisms will be administered to a select group of pastoral participants in Spain. The participants will preach, be critiqued, and the

feedback mechanisms will measure the effectiveness of the sermon evaluation guide with respect to their preaching.

Definitions

Sermon Evaluation: A sermon evaluation refers to the process in which someone preaches and receives feedback or evaluation with regard to the different components of his sermon. The sermon evaluation in this project is understood as being for expository preaching.

Sermon Evaluation vs Critique: This project will use different terms: evaluation, critique, and feedback that may or may not refer to the same thing. Critique may refer to an evaluation or a constructive criticism, but it will mainly be used to speak of criticism with a negative overtone.

Conclusion

This project purposes to contribute to the sermon evaluation area of study in writing because though there are various resources available on the matter, there is just one extensive resource on it. However, the particular desire for this project is to use the knowledge gained in it to improve preaching for its respective pastor constituents, and perhaps beyond, especially for pastors in the Latin world. Instead of being content with whatever level of theological education one has achieved in the past, may pastors view the benefits of sermon evaluations, and so choose to submit themselves to those on a regular basis. May the preaching of the Word improve so that the Word may go forth with all its power, that God's people may be blessed, and God may receive more glory!

Chapter II

FOUNDATIONS FOR SERMON EVALUATIONS

This chapter looks at four foundations for sermon evaluations. First, biblical principles that highlight the wisdom of sermon evaluations are laid out through answering the question, “why should I participate in sermon evaluations?” Second, further biblical principles and practical implications regarding those who evaluate sermons are discussed. The third point gives biblical principles on how to give and receive feedback in a sermon evaluation. The fourth point delineates different practical pointers that suggest how one may organize a sermon evaluation.

Why Undergo Evaluations

Every pastor’s sermons get evaluated, whether or not they want that to happen. However, the issue is that the normative feedback or evaluation usually is superficial, and unhelpful, even though it may be sincere and kind. It may be likened to what Robinson says: “[feyer comments are] often a little more than code words to get past the minister as he guards the door.”¹ This kind of feedback tends to fall into two extremes. Vines and Shaddix speak of the polar extremes of sermon evaluations/feedback being restricted to “overindulgent compliments or unforgiving criticism.”² Those evaluations can look like “good sermon,” or “thank you.” On the other hand, they can take the form of a grumbling

¹ Haddon Robinson, “Listening to Listeners,” *Leadership* 4, no. 2 (1983): 71; cf. William Willimon, “Getting the Feedback You Need,” in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 698.

² Vines and Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit*, 168.

and fussing email or comment from the regular complainer.³ Sermon evaluations must go beyond this kind of evaluation to a sermon evaluation that is constructive. Beyond the fact that sermon evaluations actually help one's preaching significantly, there are various biblical principles that warrant why one should submit himself to sermon evaluations.

Answering Objections

Having someone poke at one's preaching is usually not very enjoyable, to say the least.⁴ Some sermon evaluation advocates use language that is more vivid, saying that a sermon evaluation is "incredibly difficult,"⁵ and that "getting feedback on my preaching is...about as desirable as having pins stuck in my eyes."⁶ If there is such pain that accompanies sermon evaluations, then why go through them?

Humility: Proverbs 18:12

Millar and Campbell, having wrestled with the nature of their disdain of sermon critiques, have only one underlying reason for why they do not like a sermon evaluation: it is because of their sin.⁷ That sin may manifest itself in various ways, one of them being pride. Scripture commands believers to be humble and rid themselves of pride (cf. Jas 4:6). One important place where Scripture talks about humility is in the book of Proverbs.

³ Vines and Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit*, 168.

⁴ Johnson, "The Value and Challenge of Sermon Review"; John Vawter, "The Agony and Ecstasy of Feedback," in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, 696.

⁵ Dever and Gilbert, *Preach*, 135.

⁶ Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 111.

⁷ Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 112.

Context

Proverbs contains principles of wisdom for all of life, and that wisdom is grounded in the “fear of the Lord” (1:7). Proverbs is addressed primarily to the young men of Israel but is for all of Israel, and for believers today too.⁸ The book of Proverbs was meant to guide Israel, starting with foundational issues of youth and continuing with difficulties that arise later in life.⁹

Proverbs’ structure has some portions that are units: chapters 1–9, 22–24, and 31. The rest of the book contains wise teachings through short proverbs, and through some proverb clusters, though there is some debate about the extent of the structure.¹⁰ The book as a whole teaches a comprehensive guide for wise living. Furthermore, this wisdom genre normally communicates sayings that generally happen as opposed to absolute promises.¹¹ Lastly, parallelism is the hallmark of Hebrew poetry.¹² At the heart of this genre, meaning is commonly obtained through how two lines relate to one another.

Exegesis

One proverb that teaches humility, Proverbs 18:12, says, “Before his downfall a person’s heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.” This proverb is antithetical and conveys its message contrasting the two lines of the proverb. The proverb shows

⁸ Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 109.

⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 63; Ryan O’Dowd, *Proverbs*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Scot McKnight, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2017), 33–35.

¹⁰ cf. Derek Kidner, *Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1964), 22–25; Longman, *Proverbs*, 37–38.

¹¹ Longman, *Proverbs*, 31–32.

¹² Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 41; Longman, *Proverbs*, 33–34.

which path one ought to take: humility over pride. It does so by showing the outcome of either the proud or humble heart.

The “heart” refers to the control center of one’s mind.¹³ The proud heart refers to a person who is arrogant, who has an inflated and distorted view of self. The distortion is such that he thinks he is above others, and better than he actually is (cf. Phil 2:3).¹⁴ This verse teaches against the proud, warning him that his “self-elevation” will result in a consequence.¹⁵ The “downfall” or “destruction” that will come is not specified.

Certainly, multiple passages warn about pride and its consequences, and they cannot all be studied (Prov 11:2; 17:19; 29:23; Matt 23:12; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5). However, Proverbs 18:12a is very similar to Proverbs 16:18, which says, “Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall.” This proverb’s parallelism is a synonymous parallelism. The word “spirit” links Proverbs 16:18–19 to Proverbs 18:12 (“heart”).

Focusing on Proverbs 16:18, the proverb communicates that pride and arrogance are generally found before one suffers detriment, described as “destruction” and a “fall.” Again, the consequences are not specified.¹⁶ So as one is proud and therefore has an unrealistic, self-exalting view of himself, pride will lead to devastating consequences.¹⁷ As Longman puts it, “Pride does not allow one to listen to criticism and thereby correct misperceptions and harmful patterns of behavior.”¹⁸ This false view of self and the trajectories that ensue from it have consequences. This is true in the temporal and

¹³ Thomas Nelson, *The NET Bible*, 1st ed. (n/a: Biblical Studies Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Longman, *Proverbs*, 357.

¹⁵ John Kitchen, *Proverbs* (Mercker, Germany: Mentor, 2012), 399–400.

¹⁶ Kidner, *Proverbs*, 120.

¹⁷ Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2009), 365.

¹⁸ Longman, *Proverbs*, 334.

practical sense of the consequence, and can certainly be true in the sense of one's whole life trajectory being one of rebellion and pride, therefore resulting in eternal condemnation.¹⁹ With regard to the eternal consequences, other passages corroborate with this one, teaching that God, though patiently giving time for His elect to repent, will one day give a full judgment (cf. 2 Pet 3:8–10; Rev 20:11–15). As the consequence is unspecific, it allows for both temporary and eternal consequences to be applicable.

The second part of Proverbs 18:12, “but humility comes before honor,” establishes an antithetical contrast. While a distorted pride runs a person to ruin, the humble person will be honored. The humble sees himself as a finite and created being that is lowly and needy.²⁰ With this disposition, because the humble is open to correction, he is blessed with honor.²¹

Although many Scripture passages speak on the matter of pride and humility (cf. Jas 4:10; 1 Pet 5:6; Phil 2:9–11), this study will limit its focus to a parallel passage in Proverbs: “The fear of the Lord is what wisdom teaches, and humility comes before honor” (Prov 15:33b). The parallelism is progressive. It starts with the first line of the verse saying, “The fear of the Lord is what wisdom teaches.” The idea of this verse is in accord with the main theme of Proverbs: wisdom is found in the fear of the Lord (cf. 1:7). As one fears the Lord, he sits under His teaching and gains true wisdom.

The next line of Proverbs 15:33 puts forth humility as being at the core of one's willingness to be corrected and instructed in the “fear of the Lord.”²² The verse teaches

¹⁹ cf. Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15–31*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 26–27.

²⁰ Kitchen, *Proverbs*, 399–400.

²¹ Longman, *Proverbs*, 357.

²² Longman, *Proverbs*, 323.

that the fear of the Lord leads to wisdom, and humility leads to wisdom and honor. It is important to note that, while the blessings seemingly include earthly blessings, the passage is not about self-improvement. The passage promotes living life in a redemptive relationship, in the “fear of the Lord.” It speaks also of temporal blessings as one lives God’s way in God’s world. That is the path of humility.²³

Application

Though the thought of someone critiquing one’s preaching hurts one’s pride, heeding the feedback from a sermon evaluation can prevent repetitive mistakes and the consequences to which blind pride can lead. With a concern for God’s name’s sake, and the benefit of His people, may pastors humbly consider sermon evaluations.

Teachability: Proverbs 9:7–9

Teachability is closely intertwined with humility, but as it is of vital importance, it deserves particular attention. Certainly, one would say that a young pastor has a lot to learn, and usually more to learn than an older and more experienced one. However, it can also be that with time, a more experienced pastor may get rusty and need to sharpen his preaching tools.²⁴ Whether one is a very gifted and seasoned expositor or a younger and less experienced one, humans make mistakes,²⁵ always have more to learn, and therefore, should be teachable.²⁶ The finitude of one’s fallen condition impacts theoretical knowledge and the practical outworking of one’s preaching skills.

²³ Kitchen, *Proverbs*, 345; Longman, *Proverbs*, 323–24.

²⁴ Daniel Overdorf, *One Year to Better Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 9; Wheelless, “Sermon Critique.”

²⁵ cf. Dever and Gilbert, *Preach*, 132–33.

²⁶ Wheelless, “Sermon Critique.”

Context

Proverbs 9:7–9 is part of the larger section of 9:7–12, with chapter 9 being the apex of Proverbs’ first nine chapters.²⁷ Chapter 9 has two final invitations, one from Lady Wisdom (9:1–6), and one from Lady Folly (9:13–18). Sandwiched in the middle of those climactic invitations are verses 7–12, showing the outcomes of the respective chosen paths, and so appear central to chapter 9.²⁸ These verses subdivide in the following way.

Verses 7–9 speak to the one who teaches about the outcomes of instructing a mocking fool versus a wise person.²⁹ Verse 10 goes back to the book’s motto, speaking of “wisdom” or “knowledge” (cf. 1:7) being founded in the “fear of the Lord.” Verses 7–9 are based on this foundation, and so are verses 11–12, which speak of the outcomes of a student choosing the path of wisdom or alternately the path of folly and mockery.³⁰ This study will focus on verses 7–9 as a coherent subunit to the section.

Exegesis

Proverbs 9:7–9 say, “⁷ The one who corrects a mocker will bring abuse on himself; the one who rebukes the wicked will get hurt. ⁸ Don’t rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; rebuke the wise, and he will love you. ⁹ Instruct the wise, and he will be wiser still; teach the righteous, and he will learn more.”

Verses 7–8a contain 3 colas that together warn one who seeks to correct a mocker. The outcome of the warning will not be a success but rather a failure.³¹ Verse 7

²⁷ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 429; Longman, *Proverbs*, 215.

²⁸ Longman, *Proverbs*, 218; Kitchen, *Proverbs*, 204–205; Kidner, *Proverbs*, 81; contra Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 297–306.

²⁹ Longman, *Proverbs*, 219.

³⁰ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 442; Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 241.

³¹ Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 241; Longman, *Proverbs*, 219.

contains synonymous parallelism. It presents the outcome for the one who corrects a fool: he will receive “abuse” or “hurt” from the mocking fool. The “abuse” may be understood as an “insult” or some kind of “dishonor.”³² So the proud mocker will seek to “verbally attack or publicly humiliate” the one who corrects him, scorning what teaching he receives.³³ The wrath of the mocker may also move beyond verbal “abuse” to an actual physical hurt (cf. Prov 22:10).³⁴ This may happen even when the instructor is seeking the good of the mocker, desiring to ground him in the “fear of the Lord” (9:10).

In light of the mocker’s response, the third cola, or verse 8a, warns “people of the danger of trying to teach mockers, in particular trying to criticize...them.”³⁵ As someone may desire to “rebuke” a mocker, there is a warning that the mocker will “hate” the one who is providing the rebuke. Certainly, there is a time to try to instruct a mocker, but one ought to know when it is worth suffering the consequences (cf. Prov 26:4–5; Matt 7:6)

Verses 8b–9, on the other hand, have 3 colas that together speak to the one who seeks to instruct and correct, saying that when correcting a wise person, the outcome will normally be successful. Therefore, there is encouragement to invest in correcting the wise. This does not mean that the wise will always be happy or feel good as he receives critique, rebuke, or correction. However, he will nonetheless be thankful for the correction and “love” the one who corrects him.³⁶ He loves him because he has been granted a God-given wisdom, rooted in a relationship with the Lord, by God’s grace.³⁷ It is because of this grace that he can have an accurate perspective of self and welcome

³² Nelson, *The NET Bible*.

³³ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 440; Longman, *Proverbs*, 219; Nelson, *The NET Bible*.

³⁴ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 440.

³⁵ Longman, *Proverbs*, 219.

³⁶ Kitchen, *Proverbs*, 206.

³⁷ Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 241.

correction. He recognizes that he does not know everything, and so he humbly desires the constructive criticism so as to not repeat the same mistakes.³⁸

Verse 9 contains synonymous parallelism that can be seen with the words “instruct,” and “teach.” The teacher is to instruct and teach the “wise” and “righteous” person. Those two terms, “wise” and “righteous,” are understood as parallel (cf. Prov 10:31; 11:30; 23:24), and refer to a standing due to faith in God.³⁹ The point of verse 9 is that this wise person, since he is willing to receive teaching, ought to be taught. The wise person should not only receive teaching in the sense that, having received it once, he considers it sufficient. Rather, he is a continuous learner. His learning never stops. The wise ought to keep being taught to become “wiser” and to “learn more.” Believers ought to remain teachable, as they never know it all. Only as one keeps a teachable attitude will he keep learning and growing in wisdom.⁴⁰ Teachers ought to look for those kinds of pupils and ought to foment that kind of spirit in them as well.

Application

The wise have teachable spirits. What kind of response will a pastor have if someone critiques his preaching? Will the pastor scoff at the ones who give him feedback, embarrassing them so they do not ever make a comment again, or does he instead try to see where he can improve? May God grant wisdom to pastors so that they remain teachable because they have not attained a complete knowledge of preaching. May they recognize that though they likely have worked hard at preparing and delivering

³⁸ Longman, *Proverbs*, 219.

³⁹ Kitchen, *Proverbs*, 206; Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 241.

⁴⁰ Kidner, *Proverbs*, 83; Longman, *Proverbs*, 219.

their sermon, know a lot about preaching, and may even be very gifted at preaching, they still have room to grow and thus ought to remain teachable.

General Biblical Principles

The Scriptures give general wisdom principles that warrant sermon evaluations. Two important wisdom principles are that the wise seek counsel and are teachable.

Counselors: Proverbs 15:22

With a humble and teachable spirit, the wise seek advice from wise counselors. Proverbs 15:22 is taken as an independent proverb. Proverbs' overall context is already given above. This proverb teaches about the value of counselors.

Exegesis

Proverbs 15:22 says, “Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” This proverb speaks to plans made and “any situation amenable to counsel.”⁴¹ It contrasts, via antithetical parallelism, the success and failure of plans depending on whether or not those plans are subjected to counsel. When someone makes plans “independently conceived, and stubbornly clung to, [those] plans will shatter and come apart in the end.”⁴²

On the other hand, the wise, aware of his limitations and blind spots, intently seeks out counsel. One might think that it is only the simple who should ask for counsel. However, it is the wise, who knows that he is finite, that asks for counsel. The counsel is solicited from various trusted and wise individuals. Having wise and multiple counselors

⁴¹ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 633.

⁴² Kitchen, *Proverbs*, 338.

is vital.⁴³ Having several people from whom to ask counsel will normally lead to success. That being said, it is also important to discern who the counselors are. The point of the contrast is to highlight the value and importance of sound counsel in such a way that it helps one to “understand which pitfalls to avoid and to confirm what is a good course of action.”⁴⁴

Application

With regard to sermon evaluations, it is a wise thing to seek counsel from various trusted and wise people. As one plans sermons, the counselors will help one avoid various mistakes and preach more effectively.⁴⁵

Sharpening One Another: Proverbs 27:17

Wise counsel may be sought from someone who is in the same stage in life, but it is often sought from people who have been through seasons of life one has not. In seeking counsel, one is receiving, not giving. Waltke says, “in adulthood, counselors replace parents.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, there are passages of Scripture that speak of relationships in which there is a mutual edification. In these relationships one not only seeks but gives.

⁴³ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 633.

⁴⁴ Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 355.

⁴⁵ Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 112–13; Dever and Gilbert, *Preach*, 131–33; Keith Willhite, “Stop Preaching in the Dark (Or: Gaining Feedback Isn’t Enough),” *Preaching* 11, no. 6 (June 1996): 15–16, accessed December 26, 2022, <https://www.preaching.com/ministry-resources/past-issues/may-june-1996-vol-11-no-6/>.

⁴⁶ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15–31*, 632.

Context

Though there are various proverbs about friendship in Proverbs 27,⁴⁷ the fact that there are other themes in the chapter as well appears to indicate that Proverbs 27:17 functions alone.

Exegesis

Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another.” It communicates its meaning via comparative parallelism. The passage first uses a literal image, “iron sharpens iron,” to illustrate and communicate the proverb’s message found in the second line. The second line uses the same image as the first one, “sharpens,” but in a metaphorical way.⁴⁸

The first line speaks of a blade that is being fashioned. A piece of metal was used to fashion and sharpen one’s blade (cf. Is 44:12).⁴⁹

The second line speaks of the sharpening as something that friends do to “one...another.” The essential meaning of the proverb speaks to “mutual instruction in matters of wisdom, which would help a person navigate life successfully.”⁵⁰ This highlights wisdom as being a “community effort.”⁵¹ The mutual edification happens in various ways, as one is exhorted (cf. Heb 10:25; 1 Thess 5:11), encouraged (cf. 1 Thess 5:11, 14; Rom 12:8), or helped (cf. 1 Thess 5:11).

The words that are communicated in mutually edifying relationship are not meant to just make one feel good. They are meant to “sharpen” the other, to build each other up

⁴⁷ cf. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15–31*, 372.

⁴⁸ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15–31*, 384.

⁴⁹ Kitchen, *Proverbs*, 614.

⁵⁰ Longman, *Proverbs*, 481.

⁵¹ Longman, *Proverbs*, 481.

(cf. 1 Thess 4:11). They reflect a friendship that “persists and does not shy away from constructive criticism.”⁵² This kind of friendship implies making an effort to get close to other people to be better able to exhort, and encourage, even if that might cause some friction in the relationship, so that believers may mutually grow in the Lord.

Application

In connection to sermon evaluations, this proverb provides a basis for seeking and giving wisdom to others, to better preach. The constructive criticism includes exhortation, encouragement, and help so that they will mutually sharpen each other.

Direct Biblical Principles

Certain pastors and theological educators consider sermon evaluations to be part of theological education and pastoral training,⁵³ and also a practice beyond seminary amongst pastor friends from different churches.⁵⁴ Similarly, some pastors and theological educators treat sermon evaluations as an exercise that happens within church leadership⁵⁵ but also can include certain other “trusted members.”⁵⁶ Others take a broader stance, suggesting that a pastor should listen to mature congregants, whether they be men, women, or other pastors.⁵⁷ Are there specific biblical texts that warrant a particular framework for sermon evaluations? Scripture passages that deal with pastoral training

⁵² Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15–31*, 384.

⁵³ Chris Rappazini, “The Value of Feedback,” in *Training Preachers* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 150.

⁵⁴ Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 112–13.

⁵⁵ Johnson, “The Value and Challenge of Sermon Review.”

⁵⁶ Dever and Gilbert, *Preach*, 131–133.

⁵⁷ Robinson, “Listening to Listeners,” 70–71; Matthew D. Kim et al., *Preaching Points*, ed. Scott Gibson (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), chap. 15, Kindle; Wheelless, “Sermon Critique.”

shed much light on the matter. Sermon evaluations appear to mainly take place among qualified men (2 Tim 2:15).

2 Timothy 2:15

Second Timothy is a pastoral epistle, and it contains pastoral training from Paul to Timothy. The training happens as Timothy is on the “job” in pastoral ministry.

Context

The letter is personal and is written in a heightened context. As Paul is about to die (1:8; 4:6), he has received much opposition, and many of his co-laborers have bailed on him, having departed the faith (cf. 1:15–18; 4:10). In this context, Paul gives Timothy some last instructions before going home to the Lord. He urges Timothy to pass the gospel baton on to faithful men (cf. 2 Tim 2:2) as he “guards the good deposit” (1:14) amidst opposition.⁵⁸

Second Timothy 2:15 is part of the broader section that goes from verses 14–26.⁵⁹ In this section, Paul instructs Timothy, teaching him more does and don’ts as he serves amidst opposition.⁶⁰ Paul uses several illustrations in 2 Timothy, which are subdivided into the following sections: workman (14–19), vessel (20–21), and servant (22–26).⁶¹ This study will limit its scope to 2:14–19. These verses contain three teachings. First, in verse 14, Paul teaches Timothy via the imperative “remind them.” Second, Paul then tells Timothy to “be diligent” in what he teaches (v. 15, “correctly teaching;” vv. 16–18,

⁵⁸ Andreas Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 203–04.

⁵⁹ Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 240–41.

⁶⁰ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David Allen Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, World Biblical Commentary 46 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2000), 523.

⁶¹ Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 240–41.

“avoid”). Paul’s third instruction comes in verse 19: God is sovereign and omniscient in salvation despite the presence of many opponents and apostates.⁶²

Exegesis

Starting with verse 14, Paul says, “Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to fight about words. This is useless and leads to the ruin of those who listen.” In this verse, Paul teaches Timothy using the imperative “remind them.” The “them” appears to refer back to “faithful men” (2:2) and all believers (v. 10, “elect”).⁶³ When Paul mentions that these believers should not “fight about words,” he is referring to matters brought about by false teachers (cf. 1 Tim 1:4; 6:4). Those “words” speak of matters that come from heretical points of view, and focus on petty issues that are contentious and produce quarreling. They are words that deviate from the truth and that ultimately destroy “those who listen.”⁶⁴

Next, Paul, in verse 15, commands Timothy to “be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.” In contrast to the false teachers, Paul focuses on being approved by God. He is not focused on himself. After all, it is to God that Paul and Timothy will give an account of their work. So, Paul commands Timothy to “be diligent,” or give much priority and urgency to this matter.⁶⁵ Timothy, as a “worker,” ought to sweat, endure, and labor so as to not be ashamed of his work when he presents it before God.⁶⁶ “Correctly

⁶² cf. Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 241.

⁶³ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 384; cf. Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 241–42.

⁶⁴ Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 523–24.

⁶⁵ Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 242; Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 385.

⁶⁶ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 526; Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 243.

teaching” God’s word refers to the need for Timothy to say what God has said. It is His word, and Timothy must accurately proclaim only, and all of, that word (cf. 2 Tim 3:16).⁶⁷ In sum, Timothy, thinking of his handling/teaching of the Word before God, ought to strive to be diligent so that his work is not shameful but rather an accurate and precise handling of God’s Word.

Paul continues with a negative counterpart to “be diligent” by commanding Timothy in what he ought to “avoid.” He also speaks of implications for those who have gone down the path he’s instructing Timothy to avoid: “Avoid irreverent and empty speech, since those who engage in it will produce even more godlessness, and their teaching will spread like gangrene. Hymenaeus and Philetus are among them. They have departed from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and are ruining the faith of some” (vv. 16–18). What Timothy ought to avoid is “empty speech,” or “godless chatter,” which is speech “devoid of Christian content.”⁶⁸ This reference speaks of other vain kinds of speech that proceed from the selfish, godless, and unbelieving false teachers which Paul has already identified (cf. 1 Tim 1:6, 20; 6:20).⁶⁹ Though vain speech must be avoided, there are certain times when it is necessary to engage in some debate, such as when the doctrine of the church is at stake (cf. Acts 15).⁷⁰ That is what Paul engages in, in this instance, as he is actively fighting for gospel truth, and coaching Timothy in preserving the truth with his teaching and his conduct.

⁶⁷ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 386–87.

⁶⁸ Walter Bauer and Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd Ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 539; Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 387.

⁶⁹ Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 244.

⁷⁰ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 384–85.

Paul’s warning has teeth, as he illustrates by naming Hymenaeus and Philetus (cf. 1 Tim 1:20), who not only have apostatized, but have also brought others along with them (“ruining the faith of some,” 2:18). A central concern about the type of speech at hand was a particular heresy that was “saying that the resurrection has already taken place.” They were saying believers had missed Christ’s second coming.⁷¹

Paul reminds Timothy, “Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, bearing this inscription: the Lord knows those who are his, and let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness” (v. 19). Though the opposition was difficult, God still is sovereign and true. That is true with regard to the Lord’s sovereign omniscience in election and keeping of His chosen ones (“the Lord knows those who are his”). Timothy is one of the chosen. He and the rest of believers, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord,” must heed the command: “turn away from wickedness.”⁷²

This teaching that Timothy should “remind,” “be diligent,” and “avoid” (2 Tim 2:14–19) parallels 2 Timothy 4:2–5 (cf. 1 Tim 4:11–16). Timothy is warned about those who “will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear” (2 Tim 4:3). Timothy is commanded to “preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (4:2) and “exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (4:5).

⁷¹ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 389; Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 245.

⁷² Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 245–46; Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 390.

Application

Paul addresses Timothy's teaching. He gives pastoral training on the job to Timothy. He comments about what Timothy's preaching ought to be and what it ought not to be. This passage gives strong support for sermon evaluations as pastoral training as it explicitly talks about what Timothy's teaching ought to be and not to be.⁷³ The context finds the teaching happening between a seasoned pastor and a younger pastor. So, it is good for younger pastors to have someone to speak into their preaching, someone who has been on the job longer than they have. Seminary graduation does not mean training graduation. It is wise to participate in ongoing sermon evaluations to keep improving one's preaching.

Beyond the pastoral mentor-to-student relationship drawn out of 2 Tim 2:14–19, there is warrant for different qualified men to work together in a mutually beneficial way (cf. Prov 27:17).⁷⁴ It is good to work together to sharpen each other's teaching of God's word via sermon evaluations.

Who Should Evaluate

Scripture mainly deals with sermon evaluations in the category of pastoral training. It takes place in a context of a mentor and a trainee, like Paul and Timothy (2 Tim 2:14–19). However, those evaluations can also be applied for mutual benefit among pastors (cf. Prov 27:17).

⁷³ Collier, "How to Evaluate Your Pastor's Sermons."

⁷⁴ See above, under the Sharpening One Another heading.

To further warrant the biblical focus of sermon evaluations taking place between qualified men (men of character who are able to teach), this section will look at 2 Tim 2:2. Pastors have been called, equipped, recognized, and empowered for pastoral ministry, and as such, their evaluating one another gives the greatest prospect for preaching refinement.

While on the one hand, the bulk of sermon evaluations are pastoral, on the other hand there is another kind of sermon evaluation that is categorically different. This other category that Scripture also talks about is non-pastoral sermon feedback (Acts 18:24–26). This project focuses on sermon evaluations done by qualified men for qualified men. However, looking at Acts 18 is a necessary caveat as part of the study.

Evaluations Done by Pastors: 2 Timothy 2:2

Paul and Timothy had pastoral qualifications, and Paul was following the pattern he was instructing Timothy to follow, training men to further develop character and giftedness to teach (2 Tim 2:2; cf. 1 Tim 3:1–7). Character and teaching sum up the pastoral qualifications (1 Tim 3:1–7).

Context

The context of 2 Timothy has already been established above.⁷⁵ However, a few comments are necessary with regard to where 2 Tim 2:2 fits into the literary context of the epistle. After mentioning that most have abandoned him (1:15–18), Paul then says “you, therefore” (2 Tim 2:1). In other words, Paul has a few pointers for Timothy so that the church leaders under him will not deviate and apostatize but instead continue faithful

⁷⁵ See under the *Direct Biblical Principles* heading and under the *2 Timothy 2:15* sub-heading.

onto the next generation. The first pointer is that Timothy ought to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” “Be strong” is a passive imperative. It indicates that Timothy’s strength to continue in his mission for the Lord ought to depend on God’s grace.⁷⁶

Exegesis

In addition to being strengthened by Christ’s grace, the next vital ingredient for churches to see in the next generation is the training up men who have and are being shaped to develop character and giftedness to teach (2 Tim 2:2). Paul speaks at the end of his life, after investing much time in Timothy, and tells him, “What you have heard from me..., commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” The contents of what he has “heard” seem to refer to all of the teaching Paul has given him, to the whole counsel of God, which he had heard as Paul had taught him over the years.⁷⁷

As Paul taught Timothy, there had been many witnesses over the course of his teachings to Timothy (cf. 2:2).⁷⁸ This was not a private teaching. While Paul instructed Timothy other people were present.

Those entrusted with the leadership of the church are pastors (cf. 1 Tim 3:2). Paul was not asking Timothy to pass the church leadership to whoever had a certain social status but instead to men of character (“to faithful men,” cf. 1 Tim 3:1–7, NET). The gospel baton was also to be passed on to men who not only were faithful but were gifted in teaching so that they would be able to teach what they had learned to the next generation that would follow (“who will be able to teach others also”).

⁷⁶ Köstenberger, *1–2 Timothy and Titus*, 227–28; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 503.

⁷⁷ Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 506.

⁷⁸ Nelson, *The NET Bible*.

Application

Concerning sermon evaluations, it seems appropriate to look for qualified men to offer feedback on one's preaching. Furthermore, while having qualified men is sufficient, it would be ideal to find a pastor especially gifted in preaching, one who devotes himself to preaching as his main ministry (1 Tim 5:17). Also, having a few gifted preachers to evaluate one's preaching is optimal as success is found in the plurality of counselors, not in just one.

Beyond the sheer biblical wisdom of having such qualified men give feedback, doing so is simply practical. Just as one would rather have a specialist doctor give him input on his medical condition than a friend who read WebMD, or an accountant's tax input over someone who knows how to count, one should desire to have a qualified pastor give solid sermon feedback over people who are not qualified to preach, or do not have experience with preaching. That being said, there is a place for their input.

Feedback From Church Members: Acts 18:24–26

The pastoral epistles give principles that infer that sermon evaluations should take place in the context of qualified leadership, by pastors and to pastors (2 Tim 2:2, 14–19; 1 Tim 2:9–3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). In addition to that, there is another category, not so much of sermon evaluation, but of a non-pastoral sermon feedback found in Scripture. Priscilla's and Aquilla's feedback to Apollos on his preaching demonstrates that in Acts 18.

Context

This passage takes place at the juncture of Paul’s second and third missionary journeys as Paul goes from Antioch to the region of Galatia (18:22–23).⁷⁹ Paul was in Corinth for a while, and before going to Ephesus, he stopped in Syria and Cenchrea (18:18). In this travel to Ephesus, Paul was accompanied by a couple, Priscila and Aquila. However, Paul left them in Ephesus as he sailed on to strengthen disciples in other cities (18:21–23). As Aquila and Priscilla were in Ephesus, a Christian Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus and preached. His teaching contained a true gospel teaching but was incomplete and deviant in some way (18:25). The couple corrected him so that he would better understand God’s Word, and as a result, he was able to continue with a more effective ministry (18:27–28).⁸⁰

Exegesis

Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria (“now a Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian”) that went to Ephesus (v. 24). He was a “learned” or “eloquent man.”⁸¹ He understood the Jewish Scriptures and was skilled at preaching them (“was competent in the use of the Scriptures,” v. 24).⁸²

Beyond understanding the Jewish Scriptures, “he had been instructed in the way of the Lord” (v. 25). That is, he had been taught the gospel, taught about Christ’s work on the cross and had believed in him. Having a preaching gift, faith, and much zeal, he

⁷⁹ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 587–89.

⁸⁰ Longenecker, *Acts*, 1001.

⁸¹ Bock, *Acts*, 591.

⁸² Longenecker, *Acts*, 1000–1001; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2012), 784.

preached the gospel accurately in its essence (“and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately about Jesus,” v. 25).⁸³ Apollos lived at a unique time in history, at the beginning of the church, and is “a figure caught in transition who ministers in the Diaspora and thus needs to be brought up to date.”⁸⁴ He spoke correctly of Christ and the gospel, but lacked complete knowledge about a believer’s baptism (“although he knew only John’s baptism,” v. 25).⁸⁵

As Apollos was speaking in the synagogue, it became obvious to Priscilla and Aquila, more mature saints with a complete understanding of baptism, that there was a need to rectify Apollos’ teaching. They needed to add what his teaching lacked: “He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. After Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately” (v. 26). One thing to note is that this conversation took place in private.⁸⁶

Theological Implications

How does Priscilla and Aquilla’s teaching fit in here in light of the clear prohibition of women teaching Scripture over men (1 Tim 2:11; cf. 1 Tim 3:1–7)? There is a significant difference between the two in that the teaching Paul writes about in 1 Timothy not only is from a qualified pastor but also is to a congregation (2:8–11; cf. 3:15). In contrast, the conversation in which the couple instructs a pastor in Acts 18 happens in private.⁸⁷ Acts 18 does not warrant women teaching over the gathered church, but does allow for some teaching as part of private conversations, and in a non-pastoral

⁸³ Schnabel, *Acts*, 784–85; Longenecker, *Acts*, 1001.

⁸⁴ Bock, *Acts*, 592.

⁸⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 592.

⁸⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 593.

⁸⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 75, 92.

capacity.⁸⁸ Again, on the other hand, the authoritative preaching of the Word of God and pastoral church leadership is only for qualified men (1 Tim. 2:11; 3:1–7).⁸⁹

Application

There should be some sermon feedback from church members in a pastor's ministry, based on Acts 18. No one is above critique. Again, as Acts 18 is a private conversation between a couple and pastor, and as the couple together do not qualify for pastoral ministry, this sermon feedback is categorically different from formal pastoral training. Acts 18 is a descriptive passage that highlights the benefit of non-pastoral sermon feedback and is not to be viewed as the main teaching on sermon evaluations. Furthermore, as the teaching on theological education and pastoral leadership training found in the pastoral epistles is prescriptive and normative, it should govern teaching on sermon evaluations. Taking this passage at face value, as a private, informal, and non-pastoral conversation, certainly both male and female church members can give feedback to a pastor about his preaching.

Though sermon evaluation among pastors is stressed as the normal and categorically different kind of sermon evaluation, the point is not to minimize the value of congregational feedback. Pastors ought to invite congregational feedback. Just as Apollos's ministry was enhanced, pastors' ministries can be greatly helped by listening to feedback from congregants.

Congregational feedback can take place in a few different ways that appropriately fit the category of Acts 18 sermon feedback. The obvious way is the replication of

⁸⁸ cf. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 178.

⁸⁹ Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 177–78.

Acts 18 in which a couple comes to a pastor to bring a concern about teaching that they think is incorrect. So, if a couple, an individual, or a few individuals come to a pastor, he should listen to them. That is the main application here.

Perhaps one can also suggest the following as inference from this passage as well. A pastor can actively pursue conversations with congregants, inviting their feedback to learn from different congregants on his preaching. However, in this case the pastor should come to them with specific questions, as non-pastoral congregants do not usually have the same sermon structural understanding that a pastor does, and so might not be able to comment beyond their particular likes and dislikes. Perhaps pointed questions about an explanation, argumentation, application, or illustration might be more helpful to get better feedback.

In addition to that, a pastor desiring to understand his audience better can also intentionally converse with congregants, asking them questions about life matters he is preaching on. That way he can understand his audience/context more, and as a result minister to them more effectively.⁹⁰

The Manner of Evaluation

Those who give the feedback need to be reminded that truth ought to be spoken in love, and that their purpose is to build up the body. Those who receive the feedback ought not to put their defenses up but instead humbly accept the feedback, and change accordingly.⁹¹

⁹⁰ I reject Robinson's and Overdorf's lack of distinguishing sermon evaluation categories between pastoral and non-pastoral. However, they have helpful practical ideas, that can be applied using categories proposed in this project; see, Robinson, "Listening to Listeners," 68–70; Overdorf, *Better Preaching*, 102–03.

⁹¹ Dever and Gilbert, *Preach*, 133–38.

Giving Feedback: Ephesians 4:14–16

The purpose of Ephesians is to praise God for His glorious salvific grace towards the church through Christ Jesus (1:3, 6, 12, 14; 3:21).⁹² The imperatives of chapters 4–6 follow the indicatives of chapters 1–3.⁹³ Chapters 4–6 contain teachings on how to live for God’s glory in light of the redemption blessings God has bestowed on His church.⁹⁴ Ephesians 4:1–16 speaks of the unity and maturity in the church. Verses 1–6 call on Christians to live out their effectual salvation “calling” (4:1), characterized by “humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” Living this way contributes to “unity” (4:3), a unity based on the one triune God, His church, and the only true faith in Him (4:4–6).⁹⁵

Ephesians 4:7–16 delineate Christ’s provision for the unity and maturity of the church, the spiritual gifts.⁹⁶ This section involves the source (7–10), goal (11–13), and consequence (14–16) of the provision for the unity and maturity of the body.⁹⁷ Verses 14–16 are the expected result of what ought to proceed from the gifts.⁹⁸

⁹² R. Bruce Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” class syllabus (Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 25.

⁹³ S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*, ed. H. Wayne House (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 38.

⁹⁴ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 33; Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, ed. Robert Yarborough and Robert Stein, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 28.

⁹⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 66; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 29; Baugh, *Ephesians*, 39, 308.

⁹⁶ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 33.

⁹⁷ Baugh, *Ephesians*, 40; Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 33.

⁹⁸ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 327.

Exegesis

Verse 14 states the first expected spiritual outcome negatively, which is then contrasted with a second expected positive outcome in verses 15–16. Verse 14 says, “Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit.”⁹⁹ Paul speaks of immature believers, using the metaphor of immature human physical development: “little children.” He uses another metaphor, that of “waves,” to express his concern about how false teaching may impact immature believers. The children could be “tossed” and “blown around” by false teaching “winds,” as a ship is by the waves and winds in a storm. The false teachers use tactics against immature believers that are described as cunning, clever, and deceitful (v. 14).¹⁰⁰ So, the gifts Christ provided to the church ought to mature the immature, protect them from false teachings, and unify the church.

The positive outcome that ought to be the result of having the gifts is found in verses 15–16. Before the outcome is stated, the means for this outcome is given: “but speaking the truth in love” (15a). The “but” marks a contrast between the negative and positive outcomes and the means. The means is to “speak truth” and speak it in “love.”¹⁰¹ “Speak truth” refers to what is real and true, which contrasts with the deceit of false teachers.¹⁰² Though the text says speak, the meaning appears to extend to “both conduct and speech.”¹⁰³ “Love” refers to actions stemming from the “sacrificial giving of oneself

⁹⁹ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 349; Baugh, *Ephesians*, 341.

¹⁰⁰ cf. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 28–34; Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 350.

¹⁰¹ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 352.

¹⁰² cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 565.

¹⁰³ cf. John 3:21; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 565; Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 352.

for the benefit of others.”¹⁰⁴ That is what Paul means when he says, “speaking the truth in love.” The outcome of the gifts is growing in Christlikeness in all areas of the Christian life. That is seen in 15b through the metaphor of physical human growth, “let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ.”¹⁰⁵

Verse 16 continues what verse 15b says, further explaining the purposed outcome of the gifts.¹⁰⁶ It does so by pointing out again that the source of the spiritual growth of the church body is Christ (“from him”). Christ causes unity in the “whole body,” the church, as its distinct interconnected members serve their different roles (“fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament,” “by the proper working of each individual part”).¹⁰⁷ Growth is the desired outcome in order for the body to be built up. In other words, the building up of the body is the “final goal” of the growth.¹⁰⁸ The “love” speaks of the “sphere” or “manner” in which this growing and building up occur.¹⁰⁹

Application

Applying this passage to sermon evaluations, those who evaluate ought to do so in love. Their gifts and knowledge of preaching ought to be used in love for there to be unity in the church, and growth of the one evaluated. If the truth is spoken with a selfish attitude, while it may have a spiritual impact (cf. Phil 1:12–18), it opens the door to disunity. On the other hand, while one may want to be “kind” and not give constructive criticism to avoid the awkward tension that may result in the relationship, he still should

¹⁰⁴ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 352.

¹⁰⁵ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 353; cf. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 285–286.

¹⁰⁶ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 354.

¹⁰⁷ Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 354; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 569–71, 574–75.

¹⁰⁸ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 578; cf. Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 356.

¹⁰⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 578; Compton, “234 Greek Exegesis: Ephesians,” 356.

Speak truth for the benefit of the one evaluated (cf. Prov 27:5–6). Without truth being spoken, the one who is evaluated does not have his blind spot checked, and will continue to sit in his error. There is a need for both truth and love to be spoken.

Truth is spoken in love, keeping in mind that the purpose of the gifts is for the growth and maturity of the church for God's glory. May that be the motivation and not self-aggrandizement.

Receiving Feedback

With regard to receiving feedback, the principles have already been established.¹¹⁰ A humble heart and teachable disposition are necessary. Instead of putting up a defense and excusing or arguing against what is being said, pastors should instead have a listening ear.

How to Evaluate

Certainly, one can figure out the practical considerations on how he will conduct sermon evaluations. However, a few comments on the matter are appropriate. Practical considerations include how often a sermon evaluation should be conducted and whether the evaluation should be done internally or externally. This project focuses on sermon evaluations from pastors and to pastors because the main Scriptures on sermon evaluations are pastoral sermon evaluations.

¹¹⁰ See the *Answering Objections* subsection above.

Evaluation Frequency

Some pastors choose to have a weekly sermon evaluation. For example, 9marks Ministry proposes doing this.¹¹¹ Certainly, having one's preaching evaluated every week ought to improve the preaching. However, preaching evaluations every week may make evaluations superficial and make the sermon evaluation's proverbial salt lose its flavor. If evaluations do maintain rigor and depth, such a complete review on a weekly basis could become overbearing. On the other hand, if sermon evaluations are done rarely, every other year or so, they may not be often enough to change and improve preaching.

In light of that, the frequency that is recommended is one that is common enough for improvement to take place, yet not so often that evaluations become superficial or overbearing. Not being evaluated weekly, and instead more periodically, allows for a more robust and in-depth evaluation without becoming overbearing. The in-depth or complete sermon evaluation should also yield more results.

Here are examples of periodical evaluations. In the book *Saving Eutychus*,¹¹² the authors propose gathering five to six pastors together weekly, having listened to one pastor's sermon beforehand, and each giving him feedback. Cycling through each pastor, they get evaluated once every five to six weeks. In this case, the pastors are from different churches. Another scenario could be a gathering of a group of 3–7 pastors in which once every 6–12 weeks they gather together for a half-day or a full day, each preach a sermon in person, and give each other feedback.

¹¹¹ This project does not speak to their entire church service evaluation, only to sermon evaluations; Jeff Lacine, "11 Reasons For A Weekly Service Review—And 4 Cautions Once You Start," 9Marks, 2017, <https://www.9marks.org/article/11-reasons-for-a-weekly-service-review-and-4-cautions-once-you-start/>.

¹¹² Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 109.

The idea behind the group size is that it is big enough for several counselors to speak wisdom to the preacher. However, the group should not be so big that the gathering becomes cumbersome and complex. The format may vary, but the periodical evaluation way seems to allow for an in-depth yet non-overbearing sermon evaluation. Evaluations should be frequent enough for the preaching patterns to be changed and improved. Too seldom evaluations may not transform the preaching. One more point of consideration is that if someone needs more in-depth work with his preaching, weekly coaching would be appropriate.

Inside or Outside the Local Church

The local church is ideally with whom sermon evaluations should take place. That is because Christ is building his church through local bodies. That being said, collaboration between churches is seen in the New Testament. Furthermore, most of theological education today happens through the collaboration of various like-minded churches working together as it is difficult for one local church to single-handedly train its next generation of pastors.

There are various reasons why one would go outside of the church to receive sermon evaluations. The first and most obvious one is that thousands of churches in the world have only one pastor, so it is difficult for them to get good feedback within their church. Therefore, gathering with other pastors that are from a similar context seems like a good way to carry out sermon evaluations. Second, as one pastor may be under the authority of another, depending on the church polity model, he may feel constrained by

what he says in his critique and limit the sermon evaluation in that way.¹¹³ Of course, ideally the church dynamics shouldn't work that way, but that may be a reality.

Hopefully, an atmosphere of transparency and trust would be developed by the leadership for that not to be a problem.¹¹⁴ Third, if one of the pastors in a congregation is more gifted than the others and is the main teacher, he might find it more beneficial to have his sermons evaluated by men who have a parallel ministerial responsibility in a different church. Though doing sermon evaluations within the local church is philosophically best, there is good warrant, depending on the circumstance, to do sermon evaluations with pastors from various churches.

Other Questions and Considerations

There are a few other important questions to consider concerning this topic. Should pastors receive feedback before preaching? Should they receive feedback on their best sermons? What should they do with unsolicited critics? Lastly, how likeminded should their evaluators be?

Feedback Before vs After Preaching

What about getting a sermon evaluation before preaching instead of after preaching? From a logistical standpoint, evaluating a sermon beforehand means that the sermon has to be preached twice and heard twice by the evaluators. The upside is that the second preaching should yield a more refined sermon from which the whole congregation would benefit. If a preaching evaluation is done after the fact, the work is less as it is only

¹¹³ Vines and Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit*, 169–170.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, “The Value and Challenge of Sermon Review”; Vines and Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit*, 169.

preached once, but there is no opportunity to fix the sermon that went out, and it may be more difficult for the pastor to get his sermon critiqued after it is preached publicly.

There is a way to do a sermon evaluation before preaching that does not require preaching the text. It is having other people read the sermon content and comment on the contents or just the application.¹¹⁵ While this is a commendable practice and may certainly improve the sermon, one has to take into account that this is not a complete sermon evaluation. It does not evaluate the actual preaching with all of its variables, especially if it is only geared towards application.

Considering other factors concerning before vs after evaluations, if the one preaching is a student who needs more basic sermon structure evaluation, an evaluation prior to preaching seems wiser. Also, if there is concern about how some doctrinal details may come out, in the case of a trainee, then perhaps an evaluation prior to preaching is best. However, for evaluating pastors periodically, perhaps doing sermon feedback after the preaching is a better option. With periodical sermon evaluations, the focus is not on the details of every sermon. It is more on the underlying patterns of preaching. The idea is that with those periodical evaluations, the preaching patterns change, and those are reflected in the weekly preaching.

There is also something to be said about evaluating the sermon that has been preached to the church versus a sermon preached for evaluators. However, if one prefers the pre-preaching evaluation, the extra effort necessary to make that happen is commendable.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Cf. Vroegop, "Discipling and Developing Leaders Through a Sermon Application Team."

¹¹⁶ For other opinions on the matter, see, Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 108; Mark Vroegop, "Discipling and Developing Leaders Through a Sermon Application Team," *9Marks*, last

Evaluating Only “Best” Sermons

What about a pastor choosing his “best” sermons for sermon evaluations? In doing sermon evaluations, the evaluators should pick the sermon rather than the pastor being able to choose the sermon. This avoids the possibility of the evaluators hearing the best sermon over the past several weeks and of hearing what does not exactly reflect the weekly preaching.¹¹⁷ If the pastor selects his best sermons, it defeats the purpose of sermon evaluations to a certain degree. On the one hand, a preacher can only preach per his giftedness, so his preaching will reflect to a degree what he preaches; nevertheless, there certainly are sermons that distinguish themselves more than others.

Unsolicited Critics

What about unsolicited critics? Hopefully, as a pastor submits himself to regular sermon evaluations, the unsolicited critics will diminish. Also, while the criticism may continue, hopefully the critics will be met with more grace and confidence as the pastor will have a regular source of feedback from qualified evaluators to counterbalance the criticism. Nevertheless, though the person may be a regular complainer, and a good part of what he says may be false, there very well may be some truth in what he says, so one should listen with patience and humility.¹¹⁸

modified 2020, accessed November 20, 2022, <https://www.9marks.org/article/discipling-and-developing-leaders-through-a-sermon-application-team/>; Robinson, “Listening to Listeners,” 70–71.

¹¹⁷ Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 109.

¹¹⁸ A good read on the matter is Joel R. Beeke and Nick Thompson, *Pastors and Their Critics* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R, 2020).

Theological and Preaching Philosophical Affinity

What about theological affinity and preaching philosophy? This project, as stated, works from an expository preaching point of view. For sermon evaluations to be profitable, there needs to be a certain degree of affinity among those involved with regard to what good preaching is. It would be hard to do sermon evaluations between one who understands prophecy has ceased and one who speaks his dreams as supposed revelation from God. It would also be difficult to make progress in sermon evaluations between one who preaches thematically, skipping from verse to verse based on a theme found in a concordance, and an expository preacher. While these comments may appear obvious, I find them relevant, as I have experienced teaching people with those presuppositions in the Dominican Republic, in Canada, and in Spain as well. Furthermore, beyond agreement about expository preaching, it may be helpful to have doctrinal and theological affinity in order for there to not be too many rabbit trails about doctrinal matters in sermon evaluations. That way, sermon evaluations will be more focused and profitable.¹¹⁹

Conclusion

Pastors need more than surface-level church foyer feedback. Though sermon evaluations are unpleasant, pastors need to take part in them because they are beneficial. May pastors receive them humbly, despite their pride fighting against the critique. May they do sermon evaluations with a teachable spirit, acknowledging that they can and should improve.

¹¹⁹ Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 108.

Pastors should participate in sermon evaluations by listening to various counselors who are wise in preaching knowledge. They should also practice a mutual sharpening of one another. These general biblical principles of counselors and mutual sharpening apply to sermon evaluations.

Looking at biblical passages that speak more directly to pastors and preaching, sermon evaluations are understood as pastoral training. In light of that, the counselor or teacher should be a qualified pastor, gifted, and having the character that allows him to train men with regard to what should come from the pulpit. While sermon evaluations may take the form of a Paul to Timothy relationship in which an older seasoned teacher teaches a younger and less experienced student, it may also take the form of co-laborers in the gospel, mutually sharpening one another.

While sermon evaluations mostly take place amongst pastors, there also is a different category of sermon evaluations: non-pastoral sermon evaluations. That kind of evaluation should take place in a private conversational setting with the understanding that the evaluation is not an authoritative teaching over the whole church. In those non-pastoral evaluations, church members are invited to come to the pastor and communicate a concern about his preaching. The pastor should listen out of love for the church and a desire to stay in tune with them, recognizing that he has much to learn.

Speaking of the manner of sermon evaluations, may sermon evaluations be conducted in a way that truth is spoken in love and received with a humble and teachable spirit. As preachers gather for sermon evaluations, may their preaching improve, may the church be built up stronger into Christlikeness, and may God receive the glory.

Lastly, the sermon evaluations are most beneficial when conducted on a periodical frequency. This pattern allows for in-depth evaluations without being too burdensome. May those take place within the local church leadership and beyond as is deemed most beneficial for preaching within one's context.

CHAPTER III

BASIS FOR SERMON EVALUATION CONTENTS

Chapter 2 warranted sermon evaluations with biblical foundations for them. Chapter 3 gives a basis for the contents of sermon evaluations. It does so by studying key preaching books. The study starts by overviewing and summarizing what those books highlight as the key sermon components, and then, having the list of the key components, proceeds to elaborate this project's key components of sermon evaluation. Next, having established the key components, it integrates those components into the sermon evaluation template and the guide with explanatory notes. This process is carried out for the sermon introduction, body, conclusion, and delivery. An overall category is also included.

Sermon Introduction

“‘Well begun is half done.’ And ill begun is apt to be wholly ruined.”¹ John Broadus’ words should compel a pastor to prepare sermon introductions diligently. He highlights how vital introductions are to the whole sermon. Some may wonder why introductions are a big deal and immediately start with expounding the passage; or they may feel pressed by other ministry demands and choose to disregard introduction preparation. Unfortunately, they do so to their demise. Furthermore, the truth is that every preacher introduces his sermons. The question at hand is whether one has an introduction that will “serve or burden the message.”²

¹ John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, Kindle; cf. Daniel L. Akin, Bill Curtis, and Stephen Rummage, *Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 166. They say the introduction is the “most important part of the sermon.”

² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 218.

God can certainly work despite a bad introduction. Nonetheless, preachers need to do their best and not hinder His work for His name's sake and our audience's sake.³

The introduction is important because it intends to introduce the subject or the complete main idea of the message to the audience. While some authors include more purposes than that of introducing the subject,⁴ it seems best to understand the introduction's *sine qua non* purpose as introducing the subject/main idea of the passage, with other introduction components serving this purpose.⁵

Having stated the importance and purpose of introductions, this chapter section continues to overview the key introduction components from relevant preaching resources, and based on those, develop and establish this project's key components. It will also address other introduction matters, and then it will set forth the sermon evaluation template.

Overview

In order to determine what the key components of sermon introductions are, it is necessary to look at the overview of what certain authors of distinguished preaching books have written on the matter. In the following paragraphs, each author's key components will be listed, and a few explanations will be given, as deemed necessary. Also, since the same (or similar) key components are named differently by different authors, unified terminology will be given to those in order to better compare them. Those same components will then be charted to compare what the different authors suggested the key components are and how those authors think similarly or differently.

³ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 167.

⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 244; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, part 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 219–23; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 168–69.

⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 120.

Robinson recognizes three key introduction components. Those key components are “get attention,” “uncover need,” and “orient the listeners to the body of the message.”⁶ His third component, the orienting of listeners, includes introducing the subject of the passage’s main idea when the sermon is deductive or introducing the first main point if the sermon is inductive.⁷ In sum, Robinson’s three components can fit under the categories called: attention/interest, need, and subject/first main point.⁸

Sunukjian sees five key components to sermon introductions: “engage the listener’s interest,” “focus the message,” “set the stage biblically,” “preview the coming hunks,” and “announce the passage.”⁹ In his first point about “interest,” he mentions that one should either raise a “need” or satisfy the “curiosity” of the audience.¹⁰ His point about focusing the message is about declaring the central truth of the passage in one sentence using “timeless language.”¹¹ He suggests that the preview is not always necessary, and that it depends on the sermon being deductive or inductive, the passage’s structure, and the nature of the main points.¹² In sum, his five key components fit under the categories called: interest or need, focus the message (the main idea), context, preview when necessary, and scripture text.

Vines and Shaddix suggest sermon introductions have six key components: “gain your audience’s interest,” “introduce your text,” “state your proposition,” “establish the relevancy,” “promise the ‘take away,’” and “state your expectations.”¹³ The relevancy speaks

⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 125.

⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 124–25.

⁸ Authors have different names for the main idea of the message, but the term *main idea* will be used for consistency’s sake.

⁹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 192.

¹⁰ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 192.

¹¹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 65, 192.

¹² Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 224.

¹³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 237–38.

to the needs of the audience.¹⁴ “Promise the ‘Take Away’” speaks of what the audience can expect to get from the sermon.¹⁵ In sum, Vines and Shaddix’s components fit under the categories called: interest, scripture text, the main idea, need, promise, and expectations.

Richard speaks of both an introduction and a sub-introduction. He also has a pre-introduction, which is before and separate from the introduction. In the introduction, he includes four parts: “get attention,” “raise need,” “orient theme,” and “state purpose.”¹⁶ In the sub-introduction, he adds four more steps: announce the text, review if in a series, context/“background,” and “preview.”¹⁷ The “orient theme” aspect refers to the main idea, whether it is stated just in part as a theme or as a full proposition.¹⁸ “State purpose” refers to, simply declaring, “What does God want my people to understand and obey?”¹⁹ In sum, his introduction and sub-introduction include components called: attention, need, the main idea, purpose, text, review, context, and preview.

Merida states that the key components are “interest,” “text,” “main point,” “redemptive quality,” “expectations,” and “variety.”²⁰ The redemptive quality speaks of a spiritual need and a biblical solution to the problem.²¹

Akin, Curtis, and Rummage suggest an introduction should contain the following seven components: “quickly engages,” “short,” “needs,” “appropriate,” “introduces the MIT and the MIM,”²² “transition to the Scriptures,” and “a good opening sentence and a good

¹⁴ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 238.

¹⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 238.

¹⁶ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 103–5.

¹⁷ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 106–7.

¹⁸ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 105, cf. 85.

¹⁹ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 78.

²⁰ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 201–2.

²¹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 202.

²² Those acronyms will be defined below (see footnote 85).

closing sentence.”²³ In sum, they suggest introductions should have the following components: interest/engage, short in length, need, appropriate, the main idea, transition, and a good opening and closing sentence.

Chapell suggests that there is a need for a Scripture introduction before the actual introduction.²⁴ In the Scripture introduction he includes five steps: “Scripture announcement,” “Scripture introduction (ante-theme),” “Scripture reannouncement,” “Scripture reading,” and “prayer for illumination.”²⁵ The Scripture introduction part includes “creation of longing,” and “brief contextualization.”²⁶ Then, in the actual introduction, he includes five points: “arouse interest,” “introduce the subject,” “make the subject personal,” “bond to Scripture,” and “prepare for/attach the proposition.”²⁷ When he speaks of making the introduction personal, he means that the preacher ought to raise a spiritual need. This need has to do with mankind’s sin and addressing the sin condition the passage chiefly addresses. Chapell stresses this part and calls it the “Fallen Condition Focus.”²⁸ He further defines it as what “reveals a text’s and a sermon’s purpose.”²⁹ The “bond to Scripture” is a few brief comments about the Scripture passage before the proposition. Per Chapell, the last step of the introduction is the proposition, which he explains as the “summary of the introduction as well as preparation for the sermon’s subject.”³⁰ He understands that the whole introduction sets up the proposition declaration.³¹ In sum, Chapell advocates for the

²³ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 169–70.

²⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 229–31.

²⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 231.

²⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 230.

²⁷ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 218–25.

²⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 221, and 28–33.

²⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 28.

³⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 223.

³¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 223, 225.

introduction to include the components: interest, subject, need, Scripture bond, and the main idea.

Broadus does not list a similar sequential outline as do the other authors. He highlights interest about the subject, and preparing listeners to understand it, as key components.³²

See the charts that highlight these key components (Tables 1.0 and 1.1). Of the two charts, one keeps the author's order for the introduction as several authors stress the importance of components ("Per Author's Order"). The other categorizes the components per theme ("Per Theme Order") to better see the uniformity and distinction of introduction components among the authors. Looking at the chart content, one can see key elements that run through all of the authors' works. At the core of a good introduction are the interest, need, and main idea components.

³² Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

Table 1.0

Introduction Key Components Per Author's Order							
Authors	KC 1	KC 2	KC 2	KC 4	KC 5	KC 6	KC 8
Robinson	interest	need	main idea				
Sunukjian	interest	or need	main idea	context	preview	Scripture text	
Vines and Shaddix	interest	Scripture text	main idea	need	promise	response	
Richard	interest	need	main idea	purpose	Scripture text	review	preview
Merida	interest	text	main idea	need	expectations	variety	
Akin, Curtis, and Rummage	interest	short	need	appropriate	main idea	transition	good start and finish
Chapell	interest	subject	need	Scripture bond	main idea		
Broadus	interest		main idea				

Chart notes

KC stands for Key Components

For Sunukjian, the preview is optional, depending on the introduction.

For Richard, KC 5-8 are part of the sub-introduction, and he also has a review component.

Chapell reads Scripture prior to the introduction.

Table 1.1

Introduction Key Components Per Theme Order							
	KC 1	KC 2	KC 2	KC 4	KC 5	KC 6	KC 8
Authors	interest	need	main idea				KC 8
Robinson	interest	or need	main idea				
Sunukjian	interest	need	main idea	promise/expectations	context	preview	Scripture text
Vines and Shaddix	interest	need	main idea	purpose	context	preview	Scripture text
Richard	interest	need	main idea	expectations			Scripture text
Merida	interest	need	main idea			transition	variety
Akin, Curtis, and Rummage	interest	need	main idea				
Chapell	interest	need	subject/main idea				Scripture bond
Broadus	interest		main idea				

Chart note

Akin, Curtis, and Rummage also include good start and finish, short, and appropriate.

What about the components that are not addressed by certain authors as key introduction components? Do those authors not think that those other components are important or necessary, or is it that though they grant those matters certain importance, they do not consider them as main components?

Concerning the Scripture reading, though Robinson does not denote it as a core component of an introduction, he still thinks it is an important part of the introduction.³³ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage provide a similar statement in their introduction as well.³⁴ Vines and Shaddix do not explicitly state that the text should be read, but they do have a section on introducing the text.³⁵

In what concerns the preview component, Chapell includes a form of a preview with his proposition/main idea point. He says, “the proposition is actually a summary of the introduction as well as preparation for the sermon’s subject.”³⁶ Then, Vines and Shaddix, as part of setting an expectation, state that the preacher should “make clear where [he’s] going.”³⁷ Robinson’s third component, which includes the main idea, is a broader point than that, and includes the need to “orient the listeners to the body of the sermon and its development.”³⁸ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage speak of a “course or plan of discussion” as one of their purposes of an introduction.³⁹ In sum, the authors have some kind of a preview, whether or not they highlight it as a key component.

³³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 126–27.

³⁴ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 172.

³⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 237.

³⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 223.

³⁷ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 238.

³⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 124–25.

³⁹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 169.

Regarding the context, Akin, Curtis, and Rummage certainly give importance to it.⁴⁰ However, they do not mention it in the introduction. Robinson argues that normally introductions start with the modern audience but that on certain occasions they may start with biblical times.⁴¹ Then again, Chapell argues that a couple of sentences of context should be given and only in the Scripture introduction, before the actual introduction.⁴² Vines and Shaddix do include a key component called “introduce your text,” and while they do include context under that heading, they warn against giving too much context.⁴³

Concerning the promise/expectations category, Sunukjian, does not explicitly list this as a key component. Nevertheless, he does propose setting forth a promise/expectation that the audience can expect the Bible to fulfill,⁴⁴ which he addresses as part of the interest/need of the sermon. He also addresses expectation as part of the main idea.⁴⁵ Robinson also speaks of raising needs so that, as one sees his needs, he is motivated to change.⁴⁶ He further talks about those needs as being met by God and speaks of those as application.⁴⁷ He also comments about not promising more than what the sermon passage can deliver.⁴⁸ Chapell addresses this matter in the component of making the “subject personal.” He comments that the preacher should not only show the need but also the fact that God has the solution to the sinner’s spiritual need.⁴⁹ Then Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, in their purpose section, include comments on biblical relevance which address promise and expectation.⁵⁰ So although this

⁴⁰ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, cf. 86.

⁴¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 125.

⁴² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 229–30.

⁴³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 237.

⁴⁴ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 193.

⁴⁵ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 199.

⁴⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 123–24.

⁴⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 124.

⁴⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 126.

⁴⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 221.

⁵⁰ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 169.

component may be addressed differently by each author, and more as a sub-point by some of them, it is a matter that they address.

Broadus includes interests that address spiritual needs, so he also addresses the needs component.⁵¹ He includes a text reading as well, mostly before the introduction.⁵² Furthermore, he addresses the issue of over-promising, and so he deals with the matter of promising.⁵³

Key Components

The following key components are a hybrid of the components presented by different authors in the overview. They include both the basic three key components common to all, and three more: interest, need, and the main idea; and context, preview, and Scripture.

Interest

One may think, “If the purpose of an introduction is to introduce the subject, do I really need to do something to get the audience’s interest? Why not just cut to the chase and go directly to God’s Word? After all, the Scriptures are the words of eternal life, so why is getting people’s interest so important?” Those are legitimate questions, and here is an attempt to answer those.

When a pastor starts by getting the audience’s interest, he simply focuses on the audience first to prepare them to consider what God says in His Word.⁵⁴ While some people will come prepared and sincerely desirous of hearing God’s Word, unfortunately, it cannot be

⁵¹ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

⁵² Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

⁵³ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

⁵⁴ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 193; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

expected that everyone will have such a disposition. The sin curse and spiritual battle are very present in a church gathering. Some may come with disbelief, others may be bored by the routine of another Sunday, and others may even be suspicious.⁵⁵ How many will come with the cares of the week or have their minds on the distractions of the day?⁵⁶ Beyond attempting to help the audience tune in to the Word, and tune out their cares, concerns, or lack of caring, understanding the cultural context of the addictive entertainment age we live in means getting their attention quickly.⁵⁷

How should this happen? The whole purpose of the introduction is to introduce the subject/main idea, so getting interest ought to happen in such a way that it is connected to that idea.⁵⁸ An interest grabber that gains attention in a way that is disconnected from the sermon misleads the audience,⁵⁹ so one must be careful not to commit the mistake of choosing an illustration just because it seems “sensational.”⁶⁰

In addition to that, there are many ways to capture attention.⁶¹ However, stories or personal stories are most effective.⁶² Chapell calls those “human interest accounts,” and argues they normally are the best way to start a sermon.⁶³ One could also create a scenario or

⁵⁵ cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 120; Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 50.

⁵⁶ cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 218.

⁵⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 120; cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 219.

⁵⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 119–120.

⁵⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 220.

⁶⁰ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle. More will be said on the nature of illustrations in the body portion of the sermon.

⁶¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 121; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 193; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 202–3; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 240; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 224–28; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 172–73; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

⁶² Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 202.

⁶³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 226.

problem,⁶⁴ give an “assertion,” a “startling statement,” ask a “provocative question,”⁶⁵ or give a “paradox.”⁶⁶

Lastly, what one uses to catch interest should vary. If the introduction always is the same, the audience will lose interest.⁶⁷ Perhaps, to break the routine, a pastor should intentionally alternate the way he introduces sermons.

Need

Robinson famously said, “When the flint of a person’s problem strikes the steel of the Word of God, a spark ignites that burns in the mind.”⁶⁸ Neglecting to show the audience why they should listen is “one of the most common and deadly omissions in evangelical preaching.”⁶⁹ Richard deems establishing this need as “the most important part of the main introduction.”⁷⁰

Showing this need is crucial, but how does one accomplish that? The best way to do this is to ask questions about the main idea of the sermon’s text.⁷¹ In essence, raising the need answers the question, “Why do I need to listen?”⁷² Preachers ought to show the listeners that they, as sinners, have a need for which God gives provision. This has to be done in a way that carries proper tension in the sermon as it progresses to maintain the audience’s attention.⁷³ This is also not manipulation, as preachers have to promise only as far as God’s Word does

⁶⁴ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 203.

⁶⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 226–27.

⁶⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 121.

⁶⁷ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 170.

⁶⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 123.

⁶⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 221.

⁷⁰ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 104.

⁷¹ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 104.

⁷² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 122.

⁷³ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 202.

and give an accurate expectation along with the need.⁷⁴ Also, while the interest and need are highlighted as separate elements, they can certainly both be found together.

The Main Idea

Sermons must have one main idea, not fragmented thoughts. The utter necessity of a main idea is underscored by the following analogy. Per Millar and Campbell, catching a sermon with a main idea versus one without a main idea is like catching a baseball versus catching a handful of sand.⁷⁵

One versus many

Sermons should have a main idea because all textual units have one and because it is the nature of paragraphs and narratives to have a main thought.⁷⁶ That is not to say that there are no other ideas or truths in a passage, but that there is one governing main idea.⁷⁷ The main idea concept is core to expository preaching.⁷⁸ For hundreds of years, the main idea principle has been recognized as necessary for good communication.⁷⁹ Also, Paul's sermons in Acts 13, 17, and 20 had one main idea.⁸⁰ For those reasons, the majority of books on rhetoric and homiletics speak of the necessity of that principle.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 123.

⁷⁵ Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 62.

⁷⁶ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 65.

⁷⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224.

⁷⁸ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 151.

⁷⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 17.

⁸⁰ cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 67; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 19.

⁸¹ Robinson, 17; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 171; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 24, and 28; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle; Terry G. Carter, Scott Duvall, and Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Preparing, Developing, and Delivering the Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2005), 60; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 125.

The following detrimental scenarios caused by disregard to the main idea further reinforce the need for it. At best one has a connected outline, but with no main idea. Another one is to elaborate an outline with points, sub-points, and other content, all of which are equally stressed. Then, in the worst of cases, what is communicated is unrelated and scattered thoughts.⁸² The result of not having a main idea is that the listeners make it up themselves. They will not remember everything. What they will remember may then be a peripheral point of the text, or whatever main idea they have created on their own. That is in the best of scenarios. Even worse is that the one thing they remember may only be a part of a truth, or they simply leave with scattered information in their minds, unsure of what they were supposed to take away from the sermon.⁸³ Going back to the baseball analogy, without a main idea, the audience may catch a few scattered grains of sand, as opposed to catching the baseball.

Parts of the main idea

The importance of the main idea has been highlighted, but what does it consist of exactly? There are three parts/steps to that answer. The first part is textual and historical. The second part is a theological bridge between parts one and three. The third part is textual and contemporary.⁸⁴

⁸² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 16.

⁸³ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 66.

⁸⁴ The different preaching books give different names to those parts, and some separate the parts differently, especially Chapell. Richard names the three parts: “The Central Proposition of the Text” (CPT), the “Purpose Bridge,” and “The Central Proposition of the Sermon” (CPS), (*Preparing Expository Sermons*, 65, and 78–79). Vines and Shaddix call them “The Central Idea of the Text” (CIT), “The Theological Purpose,” and “The Proposition” (*Power in the Pulpit*, 171, 175, and 184). Robinson’s “Big Idea” goes from the historical aspect which he calls the “Exegetical Idea” to the contemporary one called the “Homiletical Idea” (*Biblical Preaching*, 15–25, 39–43, 47, and 67–76). Sunukjian goes from a historical and exegetical idea to a theological “timeless truth,” which he calls the “Take-Home-Truth” (*Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 65–66). Merida has the “Main Point of the Text” (MPT) and the “Main Point of the Sermon” (MPS), and speaks of a “Redemptive MPS,” quoting Chapell (*The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 152–157). Chapell moves from the FCF to the

The first textual and historical part of the main idea is the thrust of the biblical author's intent in a particular textual unit for the original/historical biblical audience. This main idea consists of "a subject and a complement," which when put together gives the main idea of the text.⁸⁵ The subject/theme is what the thrust of the passage is about. The complement is what the passage is saying about the theme/subject.⁸⁶

The second part connects parts one and three theologically and by principles. This second part takes into account the text in its historical statement and considers how to apply that specific truth to a contemporary audience. To do that, it considers God's progressive revelation and how it applies theologically and principally to the modern audience. At times the "interpretive river" is narrow, so the truth application does not change (or change much) between the original audience and the contemporary audience. For instance, the exhortation that Paul made in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray constantly" applies in a very similar way to the contemporary audience as it did to the original audience—the river is narrow. However, other times, as per God's progressive revelation, the river will be wider. For instance, the Mosaic Law is now fulfilled, and believers are now priests worshiping God everywhere. Those differences in progressive revelation require one to use the adequate principlizing and theological bridge to give a true and appropriate rendering of the truth for today's audience. The truth does not change, but its application does.⁸⁷

Proposition. Again, how he does it is slightly different, though he also takes into account a main idea (*Christ-Centered Preaching*, 28, 30, 33, and 131). Akin, Curtis, and Rummage call it the "Main Idea of the Text" (MIT), "The Bridge," and the "Main Idea of the Message" (MIM) (*Engaging Exposition*, 117–125).

⁸⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 21.

⁸⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 21–22; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 73; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 66; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 172; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 152.

⁸⁷ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 61; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 95.

Lastly, the third step, having considered the main idea “of the text” (MIT) and its theological and principled truth for today’s audience, states the main idea “of the message” (MIM).⁸⁸ Borrowing from Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, step one can be called the “MIT,” and step three, the “MIM.”⁸⁹ Step three, or the MIM, is like step one, in that it states what is in the text, except that the text truth is adapted to the contemporary audience through the bridge.⁹⁰ For instance, instead of stating that Paul exhorted the Philippian believers to stand together for the sake of the gospel (Phil 1:27–2:4) as in the MIT, the MIM could be that we need to stand together for the sake of the gospel. Certainly, one can refine the statement to render this truth more homiletically memorable as well.

How it is communicated

The main idea may be communicated either in an inductive or deductive way. If the sermon is inductive, only the message subject or question⁹¹ is stated either in the beginning or in the message’s first main point.⁹² If it is deductive, both the subject and complement are declared.⁹³ The inductive sermon takes the audience along to discover the truth as the sermon develops, while the deductive sermon presents a claim in the beginning and proceeds to prove and explain how the text supports that claim.⁹⁴

When should one choose a deductive versus an inductive sermon? If the main idea of a passage is declared clearly at the beginning or the end of a passage, then one would choose to structure the sermon deductively or inductively, respectively. Narratives should normally

⁸⁸ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 125.

⁸⁹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, 125.

⁹⁰ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 172, 184.

⁹¹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 141–42.

⁹² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 124–25.

⁹³ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 141–42.

⁹⁴ Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 37.

be inductive because the main idea in them is towards the end. There also are other consideration factors for choosing inductive or deductive sermons. Sunukjian suggests that if the listeners have questions surrounding proof, explanation, or application of the text, then deductive is more fitting.⁹⁵ That way the audience is given clear direction from the beginning, and their questions are answered as the sermon unfolds.⁹⁶ On the other hand, if the sermon is a list, or if there are no questions, induction should be used to keep the tension of the sermon in order to keep their attention.⁹⁷ Robinson describes another scenario when an inductive sermon could be used, and that is when the audience is “indifferent or even hostile.”⁹⁸ He further states that inductive sermons are helpful because they produce a sense of “discovery.”⁹⁹ As the audience hears the main truth at the end of inductive sermons, they may be more ready to accept it, having seen it developed in the text and having discovered it “by themselves.”¹⁰⁰ Again, variety will be key. If one always preaches a certain way, it may get boring.¹⁰¹

Context

The information about the passage’s context should be brief. Only necessary information to introduce the sermon should be included, such as historical or literary context or comments connecting to the previous week’s passage.¹⁰² Where the context goes and why it should come before the text reading is explained in the Scripture text component below.

⁹⁵ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 160.

⁹⁶ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 156–58; cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 78–84.

⁹⁷ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 159. Another option is the semi-inductive/deductive sermon, in which the sermon is inductive until the second point of the sermon, when the complement is stated (Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 78).

⁹⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 88.

⁹⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 88.

¹⁰⁰ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 88.

¹⁰¹ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 39.

¹⁰² Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 205–7.

That being said, the context fits better after addressing the audience, getting their interest, sharing their need, and declaring the main idea of the passage. It is part of the “textual steps” that help zero in on the body of the sermon.¹⁰³ According to preaching books, it is generally ill-advised to start off the sermon with the passage context.¹⁰⁴

Preview

It is good to provide the audience with a GPS, so they can have a “roadmap” to better track with the preacher.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, preachers should not give too much outline and sermon away in such a way that the audience can think they are ready to pack up and go home. So how much of and when is a preview given? Sunukjian has elaborated a grid of when previews should be used. He gives seven different possible scenarios, four that make the preview unnecessary and three that make it necessary. In sum, regardless of if the sermon is deductive or inductive, if the main points are a “list,” there is no need for a preview; if the sermon points “progress” and develop, they may need a preview.¹⁰⁶

Scripture Text

The passage should be announced 2–3 times before starting to read the text. Wait for the audience to be ready before reading the passage.¹⁰⁷ Only stating the passage once, and not waiting for the audience, will cause the pastor to lose some people. Also, though technology is available, instead of having people feel like they can leave their Bibles at home because they do not need it at church, one should consider encouraging people to read from their

¹⁰³ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 208; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 106–7.

¹⁰⁴ cf. Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 106–7.

¹⁰⁵ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 169.

¹⁰⁶ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 224. See pages 221–238 for the full list and for examples.

¹⁰⁷ cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 239; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 102.

Bibles. One should cause a need for it by turning to passages and not putting all the text on the screen. This should be done to help form the habit of having the whole Bible in their hands and reading it.¹⁰⁸

The text must be read. However, where that text reading is placed in the introduction is debated. Chapell advocates for Scripture reading before the introduction, as a norm.¹⁰⁹ Sunukjian and Robinson, on the other hand, argue that the Scripture reading is more natural at the end of the introduction.¹¹⁰ Richard suggests normally reading the passage in the sub-introduction, after the introduction.¹¹¹ Vines and Shaddix place it between gaining interest and declaring the main idea.¹¹²

Fleshing out the respective thoughts on when to read the passage, Robinson argues that if the text is short, it should be read at the end of the introduction so that the audience is given “glasses” to see the text.¹¹³ On the other hand, Chapell argues that if the introduction takes place before reading the text, the introduction's “thought flow and cohesion” are impaired and suggests that only a comment about how the main idea is impacted by the text should be made at that point.¹¹⁴ Richard mentions several alternate ways to read the text, before or at the end of the main introduction.¹¹⁵ Sunukjian argues that it is more natural to have the text read at the end, as by that point, the listener is prepared with interest, has heard the main idea, and has been given context or glasses to see the text and a necessary preview

¹⁰⁸ cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 240.

¹⁰⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 231.

¹¹⁰ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 192, and 238; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 126.

¹¹¹ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 106.

¹¹² Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 237.

¹¹³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 126.

¹¹⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 224; cf. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

¹¹⁵ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 102, and 106.

to the passage.¹¹⁶ He gives various convincing examples to show how that sequence flows better.¹¹⁷

In the end, what can be extrapolated from the text reading suggestions here is that, as a general rule, when the text is short, it is read at the end of the introduction. There is room for variety, so reading the text in a Scripture introduction, like Chapell recommends, seems like a good occasional alternative. Reading the passage before the introduction is a good alternative, especially if the passage is lengthy. Also, another possible way to break down a lengthy passage is to read the Scripture as one goes through the passage in the sermon along with the sermon's developmental ideas. Reading the text progressively as the sermon unfolds fits an inductive delivery which encourages discovery.

Other Introduction Matters

There are a few other introduction matters that, though not key components, still merit attention. They are first contact, length, unrelated sermon items, prayer, and components to avoid.

First Contact

The messenger is an important part of addressing the audience to challenge them with God's Word. He is but a vehicle to communicate God's Word, but he still is a vehicle. How he comes across at the beginning of the sermon is important.

During the introduction an audience gains impressions of you, the speaker, that often determine whether they will accept what you say. If you appear nervous, hostile, or unprepared, they are inclined to reject you. If you seem

¹¹⁶ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 207.

¹¹⁷ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 221–37.

alert and friendly, they decide you are an able person with a positive attitude toward yourself and your listeners.¹¹⁸

Robinson continues, “step forward to begin the sermon, pause, square your shoulders to the congregation, look directly at your listeners, gather your breath, and then speak with evident confidence in your first words.”¹¹⁹ One’s first impression counts. As he starts, the undershepherd should display a caring and bold leader who is ready to minister to God’s people by His grace and for His name’s sake. The sermon deliver will be dealt with more thoroughly later on.

Length

A long introduction has been likened to a visitor that was kept on the porch so long, he didn’t have time to visit the house.¹²⁰ Authors suggest the following different sermon introduction lengths: 5–7 minutes,¹²¹ 5 minutes maximum,¹²² 3 minutes at the most,¹²³ or at the very most, 10% of the sermon.¹²⁴ The longest proposal is that it can range from 2–10 minutes but the longest portion of that is for getting the listeners’ interest.¹²⁵

One common problem with introductions, on top of not containing the key components they should, is that they are too long. Once one is done introducing, he should move on. If an introduction is occasionally long, it should be because the interest is being caught. Otherwise, 3–5 minutes is sufficient. While on the one hand, there are plenty of warnings about long introductions, on the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that

¹¹⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 119.

¹¹⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 219, cf. 127.

¹²⁰ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

¹²¹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 170.

¹²² Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 201.

¹²³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 238.

¹²⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 126.

¹²⁵ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 193.

introductions are necessary. Beginning without an introduction is a big mistake. That is, beginning without an intentional introduction is a mistake, as there always is an introduction, whether or not one plans it.¹²⁶

Unrelated Sermon Items

Unrelated sermon items should be kept separate from the sermon. If one does a pre-introduction, because he needs to make a relevant church announcement, introduce a guest speaker, or pray for a specific need, it should be separate from the sermon.¹²⁷

Prayer

Prayer is vital. I prefer praying before and sometimes also after the sermon to not interrupt the sermon as a whole. Some pray at a certain point in the sermon. This is not to say that if one does not pray during the sermon, he is in the wrong. The point is that pastors ought to be devoted to prayer (Acts 6:4), whether that be during the preparation or the delivery of the sermon. They ought to depend on and plead to God in prayer for all of life.

Components to Avoid

Here are a few notable components to avoid in the introduction. First, do not apologize for having had insufficient time to prepare. That is not to say preparation is not important, but commenting on a lack of it will possibly discredit a preacher and make some not want to listen. The audience will find out about one's preparation anyway. Second, do not apologize for the topic brought up in God's Word. Third, do not ramble, and finally, do not

¹²⁶ cf. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 243.

¹²⁷ Cf. Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 103; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 172.

misuse humor or overuse it. Pastors are not comedians. Vines and Shaddix suggest that humor may be fitting, but not in the introduction.¹²⁸ The use of humor at the start of the sermon is not recommended because it may set the wrong tone for the sermon. It hardly fits with introduction components. Beyond the introduction, pastors should seldom use humor, and when they do so, it must be fitting in that it contributes to communicating the text.

Sermon Evaluation Template and Guide

This project's sermon evaluation template items were elaborated based on the material above, and the following sermon evaluation templates. A brief guide and fuller template explanatory notes accompany the template.¹²⁹ The purpose of the guide with explanatory notes is that if the evaluator has further questions about a particular point, it would give him sufficient information to ably evaluate. The explanatory notes themselves are provided so that the template is not cluttered, making it more user-friendly for evaluators. The summary information of the guide and notes may make it viable to use the template without necessarily reading the project in its entirety. The key components of the template reflect those previously elaborated: attention, need, main idea, context, preview or transition, and Scripture reading.

Of the different sermon evaluation templates that were referenced in the introduction, some were developed thematically with headings such as theological, exegesis, contents, organization, delivery, and application.¹³⁰ Others followed the sermon structure in

¹²⁸ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 241–42; cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 171–72.

¹²⁹ The fuller notes were elaborated based on the template and key components. The complete guide with full evaluation notes can be found in Appendix 2. Also, the guide on how to carry out the sermon evaluation was elaborated based on chapter 2's section on how to conduct sermon evaluations.

¹³⁰ Timothy Keller, "Sermon Evaluation Form," accessed December 12, 2023, https://cpfortherestofus.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/sermon_evaluation_form_keller_.pdf; Haddon W. Robinson and Craig Brian Larson, eds., *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource*

elaborating sermon evaluation templates with a structure that was something like an introduction, body, and conclusion, and then added other overall elements at the end.¹³¹ This latter structure was chosen because evaluating sermons chronologically flows better than doing so thematically. It is easier that way because one can conveniently check off evaluation boxes as the sermon is being preached. Though that is the case, some components may be found in different areas of the sermon, such as application. The overall structure of the sermon evaluation template follows the categories “introduction,” “body,” and “conclusion,” and then adds the following two additional categories: “delivery” and “overall.”

Beyond the template structures, some templates had very few questions or points, as few as thirteen, though in those cases they addressed more than one item per question.¹³² Others had as many as sixty-six questions.¹³³ There is no rule as to how many specific questions or points one should have in a sermon evaluation template. However, an attempt was made to have enough questions to cover the key components well, but not so many as to make the template cumbersome. The result is a template with twenty-six points.

The sermon evaluation template evaluates with one brief descriptive phrase or sentence per key component. A keyword for each key component is underlined for it to be easily identifiable when it is used during a sermon evaluation. Then, a space is given to write a score per component. Beyond the numerical scoring, a space is given for comments.

for Today's Communicators (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 701; Calvin Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Forms.”; Vines and Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit, How to Grow in Your Preaching* (Chicago: Moody, 2017), 219–20; Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form,” cbtseminary, 2018, <https://cbtseminary.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Sermon-Evaluation-Form.pdf>; Trinity Bible Church, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

¹³¹ Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”; Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 137–38; Akin, “Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching,” 6–12.

¹³² Keller, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

¹³³ Robinson and Larson, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, 701.

Though the numerical score may give an idea of one’s preaching, the especially important part of the evaluation is the feedback through comments, as those are more concrete than a score.

Introduction Evaluation Template¹³⁴

Fill in the blank from 1–4 (1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 agree; 4 strongly agree)¹³⁵

1. Gets attention that connects to the main idea¹³⁶ _____
2. Speaks to a need related to the main idea¹³⁷ _____
3. Addresses the subject or the complete main idea¹³⁸ _____
4. Provides the necessary context¹³⁹ _____
5. Previews or transitions well to the sermon body¹⁴⁰ _____
6. Reads Scripture¹⁴¹ _____

Comments:

Sermon Body

The body is the core of the sermon. The components below make up what is in the sermon body, but they are not all limited to the body of the sermon. Application and illustration, for instance, are found in the introduction and conclusion as well. This part of the chapter will overview key sermon body components from key preaching resources, and from

¹³⁴ The full template can be found in Appendix 1.

¹³⁵ Other sermon evaluation forms evaluate quantitatively and qualitatively as well: Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Trinity Bible Church, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Brent Belford, “Sermon Evaluation Form” (Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, n/a); Akin, “Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching,” 6–12; Keller, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

¹³⁶ Cf. Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Robinson and Larson, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, 701.

¹³⁷ Cf. Robinson and Larson, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, 701.

¹³⁸ Akin, “Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching,” 6–12; Gibson, Scott, *Training Preachers*, 191–92; Vines and Shaddix, *Progress in the Pulpit*, 219–20.

¹³⁹ Cf. Trinity Bible Church, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Belford, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

¹⁴⁰ Akin, “Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching,” 6–12.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Kevin F. Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 137.

those will establish key sermon body components for the elaboration of its sermon evaluation template and guide.

Overview

Only the functional elements will be overviewed/surveyed (explanation, argumentation, illustration, and application) to determine which should be included as part of the sermon body key components. The functional elements refer to the only legitimate things one can and must do with the exegesis of the passage, expanding on the main idea and developmental ideas.¹⁴² To highlight the functional elements, a chart is attached below (see Appendix 3).

There is not much practical use in overviewing and charting the developmental ideas/main points¹⁴³ and transitions¹⁴⁴ to determine if they should be included as key components. Their need to be in the sermon is understood. Concerning the theological components, several of the surveyed key preaching books did not have thorough sections on the matter. Since those give scarce data to overview and chart, what was found will be interacted with below in the key components section. While the developmental ideas, transitions, and theological components will be dealt with under their respective headings, an overview of the functional elements follows.

¹⁴² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 49; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 216–18.

¹⁴³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 79, 91; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 143–44; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 97–98; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 135–38; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 196; Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 101; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 33–34; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 130.

¹⁴⁴ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 211; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 96; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 3, chap. 2, sec. 2, Kindle; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 173; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 111–12; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 112.

Robinson says, “When we make any declarative statement, we can do only four things with it: we can restate it, explain it, prove it, or apply it.”¹⁴⁵ Though he does not mention illustration, he sees them as a means to restate, explain, prove, and apply Scripture truths.¹⁴⁶

Sunukjian, like Robinson, sees explanation, argumentation, and application as the functional elements, but not the restating element. He addresses those as developmental questions which respectively deal with “understanding, belief, and behavior.”¹⁴⁷ He suggests that those elements should be tackled by the preacher in a way that would communicate Scripture in a “clear, convincing, and relevant” manner to the audience.¹⁴⁸ Though he does not include illustrations as functional elements, he sees them as extra material that supports the functional elements to communicate Scripture.¹⁴⁹

Merida puts forward three functional elements: explanation, application, and illustration. He clarifies that though those three are functional elements, as illustrations can be spared, not needing them on every point, explanation and application are the core functional elements.¹⁵⁰ Though argumentation is necessary, he takes that as part of the application.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 49.

¹⁴⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 107–8.

¹⁴⁷ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 88.

¹⁴⁸ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 88.

¹⁴⁹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 128, 133–34, and 193. He is against using biblical illustrations though.

¹⁵⁰ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 177.

¹⁵¹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 176.

Richard explains the need to address the audience for them to “know,” “care,” and “believe.”¹⁵² Those points reflect explanation, argumentation, and application. He also highlights the need to illustrate the text.¹⁵³

Akin, Curtis, and Rummage propose three components. Explanation is the core of the sermon, and illustration and application support the explanation.¹⁵⁴

Chapell sees explanation, illustration, and application as the three components of expository preaching.¹⁵⁵ While argumentation is not stated as a particular category, he does believe argumentation is important. He sees it as part of the explanation.¹⁵⁶

Carter, Duvall, and Hays present three functional elements: explanation, application, and illustration.¹⁵⁷ They do not have argumentation as a functional element, but they show its importance. They state, “The audience accepts or rejects the propositions based on the evidence presented in the sermon.”¹⁵⁸

Vines and Shaddix, and McDill present four functional elements: explanation, argumentation, illustration, and application, and they do so by citing Broadus.¹⁵⁹ Per that line of thought, whatever the preacher says should fall into one of those categories.

Stott does not have the categories laid out as functional elements. However, the four elements are seen in his writing. He speaks of using clear words as he explains the sermon.¹⁶⁰ He recounts how he went from thinking he should not apply sermons and let the Holy Spirit

¹⁵² Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 108.

¹⁵³ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 121.

¹⁵⁴ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 137–38.

¹⁵⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 73–75.

¹⁵⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 106.

¹⁵⁷ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 34, 72, 116, and 132.

¹⁵⁸ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 37.

¹⁵⁹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 218; *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 126; cf. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 1 chap. 6, Kindle.

¹⁶⁰ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 231.

do that to realizing the necessity of application.¹⁶¹ He strongly advocates the use of illustrations,¹⁶² and also understands the need to persuade people via argument.¹⁶³

Key Components

The key components of the sermon body, beyond the four functional elements, include developmental ideas, transitions, and theology. The theological components include systematic doctrine, biblical storyline, and Christ and the gospel. Our treatment of these components will follow this sequence: developmental ideas, explanation, argumentation, illustration, application, transition, systematic doctrine, biblical storyline, and Christ and the gospel.

Developmental Ideas

The developmental ideas are the outline of main points/ideas that support and develop the main idea of the message.¹⁶⁴ They reflect the authorial intent of the writer,¹⁶⁵ follow the structure and emphasis of the text,¹⁶⁶ and are core to expository preaching.¹⁶⁷ They are stated in the present tense and applicative principled form, with the intent to apply truths in the text to the modern-day audience.¹⁶⁸ Some will argue against such structure, arguing for “no-structure sermons,” but in the end, they end up with some kind of structure.¹⁶⁹ Beyond

¹⁶¹ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 141, 169, and 246.

¹⁶² Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 236.

¹⁶³ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 253.

¹⁶⁴ See the main idea section under the introduction heading for more information; cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91–92; McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 101.

¹⁶⁵ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 100.

¹⁶⁶ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 131; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 33; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 196.

¹⁶⁷ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 196.

¹⁶⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 135–36; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 164; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 204–10; McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 104–7. For more information on how to carry those out and refine those, see Chapel, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 129–141.

¹⁶⁹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 164.

helping fulfill the need to reflect the structure and emphasis of the text, having developmental ideas may richly bless the audience and preacher, guiding them to follow the text's development.¹⁷⁰ These ideas should be full-sentence thoughts, not single words or incomplete phrases.¹⁷¹

Sub-points are succinct phrases or sentences that support the developmental ideas.¹⁷² Those may be recommendable, but much caution should be used in presenting sub-points of sub-points to the audience, lest the outline becomes so complex that "the audience cannot possibly follow" it.¹⁷³

Unity, Progress, and Proportion

The developmental ideas ought to support the main idea of the message in concrete ways as the sermon develops Scripture thoughts to its climactic conclusion. They ought to move the sermon UPP (with Unity, Progress, and Proportion) to its climax.¹⁷⁴ Speaking of unity, though there are several developmental ideas, there should be a single message.¹⁷⁵ The sermon is not disjointed and does not include information that does not serve the main idea of the sermon.¹⁷⁶ The developmental ideas normally follow the progression of the text chronologically but can also do so logically.¹⁷⁷ How those developmental ideas look will

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Merida, Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 165–66.

¹⁷¹ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 107.

¹⁷² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 142.

¹⁷³ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 109; Chapel, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 142.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. McDill, 167; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 69; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91.

¹⁷⁵ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 167.

¹⁷⁶ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 69; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 167.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 105; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 92; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 196; McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 101.

depend on the inductive or deductive outline.¹⁷⁸ Also, the time spent per point should be proportional to text content.¹⁷⁹

Number

The quantity and contents of developmental ideas, as with their contents, should reflect the structure and emphasis of the text.¹⁸⁰ Somehow, some preachers have gotten the idea that there always should be three developmental ideas in a sermon. Following such logic, one might as well say that a sermon should always have seven developmental ideas, since that is the number of perfection! Normally there should be between two to five developmental ideas.¹⁸¹ The text may have more important concepts and ideas. However, by the time one develops five ideas, explaining, arguing, illustrating, and applying them, the sermon may be quite long, making it a good idea to divide the passage into two sermons.¹⁸² However many points one ends up with, they should not be forced on the text but flow from it.

Practical Ways

There are a few different ways one can write developmental ideas.¹⁸³ Vines and Shaddix recommend mastering three core outlining ways, those being the “key word,” “analytical,” and “narrative” methods, before moving on to all nine different possible methods they present.¹⁸⁴ They suggest that the “key word” method works well when the text

¹⁷⁸ For more information, see the introduction section on what the main idea is and how it is communicated.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 109.

¹⁸⁰ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 196; Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 230.

¹⁸¹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 195–96; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 105.

¹⁸² Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 105.

¹⁸³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 196; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 169–71.

¹⁸⁴ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 197–98.

has parallel concepts, the “analytical” method is a good method to use when the developmental ideas are different subsets to the main idea, and the “narrative” method works for narratives and passages that only have one idea.¹⁸⁵ Also, one should be cautious with alliteration and choose ideas that reflect the text over ideas that sound good but strain to reflect the text.¹⁸⁶

Bridge

Though the bridge has already been discussed in the sermon introduction section, a few clarifying comments are helpful. The comments in that section referred to the main idea of the message. The same principles apply to developmental ideas. The sermon’s developmental ideas, which are in present tense, and applicative to the main audience, take such a form only having crossed the bridge. The ideas cross the interpretive bridge in such a way that they reflect the authorial intent. This happens in three steps. They start with the text and its statements to the original audience. Then, taking into account progressive revelation and the text’s exegetical ideas, universal theological principles valid for the church are extrapolated from the text. Lastly, the developmental ideas are developed from the theological principles for the current audience.¹⁸⁷

Explanation

“Explanation is the process of making something clear or plain and, therefore, more understandable.”¹⁸⁸ For true understanding to happen, the preacher must accurately explain

¹⁸⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 197–204.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 109.

¹⁸⁷ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 101; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 104.

¹⁸⁸ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 219.

the text. Explanation has chief importance among the functional elements because it explains the meaning of God’s Word, making it understandable for the audience.¹⁸⁹ As such, it should take up much space in each of the developmental ideas.¹⁹⁰ The other functional elements serve the explanation. The passage has to be understood in order to be applied, argued, and illustrated.¹⁹¹ Also, the four elements overlap. Illustration, application, or argumentation may explain the text.¹⁹²

Unfortunately, some preachers will take liberties and go beyond the text. Certainly, true gospel preachers, though struggling to honor the text, have missed its point at times. However, true gospel ministers submit themselves to the text. Vines and Shaddix use a pool analogy to illustrate unfortunate ways in which preachers go beyond the text. They will use the text as a “diving board” and their sermon will be the “pool” that is disconnected from the text. Others will use the text as “pool furniture,” visiting it every once in a while, though spending most of their sermon in the pool. The text and the sermon are one. The true preacher “jumps off the board into it and takes his listeners with him for a swim.”¹⁹³

How

There are several ways to explain things. Defining them is one, not just by giving the theoretical kind of definition but by giving one that is concrete and has examples.¹⁹⁴ A definition “sets down what must be included and excluded by a term or statement.”¹⁹⁵ Robinson also says, “Explanation, like definition, also sets boundaries, but it may do so by

¹⁸⁹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 177–78; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 220.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 34.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 177.

¹⁹² Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 218–19.

¹⁹³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 234.

¹⁹⁴ Sunukjian, *Biblical Preaching*, 90; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 1, chap. 6, sec. 3, Kindle.

¹⁹⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 99.

amplifying on how ideas relate to one another or what an idea implies.”¹⁹⁶ Explanation also happens using “contrasts” or “comparisons.”¹⁹⁷ The use of “synonyms” or “illustrations” is a way to explain.¹⁹⁸ Something to watch out for when one is explaining is to not use too much academic terminology.¹⁹⁹ Of course, that caution has to take into account the audience one speaks to.

Beyond those matters, for a text to be appropriately explained, the chosen unit should be manageable.²⁰⁰ If a unit is too long, the preacher may have to skip over important material.

What to explain

What must be explained, then, is what is strictly necessary to bring clarity and understanding of the text to the audience: nothing more and nothing less. The preacher must not explain all his exegesis but the result of it.²⁰¹ He has studied the historical and literary context, words, grammar, and syntax and needs to filter his study, presenting only the necessary fruit of it for his audience to understand the text.²⁰² He needs to explain words or concepts that are unclear, theologically loaded, or key to the text.²⁰³ If a word or concept is clear, or if a word is not important, the preacher ought not to waste time on it and instead focus on making the text understandable.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 99.

¹⁹⁷ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 1, chap. 6, sec. 3, Kindle.

¹⁹⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 100.

¹⁹⁹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 180.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 42-43.

²⁰¹ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 72.

²⁰² Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 100; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 110.

²⁰³ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 177-78.

²⁰⁴ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 216.

Beyond explanation

Though explanation is vital, more than explanation is necessary. Only explaining may “numb the listener” and will not necessarily change him.²⁰⁵ If sermons only are about knowledge, and not about application of it, they may amount to pharisaism.²⁰⁶ Scripture purposes to transform (2 Tim 3:16–17), so sermons should purpose to transform, not just dispense biblical information. This fact leads the way to the other functional elements.

Shows the text

The text has to not only be read at the beginning but referred to throughout the sermon. A pastor should take care to show his audience where he is in the text as he progresses along.²⁰⁷ At times, speakers only mention the text at the beginning, and though they may exposit it, they do not show the audience where they are in it as they work through it. Pointing out where one is in the text is essential because God transforms sinners through the text.

Argumentation

Argumentation serves explanation by proving it, where necessary, for the audience to believe it.²⁰⁸ Scripture gives many reasons for belief, and preachers have to interact with those reasons. Because some people in the audience will understand but will not believe, preachers should argue to show the validity of Scriptures’ claims, so as to persuade them to believe.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 92.

²⁰⁶ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 110.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 378; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 383.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 53.

²⁰⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 53.

Scripture at times reasons and argues, “establish[ing] the validity” of what it says, for people to believe.²¹⁰ Paul, for instance, illustrated and argued that just as a soldier, a vineyard keeper, and a shepherd deserve remuneration, he too had a right to financial provision as an apostle who ministers the gospel (1 Cor 9:6–12).²¹¹ He was arguing and reasoning with the Corinthians with real-life examples to make them believe his point.

Some listeners will have a willing disposition; as they understand the truth they will believe. However, many in the audience, even solid Christians, have questions and arguments against Scripture, just as a child may understand, but not want to obey. What else could be expected of sinners? That reality behooves expositors to honestly address the listeners’ questions and show that the truth of Scripture is as believable as it claims to be.²¹²

How much

There should be argumentation, but how much? First, not everything in Scripture *can* be proved; it should just be believed. Second, not everything in Scripture *needs* to be proved.²¹³ Third, what must be proved is what the audience may not agree with, taking into account the confines of the first and second points. The preacher thinks about potential objections and addresses those.²¹⁴ What is proved only needs to be proven beyond reasonable doubt.²¹⁵ Lastly, in proving Scripture, God’s Word, and not reason, ought to remain the authority. Broadus states that last point well, saying, “The argument in preaching has one

²¹⁰ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 53–54.

²¹¹ Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 53.

²¹² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 56–57.

²¹³ Cf. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 1, chap. 7, sec. 1, Kindle.

²¹⁴ Cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 93.

²¹⁵ Cf. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 223.

peculiarity. There is a great authority, the Word of God, whose plain utterances upon any question must be held by the preacher as decisive and final.”²¹⁶

How

What does arguing for belief look like? Sunukjian shares the following three reasons why people do not believe: because they do not see the “cause-effect connection,” because they see the explanation to be “contrary to real life,” or because something else is “more important.”²¹⁷ The preacher should look at his text and audience and figure out which reason to address.

More than unbelief

While Sunukjian addresses those three ways to address unbelief, he also makes the point that one should address the right questions that the audience may have. Though they may not wrestle with unbelief, they are not living out the truth because they do not understand it and need further explanation. It may also be due to the fact that they do not perceive how to apply the passage and need to be shown how that is done in daily life. Therefore, it is vital that one seek to address the appropriate issue in the audience, whether it be understanding, belief, or application.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 1, chap. 7, sec. 1, Kindle.

²¹⁷ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 93, 96, and 101. For more ways on how to carry out argumentation see, Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 253–54, and Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 222–23.

²¹⁸ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 88–106.

Illustration

Illustrations help clarify something obscure with a mental picture.²¹⁹ They do not stand by themselves but serve the other functional elements.²²⁰ Understanding their transitive nature is critical as illustrations by themselves are only a show, not Scripture exposition. Illustrations by themselves are dangerous as they can deter attention from the text instead of serving it.²²¹ Illustrations first serve explanation, and they also serve argumentation and application.²²² So they bring clarity not only to understanding but also to how the text should move one's desires to act upon biblical truth. Good illustrations may and, ideally, should impact all functional elements, explanation, argumentation, and application.²²³ May preachers labor to that end, not just cheaply tacking on an image to keep people's attention.²²⁴

Why

Illustrations unsettle some speakers because they are, after all, a support to the three core functional elements and not a core functional element per se.²²⁵ The three core elements are what one does with the actual text, but an illustration simply supports that, rather than being a direct engagement of the text.²²⁶ Why then use them? Are they necessary? They should certainly not be used because they are a “necessary evil” or because they add

²¹⁹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 228–29; Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 239–40.

²²⁰ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 110.

²²¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 110; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 1, chap. 8, Kindle.

²²² Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 177, and 192–93.

²²³ Merida, Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 193; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 151–154; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 108.

²²⁴ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 120.

²²⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 153.

²²⁶ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 128, 133.

“pizzazz” to a sermon.²²⁷ By all means, as lives depend on the true preaching of God’s Word, one ought to stand with convictions on what he does with biblical illustrations.²²⁸

Illustrations should be used for four reasons. First, God has given man an imagination which he uses to visualize information and communicate ideas. Those mental images are part of basic “human communication.”²²⁹

Second, the Scriptures themselves are replete with illustrations and images. Jesus and the apostles used them. Also, they are found throughout biblical narratives, poetry, prophecy, parables, and in a good number of the epistles as well.²³⁰ For instance, Psalm 1 likens the blessed man to a tree by water and the wicked man to chaff. Jesus used many illustrations, analogies, and stories. McDill lists dozens of those examples that fall in the following categories: “household affairs,” “eating and drinking,” “farming,” “shepherd and sheep,” “natural world,” and “the human body.”²³¹ Chapell says, “Had not the apostles punctuated their words with images of the full armor of God, the racecourse, living stones, olive trees, or walking in the light, we would strain to remember their instruction.”²³²

The third reason is that good preachers use illustrations, though this reason does not carry as much weight as the previous ones.²³³ Think of highly regarded preachers, men who rightly divide the Word of God and who are powerful preachers.²³⁴ Think of a powerful sermon that you remember: it likely had good illustrations.²³⁵

²²⁷ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 141.

²²⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 154.

²²⁹ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 141; Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 238.

²³⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 162–66; cf. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 236–37.

²³¹ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 159–60.

²³² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 159.

²³³ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 121.

²³⁴ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 159.

²³⁵ Cf. Chapell, 151.

Fourth, good illustrations help the listener remember the main idea or a developmental idea of the sermon.²³⁶ A mental image stays in the mind longer than a mere set of instructions.

Cautions

Though illustrations should be used, here are two cautions on illustrations. The first is a quantitative caution, and the second is a qualitative one. Having too many illustrations renders the sermon superficial, reducing it to storytelling and entertainment.²³⁷ Too few illustrations may make a sermon dull and hard to follow, causing people to lose focus after a while.²³⁸ How many are too many or too few illustrations? Some suggest that there should be an illustration for each developmental point and sub-point, on top of an illustration for the introduction and the conclusion.²³⁹ However, talking about illustrations on most or every sub-point is likely excessive. It appears best to illustrate the introduction, one or all developmental ideas, and the conclusion at the most. On the lesser side, perhaps illustrating just the introduction, the conclusion, and/or one developmental idea, would be sufficient.²⁴⁰ Variation is key, and one must consider the necessity of illustrations per the text and audience. Also, much of the development of the sermon should be given to the explanation of God's Word. As important as the illustrations are, they should not dominate, not only by standing alone instead of serving the explanation, but also in how many of them are used, or in the length of time spent on them in the sermon.²⁴¹

²³⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 110.

²³⁷ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 179.

²³⁸ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 142.

²³⁹ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 125.

²⁴⁰ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 229; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 177, and 193.

²⁴¹ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 177, 192, and 195.

As for the quality of illustrations, regardless of how many illustrations one includes, one must consider where those need to be and whether or not they help explain, argue, or apply the text.²⁴² They ought to focus on the heart of the text: particularly on the main idea but also on the developmental ideas. Illustrations on fringe details of the text are distracting. Also, one must use much caution as, if he is not careful, he may greatly trivialize Scripture and also discredit himself as a messenger of God's Word.²⁴³ Braga, on being careful about what you illustrate, says, "The bizarre, the coarse, and the grotesque have no place in preaching. Their use by the preacher may lay him open for the charge of frivolity, vulgarity, or irreverence."²⁴⁴

What kind

The best illustrations are real-life stories, but analogies can also be used.²⁴⁵ Those real-life stories are best told as actual stories, with a conflict, descriptions that allow one to sense and experience the story and a climax.²⁴⁶ Real-life stories are best because illustrations purpose to show the audience how to live out the sermon in real life.

Though real-life stories are best, there is a very appropriate place for analogies, which give a comparative point to a truth in the text.²⁴⁷ In making the analogy, the comparative point should be clear. Stott remarks about Jesus telling people to be like children (Matt 18:3), not in every sense, but in one analogous sense, being that of humility.²⁴⁸ Analogies can powerfully stir up the imagination in such a way that causes a profound understanding of the

²⁴² Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 122.

²⁴³ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 141.

²⁴⁴ James Braga, *How to Prepare Bible Messages* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1981), 198.

²⁴⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 152, and 160; McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 140.

²⁴⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 169–70.

²⁴⁷ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 152.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 241.

text, belief in the text, and/or application of the text. Preachers should have a keen eye on using illustrations and analogies in such a way that would move the audience, and allow him to “strike while the iron is hot” with application.²⁴⁹

Are there more kinds of illustrations beyond real-life stories and analogies? Though there is some overlap between the categories of kind of illustrations and their sources, real-life stories and analogies are proposed as the basic kinds of illustrations. The rest of illustration types are best taken as sources for illustrations. Again, Chapell highlights real-life stories, or “human-interest accounts,” as the *par excellence* way to illustrate, and McDill highlights illustrating with stories and analogies as well.²⁵⁰ Chapell then differentiates those real-life stories as the way to illustrate from the sources those stories may come from. He says, “preachers get illustrations from several basic sources: personal experiences (read about, heard from others, or personally lived), news accounts, historical accounts, literary materials, imagination, and the Bible.”²⁵¹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage distinguish between kinds and sources of illustration as well, but they put those together in a list. In that list, they include: “Bible,” “experiences of others,” “personal experiences,” “human interest,” “biography,” “current events,” “historical events,” “literature,” “science,” “figures of speech or pithy statements,” and “humor.”²⁵²

Finally, other sources of illustration must also be considered. Personal illustrations are good when they are used to effectively show how the pastor is a sinner who, despite

²⁴⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 176.

²⁵⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 161, 167–68; McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 138–63.

²⁵¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 182. See Vines and Shaddix who also have an illustration source list: “Bible,” “current events,” “personal experiences,” and “sermons,” *Power in the Pulpit*, 232–233. Carter, Duvall, and Hays have the following list of illustration sources: “personal stories,” reading “visual media,” “life,” “borrow,” “imagination,” “research,” and “internet,” *Preaching God’s Word*, 134–139.

²⁵² Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 147–48.

struggles, seeks to follow God and honor Him, like other believers.²⁵³ That being said, on the one hand, the pastor ought to avoid making himself look better than he is or look like the hero in the sermon.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, the pastor, though staying honest, should not be foolish, carelessly commenting on how he sins in such a way that is discrediting.

Furthermore, here are a few other cautions about personal illustrations. They should be used sparingly. The congregation does not come to church to hear about the pastor's life but about Scripture.²⁵⁵ Also, illustrations about one's family or other people should be used with their consent and in such a way that trust remains intact after the illustration.²⁵⁶

Some authors recommend the use of biblical illustrations. Others warn against using them. Some of the arguments made for using those illustrations are biblical literacy and helping the modern audience see how the biblical characters and immediate audiences struggled with the same sin as people do today.²⁵⁷ On the other hand, Sunukjian cautions against using biblical illustrations unless they are in the main text at hand because they may be easily squeezed and fitted into one's text in a way that misinterprets said stories or illustrations.²⁵⁸ In light of those points, careful and contextual use of biblical illustrations may be a good thing. One should also consider how those biblical illustrations connect with today's audience and carefully weigh the benefit of using a modern illustration over a Bible story.

²⁵³ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 134.

²⁵⁴ Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 232.

²⁵⁵ Carter, Duvall, and Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 134.

²⁵⁶ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 232.

²⁵⁷ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 147; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 232.

²⁵⁸ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 133.

Regarding canned illustrations, be careful to give credit to the person from whom the illustration comes.²⁵⁹ Also, one should be careful to make sure the illustration adeptly applies to the passage and audience and that it is not just an easy find that results in being trite. Lastly, reading, or merely observing and thinking about life can provide many useful illustrations.²⁶⁰

The overlapping circles

Robinson has a helpful overlapping circles concept, in which he argues that, for illustrations to be effective, they should overlap between the preacher's and audience's lives.²⁶¹ The most powerful illustrations are "lived" by both the audience and the speaker, and Robinson encourages preachers to use illustrations in that category.²⁶² The "second-best illustrations are those where your learned experience overlaps your listener's lived experience."²⁶³ The third most powerful illustration is audience-"learned" and preacher-"experienced." Fourth is that both speaker and listener "learn" the illustration, and, in fifth place, the least desirable kind of illustration is one which the preacher may have "learned" or "lived," but the audience has not.²⁶⁴

The ladder

Another principle that is helpful concerning illustrations and their relation to the other functional elements is that of the "abstraction ladder."²⁶⁵ A preacher should move up and

²⁵⁹ Carter, Duvall, and Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 138.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Daniel Hays, 137–38; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 148; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 232.

²⁶¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 111–12.

²⁶² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 111.

²⁶³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 111.

²⁶⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 112.

²⁶⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 107.

down the abstraction ladder. If he only dwells on expounding abstract concepts, the sermon will remain unclear. If he dwells only on concrete matters, the audience will lose sight of the general principles. “To have meaning, particulars must be gathered up in generalizations, and abstractions must be taken down to particulars to be made understandable.”²⁶⁶ Good preachers include both abstract and concrete elements in sermons.

Application

The application calls upon the audience to take action on biblical truth in day-to-day situations.²⁶⁷ It is vital then that the application be concrete and specific and not vague so that the audience does not leave church with little clue of what they should do with the sermon.²⁶⁸ Application is a servant to explanation and exegesis, as one cannot apply what he does not understand.²⁶⁹ That being said, the aim of exposition, with its functional elements, is to culminate in the application, as the goal is that Scripture truth would be lived out.²⁷⁰ True understanding results in application.

Another vital point, which will further be elaborated below in the theology section, is that biblical applications are rooted in the gospel.²⁷¹ Christ has graciously redeemed the believer, and only because of His gracious and free salvation, which is through faith and not by works (Eph 2:8–9), can the believer live for Him. Christ’s gracious work for the Father’s glory ought to move the believer’s affections to live for Him.

²⁶⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 107.

²⁶⁷ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 34.

²⁶⁸ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 113.

²⁶⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 58.

²⁷⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 190–91; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt 1, chap. 9, Kindle.

²⁷¹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 183.

Transformative application

Application transforms. For application to truly transform, it has to address the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of the hearer.²⁷² What one needs to *do* must be addressed, but the doing happens not just in external actions. The preacher must show what to do and challenge the person's knowledge, desires, and his resulting attitudes and outward actions.²⁷³ Only then can sound spiritual growth take place. The audience, along with the contents of the text, will shape how much emphasis is put on those different areas. For instance, young children will require more doing and attitudinal application, whereas with adults, thought and motive application can be more fully developed.

Placement

Application ought to be considered from the start in the introduction and not as a mere tack-on at the end of the sermon. One may vary in where he puts it, whether interspersed or at the end.²⁷⁴ If the sermon is deductive, the application should tend to be more interspersed. If the sermon is inductive, the weight of the application will be at the end.²⁷⁵ In general, application should be interspersed more often than being at the end, since the goal of preaching is application.²⁷⁶ If one does choose to intersperse applications, he should keep a climactic application for the conclusion.²⁷⁷ Wherever one places the

²⁷² Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 128.

²⁷³ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 181, 184; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 189.

²⁷⁴ Application can also be wrapped, which refers to applying before and at the end of the developmental ideas. For more information see Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 176–77.

²⁷⁵ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 115. The reason for this placement of the application is that it follows the sermon structure and its main idea placement in the sermon. For information on the inductive and deductive sermon structure, please see the comments made in the sub-section of the *Main Idea* called *How is it communicated?*

²⁷⁶ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 227; cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 189–90.

²⁷⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 246; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 9, Kindle.

application, a main application should be highlighted. Since there is a main idea in a passage, particular emphasis should be placed on applying the main idea of the message, over the other ideas that are present in the text.²⁷⁸

Necessity

Application is necessary. “Without application a preacher simply swings blindly, hoping the ball of application will hit the bat of exposition.”²⁷⁹ Simply explaining the truth does not mean that the audience will live it out.²⁸⁰ Many believers, once explained the Word of God, may even desire to carry the biblical truth out but just not comprehend what doing so looks like practically.²⁸¹ Those facts heighten the need for application.

Some preachers may advocate that application should be left to the Holy Spirit, but as Scripture not only explains but also exhorts truth to believers (2 Tim 3:16–17; 4:2), so should preachers. Perhaps well-intended and God-fearing men leave the application to the Spirit out of conviction. However, it is better to see the Holy Spirit working through sound application, as most preachers believe.²⁸² It may also be that preachers do not apply the truth to the audience because they are not sure how to apply it to themselves. Sunukjian says, “So the next time you as a speaker find yourself saying, ‘May the Spirit of God apply this to your hearts,’ what you’re really saying is, ‘I haven’t the vaguest idea of how it fits; maybe you’ll think of something.’ But they won’t.”²⁸³ Whether or not the preacher knows how to apply the

²⁷⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 17.

²⁷⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 191.

²⁸⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 188.

²⁸¹ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 124.

²⁸² Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 116.

²⁸³ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 111.

text, the outcome for the audience is the same sad result. The audience goes home likely not knowing how to live out the sermon.

How

Preachers should usually be able to clearly explain biblical facts, but applying truth is harder than explaining it. Application may be the hardest part of the sermon.²⁸⁴ If the application is so hard, how can one do it well and avoid pitfalls in doing so? To have relevant applications that show what to do with biblical truth in tangible life situations, Sunukjian gives a few suggestions. The preacher should think about how the truth applies both in his life and the audience's life, use images that do not merely illustrate but tangibly apply the truth to life, and "make ... applications detailed and extended, not vague and brief."²⁸⁵

Implications

An important consideration to meditate upon as one thinks about application is the theological implications. Vines and Shaddix look at "theological implications," "timeless truths," and "practical applications" and put those on an application continuum line.²⁸⁶ Merida treats theological implications and timeless truths as one and suggests that those should apply to the audience.²⁸⁷ Vines and Shaddix caution preachers to only go down this continuum line as far as the text warrants. They say the following:

Sometimes the best application of a text will be limited to its theological implications and timeless truths. The preacher will be able to say no more with

²⁸⁴ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 117.

²⁸⁵ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 124. Several other authors offer practical ways to make applications that apply to all the audience in a sound theological way. See Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 185–87; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 117; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 196; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 125.

²⁸⁶ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 224.

²⁸⁷ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 182.

regard to relevance without stretching the text. Certain truths issuing from the theological implications will serve as the primary application of the passage. And you should never feel guilty about that. *Theological implications and timeless truths are application, even though they may not have immediate and practical expression in people's lives!* In many cases, however, you will be able to apply the truth rightly in practical ways. With each individual text, you must determine how far along the continuum you can go and still make application with integrity.²⁸⁸

Avoiding pitfalls

To avoid application pitfalls and heresies, two matters should be considered. The first is that of oversimplification. The application should go beyond just commenting, “Read your Bible and pray”; it should be text-specific.²⁸⁹

The second issue is that of heresy. Parting from the text and jumping to making an application that is not warranted in it is heretical.²⁹⁰ Robinson is quoted in several books as he illustrates how heresy happens in preaching application.²⁹¹ Robinson differentiates between categories of application that range from truth to heresy as they do or do not relate to the passage: “necessary,” “probable,” “possible,” “improbable,” and “impossible.” Essentially, while preachers should only make the necessary application, they commit heresies rendering possible applications of the text as God’s Word.²⁹² “Too often preachers give to a possible implication the authority of a necessary implication.”²⁹³ Preachers must not present as God’s Word what they feel strongly about when it is not God’s Word. They have to filter through their ideas and ensure that there is a full correlation between what they say and what the text says. They need to only apply and fully apply what the text warrants.

²⁸⁸ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 224.

²⁸⁹ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 126–27.

²⁹⁰ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, 127; cf. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 225.

²⁹¹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 226; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 181.

²⁹² Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” 21, and 25–26.

²⁹³ Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” 26.

Wholesome application grid

A tool for application is the *Wholesome Application Grid* (See Table 2 for the respective grid). It has been elaborated to help think through and filter applications during sermon preparation, and can also be used for sermon evaluations. It intends to not just make one think of whom the application impacts but also of *how* the application impacts one as a person, and how the application is rooted in Scripture.

First, concerning Scripture, the grid takes into account that every application will intend to reflect directly what the passage says for the modern audience. Robinson shares a practical way to accomplish applying what the passage actually says. He compares true versus heretical application in that true applications apply what the text says, versus saying something “probable” or “possible,” or worse, something “improbable” or “impossible.”²⁹⁴ Along the same lines, Chapell suggests a concept that helps avoid limiting the full scope of biblical truth as one tries to give a specific application. He suggests that the application should detail one real-life circumstance to tangibly show what to do with the biblical truth. However, the preacher should also briefly list other situations or concepts of application in order to not confine the audience’s mind to just one concept and limit the biblical truth to a narrower concept or circumstance than it should.²⁹⁵ The surface applications are suggested because one cannot go in-depth into all applications per time constraints. Also, applications are not mere moralistic *do’s* and *don’ts* lists; their appeals are rooted in the gospel of Christ and are for God’s glory.

²⁹⁴ Haddon Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” 21, and 25–26; cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 181.

²⁹⁵ Merida, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 204–6.

Second, for applications to transform a believer, they cannot merely address behavior. They have to also address affections and knowledge. They have to address deep-seated beliefs, arguments, desires, and loyalties.²⁹⁶ That way, a person is wholly transformed as they should be. Third, there are various spheres and stages of life in which believers may be, and application should impact each person in those, respectively.²⁹⁷

The grid can be thought of as a filter in that the application is filtered through whether or not it is Scriptural and affects the whole person, before applying it to the various people in the audience.

²⁹⁶ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 181–84.

²⁹⁷ This framework, though previously elaborated, also reflects Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 117.

Table 2

Wholesome Application Grid			
Whole Scripture	Whole Person	Whole Audience (Life Sphere and Stage)	
1. Necessary vs probably or possible	Impacts knowledge, affections, behavior	1. Individual 2. Family role 3. Study or work 4. Church 5. Neighbors and Civil 6. Leisure Time	
2. One deep and several surface			
3. Gospel and Doxological			
Main Idea			
Developmental Idea 1			
Developmental Idea 2			
Developmental Idea 3			
Developmental Idea 4			

Theology

Three main considerations are taken into account in this section: systematic doctrine, biblical storyline, and Christ and the gospel. The first addresses the treatment of a doctrine as it is found in a passage. The second looks at the big picture of Scripture's progressive revelation. The third focuses on preaching Christ and the gospel, including important comments on God and His Kingdom.

Systematic Doctrine

Preachers must share the doctrine they find in the passage they are preaching,²⁹⁸ whether it be a main doctrine like Scripture, God, man, salvation, the church, the end times, or any other doctrine, like prayer or fellowship. These doctrines must be presented in such a way that is in harmony with the rest of Scripture's systematic teaching on that doctrine.²⁹⁹ This should be done following the appropriate circles of context, moving from the particular unit at hand, to the book, testament, and whole canon.³⁰⁰ At times, though Scripture has no contradiction, preachers may make matters sound that way. They may state a doctrine in such a way that it sounds incongruous with the rest of Scripture. Preachers should look for the passage's prominent theological themes and treat those adequately. That statement must be taken within the purview of expository preaching, in which one exposit one passage. Though one elaborates on a passage explaining a doctrine and may go to other passages of Scriptures for *analogia scriptura* purposes, the passage that is preached needs to remain the main focus in the sermon.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 76–77.

²⁹⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 255.

³⁰⁰ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 41–42; cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 76–77. Systematic theology is thematic, but still must be contextual.

³⁰¹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 94.

Biblical Storyline

Beyond the need for taking into account systematic theology for a passage's doctrine is the need for fitting the passage within the biblical storyline.³⁰² That is necessary because context is king, and it is king in the literary sense of the context of any book and above all in the theological context/storyline of the Bible.³⁰³ Again, there are circles of context, from phrase, to sentence, to paragraph, to book section, to book, to testament, and to the whole canon. With this in mind, what is the main theme of the biblical storyline?

The overarching biblical storyline is about God, the universal King, who is restoring His Kingdom through Christ Jesus. God is the ruler over all, even over those who rebel against Him (Ps 103:17–19).³⁰⁴ He allows, for a time, that the mankind He has created for His glory would, for the most part, not honor Him as He deserves (Is 43:7, 21). The redeemed do live for His glory, though imperfectly for now (1 Cor 10:31; Rom 11:33–36). He has planned all along for His Kingdom to be restored via Christ's mediatory cross-work (Gen 3:15; Eph 1:5, 19–21).³⁰⁵ Christ currently is at the right hand of the Father as the resurrected Victor (Heb 1:13). Christ reigns spiritually with a salvation rule over spiritual powers (Col 1:13, Eph 1:19–23).³⁰⁶ Though that is the case, Scripture most prominently refers to the kingdom as future, a kingdom in which Christ will reign physically and spiritually during the millennial Kingdom (Luke 19:11, Acts 14:22, Rev 11:15). Christ will then hand over the millennial reign to the Father, and the eternal kingdom will begin

³⁰² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 255.

³⁰³ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 52–53.

³⁰⁴ Cf. Michael Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever* (Silverton, OR: Lampion, 2020), chap. 15, Kindle.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, chap. 15, Kindle.

³⁰⁶ Darrell L. Bock, "Current Messianic Activity and OT Davidic Promise: Dispensationalism, Hermeneutics, and NT Fulfillment," *TrinJ* 15:1 (Spring 1994): 55.

(1 Cor 15:24, 28).³⁰⁷ In the eternal state, the Father and the Son will reign together during all eternity (1 Cor 15:24, 28; Rev 22:3). Christians must rightly recognize the Lordship of Christ, to the glory of the Father (Phil 2:11; cf. 1 Peter 4:10–11). They must live for their King today and with an eye on eternity when we will worship their King without any sin (cf. Rev 5:13). The Scriptures are then Kingdom-oriented and God-centered, and that truth should undergird every sermon to God’s glory.

In harmony with the main thrust of the Kingdom-oriented and God-glorifying message is Christ-centeredness. Christ is the Mediator and King in the Father’s Kingdom, to the Father’s glory. The Kingdom, the Father’s glory and centrality, and Christ-centeredness should be seen as different angles from which one sees a diamond, not centers that are pitted against each other.³⁰⁸ Christ is at the center of the Father’s Kingdom as the Mediator and Redeemer (1 Tim 2:5). Christ is at the center of the Scriptures (John 5:39; Luke 24:27), to the Father’s glory.³⁰⁹ Christ ought to be at the center of preaching because He is the gospel message (1 Cor 2:2).³¹⁰ Without Him, there is no true preaching.³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Cf. Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, chap. 35, Kindle.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 56.

³⁰⁹ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 54; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 52.

³¹⁰ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 14–16.

³¹¹ Christ-centeredness may be explained without such emphasis on the kingdom and the Father’s glory. For instance, see, Walter Jr. Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); James Jr. Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgement* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010). On the other hand, others put Christ’s work within the framework of the Kingdom, see Alva J McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959); Thomas Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013); Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*.

Christ and the Gospel

Michael Vlach writes, “Jesus is the focal point and center of God’s mediatorial kingdom plan”³¹² (cf. 1 Cor 2:2). What should preaching with Christ at the center look like? In the audience, there are sinners who have either accepted Christ’s substitution or rejected it. The unrepentant need Christ’s gospel power to be saved (Rom 1:16). The believers are being transformed by God’s grace into Christlikeness (Eph 2:8–10; 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 6:1). In other words, salvation, from the starting point of conversion to its everyday progressive sanctification, is by the grace of Christ alone. No effort at the beginning of salvation, throughout all of new life on earth, and through the eternal glorified state, can contribute to salvation (cf. Rom 3:10–12). As it is by God’s grace through Christ and the power of the Spirit that one is saved and sanctified into Christ’s image, Christ ought to be central to every sermon.³¹³ The other alternative is Christless and graceless sermons, which is moralism and guilt as a means of trying to please God.³¹⁴

How does Christ’s centrality practically flesh out in a sermon? If a passage speaks directly about Christ, then one can and ought to make much of Christ in his sermon in a way that reflects the text’s structure and emphasis. The sermon should reflect the sinner’s condition, needing redemption or having been redeemed by the grace only available in Christ.³¹⁵ Having been redeemed, any instructions and exhortations must be grounded in Christ’s grace. The whole sermon ought to be bathed in a robust theology of salvation that magnifies His rich grace. That stands in contrast to a mere passing comment about Christ and

³¹² Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, chap. 35, Kindle.

³¹³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 275–81; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 66–68.

³¹⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 253, and 305.

³¹⁵ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 249–50.

the gospel, or worse, to guilt-driven and graceless demands. If Christ is directly mentioned in a passage, preaching Him should be straightforward.³¹⁶

If a passage does not speak directly about Christ, then matters become more difficult.³¹⁷ Some preachers will then not make much of Christ and unfortunately fall into giving moralistic “do” and “don’t do” sermons. Others will cheapen Christ by making illegitimate references to Him where the text makes none by way of allegory, spiritualization, or an odd tack-on of Christ.³¹⁸ They may also just jump to Christ in the conclusion of their sermon in an unwarranted way per the context of the passage.³¹⁹

When the passage does not speak directly of Christ, one shows Christ appropriately by “identifying where a passage fits in the overall revelation of God’s redemptive plan” by relating its contents to Scripture’s broader context.³²⁰ However, what does that mean practically as one exposit a passage? Passage outlines must not be altered beyond the structure and emphasis of the text to fit a “Christ-centered” method. To be coherent with expository preaching is to stay within the text’s content. The Christological emphasis that is needed per the broader theological context of Scripture should be treated as such, as context, not blurring textual contents.³²¹ However broad one needs to go to appropriately refer to Christ through the context, whether it be the book, testament, or canon, he should do so.³²² So, one says in the outline what the text says without blurring its contents, while relating what it says to the big picture as well. Christ is preached to the glory of the Father, who is establishing His Kingdom.

³¹⁶ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 263.

³¹⁷ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 52.

³¹⁸ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 56, and 67.

³¹⁹ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 291, and 298.

³²⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 260, and 265; cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 52.

³²¹ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 288.

³²² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 260–61.

Transitions

Transitions are brief but vital to sermons. They communicate movement from one point to the next, whether that be movement between the introduction and a developmental idea, movement between developmental ideas, or movement between the last developmental idea and the conclusion.³²³ In a transition, one essentially makes a summary comment of the point that is finished and moves to the next point with a transitional cue word like “now” or “next”.³²⁴ Transitions should be smooth and should not obstruct the flow of the sermon.³²⁵ Without them, the audience is left behind as the preacher continues. They are left to figure out how things connect on their own. With good transitions, the audience continues along with the preacher.³²⁶

Sermon Evaluation Template and Guide

As with the rest of the sermon parts, the following sermon evaluation template items were elaborated along with a brief guide and fuller template notes.³²⁷ These are based on the material above on the sermon body and on the sermon evaluation templates cited below.

Body Evaluation Template³²⁸

1. Develops ideas that support the main idea, per the text structure and emphasis³²⁹ _____
2. Explains the text clearly and accurately, making it understandable³³⁰ _____
3. Convinces to believe the text, answering legitimate questions³³¹ _____
4. Illustrates to help see the text’s explanation, argumentation, and/or application³³² _____

³²³ Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 95.

³²⁴ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 173. For practical examples of how to use transitions, see, Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 211–214; Ramesh, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 111–12.

³²⁵ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 2, Kindle..

³²⁶ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 112.

³²⁷ The guide and full evaluation notes can be found in Appendix 2.

³²⁸ The full template can be found in Appendix 1.

³²⁹ Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³⁰ Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³¹ Keller, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³² Keller, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

5. Applies the text to real-life situations in a specific and detailed way³³³ _____
6. Expounds but does not abuse theological truths³³⁴ _____
7. Relates the text to the Scripture storyline³³⁵ _____
8. Teaches Christ's gospel to unbelievers and believers³³⁶ _____
9. Transitions to indicate movement between points³³⁷ _____

Comments:

Sermon Conclusion

Some preachers have likened a sermon conclusion to landing a plane in that concluding the sermon requires a focused effort.³³⁸ An issue with conclusions is that they may often be neglected. The preacher, having expended himself on the introduction, exegesis, explanation, illustration, application, and argumentation, may unfortunately, due to tiredness or time constraints, leave the conclusion as an add-on, a “thoughtless summary to the message.”³³⁹ Ill-executed conclusions can also liken preachers to pilots that “circle round and round, like a plane on a foggy day without instruments, unable to land. Their sermons ‘are nothing less than a tragedy of aimlessness.’”³⁴⁰

Good expositors attribute much importance to conclusions, because if one fails in the conclusion, the entire sermon may fail.³⁴¹ Conclusions matter because they are the climax

³³³ Trinity Bible Church, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 255; Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³⁵ Belford, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³⁶ Trinity Bible Church, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³⁷ Gibson, Scott, *Training Preachers*, 194; Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

³³⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 128.

³³⁹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 243.

³⁴⁰ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 245.

³⁴¹ Cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 175; Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 2, chap. 2, sec. 3, Kindle.

and the end and because they will probably be remembered more than the other sermon parts.³⁴²

This part of the chapter will look into the purpose of sermon conclusions and survey conclusion key components from key preaching resources. From those it will establish key conclusion components and the elaboration of the sermon evaluation template and guide for conclusions. In addition to that, comments will be made on ways to conclude and on other conclusions matters.

Purpose

The purpose of the sermon's conclusion is to climactically tell the audience what to do with the sermon.³⁴³ Robinson suggests that "Directly or indirectly, the conclusion answers the question 'so what? What difference does this make?'"³⁴⁴ In like manner, Vines and Shaddix boil down the conclusion's essence to "some plea or exhortation for the listeners to act on the message."³⁴⁵ This final plea that asks the "so what?" question is the climax of the sermon.³⁴⁶ The subsequent key components serve the conclusion's purpose.

Overview

Authors propose a differing number of conclusion key components. To help discern the conclusion's key component's essence, here is an overview of what they propose. To help visualize the key conclusion components, see Appendix 4 below.

³⁴² Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234.

³⁴³ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234–5.

³⁴⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 128.

³⁴⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 244.

³⁴⁶ This purpose is distinguished though other purposes may be accomplished. See, Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 176–78; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 127; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 244; Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 245.

Merida suggests “a conclusion generally has two important parts: a summation and a response.”³⁴⁷ To put unified terminology to the same components to which different authors give different names, the elements he states can be called summary and application/appeal.

Chapell highlights four key components: “recapitulation,” “exhortation,” “elevation,” and “termination.” In other words, those would be summary, application/appeal, climax, and “termination.”³⁴⁸

Sunukjian states his components as purposes, and they are “to summarise and to exhort.”³⁴⁹ Those components can be stated as summary and application/appeal.

Akin, Curtis, and Rummage have the following twelve sermon conclusion components: “crescendo,” “cohesion,” “restate... summation,” “fits the message,” “clear and transparent,” “brief,” “element of surprise,” “good timing,” “personal in application,” “appeals to ... real and specific people,” “flows out of the body of your message,” and “preparedness.”³⁵⁰ Amongst other elements, they have those of summary, application/appeal, and climax. It must also be said that the authors have a whole chapter on invitations.³⁵¹ The invitation is part of the stated application/appeal component.

Broadus has the following components: “prepared[ness],” “recapitulation,” “application,” “specific[ity],” “length,” and “final words.”³⁵² Along with the other components, Broadus suggests that while the conclusion should include a summary, the predominant emphasis should be application.

³⁴⁷ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 204.

³⁴⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234–36.

³⁴⁹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 242.

³⁵⁰ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 178–79.

³⁵¹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 183–94.

³⁵² Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt 2, chap. 2, sec. 3, Kindle.

Stott has “recapitulation,” “personal application,” and “pray[er].”³⁵³ So, he also has the main two components of summary and final application/appeal.

Robinson’s conclusion definition is the following: “[It] gives the congregation a view of the idea, entire and complete. It brings the central concept to a burning focus and drives home its truth to the minds and lives of the listeners.”³⁵⁴ Two key components that can be extrapolated from that definition are summary and climactic application/appeal of the main idea.

Richard suggests several components in the conclusion: “completes,” “integrates,” “reviews,” “resolves,” “invites ... to obedience,” “appli[es],” “repeats or restates,” and “cohesion and resolution.”³⁵⁵ In essence, conclusions climactically summarize the main points and restate the main idea, and apply the sermon.

Vines and Shaddix distinguish one key component, a climactic “appeal,” along with a list of other things to do and avoid.³⁵⁶ Their component fits with the climax and application/appeal components.

Key Components

Though some authors have more components, it seems best to view the sermon conclusion as having two key components: summary and climactic appeal. The conclusion is the sermon’s climax,³⁵⁷ in which a summary and appeal/application are made.

³⁵³ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 245, 253.

³⁵⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 133.

³⁵⁵ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 127.

³⁵⁶ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 244.

³⁵⁷ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 176.

Summary

The summary should help people remember the essence of the sermon.³⁵⁸ It also aims to give a climactic completeness to the sermon, tying it together.³⁵⁹ The main points should be restated succinctly by stating keywords or thoughts.³⁶⁰ Normally, this part should be no longer than “two or three sentences.”³⁶¹ The main idea of the sermon should also be restated, as part of both the summary and climactic application of the sermon.³⁶²

Climactic Appeal/Application

Most of the climax/conclusion should be spent on the application, appealing that the listeners to obey God’s Word as expounded in the sermon.³⁶³ This final appeal cannot merely summarize and give information; it must entreat people to act on what they have heard.³⁶⁴ “The entire message should move toward this purpose.”³⁶⁵

The sermon’s final appeal/application is climactic. “Ending contents are alive – packed with tension, drama, energy, and emotion. This never means bombast and does not necessitate grandiloquence, since deep feeling and powerful thought are often expressed in the most quiet, sincere terms.”³⁶⁶ The climactic appeal should be communicated thoughtfully, passionately, and sincerely, conveying that the sermon truth is important, lest the conclusion fail, executed as a tack-on summary statement.³⁶⁷ Going back to the plane illustration, the

³⁵⁸ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 245.

³⁵⁹ Cf. Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 127; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 242.

³⁶⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234.

³⁶¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234.

³⁶² Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 204.

³⁶³ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 235.

³⁶⁴ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 243.

³⁶⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 244; cf. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 247.

³⁶⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 234.

³⁶⁷ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 236.

conclusion answers a climactic “so what?” question via application and appeal, and in that way lands the sermon plane.³⁶⁸

Invitations

Some authors devote particular attention to the invitation.³⁶⁹ They claim that part of a climactic application to obey God’s Word is a public appeal. The issue many have with invitations is that they have been greatly abused with “altar calls.”³⁷⁰ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage ably address and answer typical objections against invitations. Among other issues with invitations, they address the manipulation and misleading that unfortunately have happened.³⁷¹ For instance, they address the objection against invitations because invitations have produced many false converts. To such a serious objection they respond that the issue is not the invitation but that there was “anemic theology and poor presentation of the gospel” in the respective invitations.³⁷² Therefore, the problem is not the invitation but how the invitation is done.

The authors suggest that the preaching of God’s Word demands a public response. Amongst other passages warranting such a claim, they cite Acts 2:38, which says, “Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Scriptural authority indeed warrants invitations to repentant faith.³⁷³

³⁶⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 128.

³⁶⁹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 205–7; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 183–94; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 381–85.

³⁷⁰ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 205.

³⁷¹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 183.

³⁷² Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 187–88.

³⁷³ Cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 184–86.

There are practical ways to make an invitation in a sermon. For instance, there are “go and do likewise,” “come forward,” “post-meeting follow-up,” “written response,” “question-and-answer session” after the sermon, and “Lord’s Supper as a time for response.”³⁷⁴ As with other sermon components, some variation is helpful.

Ways to Conclude

There are different ways to climactically summarize and apply the sermon. Robinson offers one of several helpful lists of ways one can conclude: “a summary,” “an illustration,” “a quotation,” “a question,” “a prayer,” “specific directions,” or “visualization.”³⁷⁵ Though these all can be good ways to conclude a sermon, some of them are better than others.

Illustration or Story

Illustrations or stories are best when they show how the sermon works out in real life.³⁷⁶ The most effective stories or illustrations are of someone’s “experience with which hearers are made to identify.”³⁷⁷ Also, a very effective way to end the sermon is with a “wraparound” story that brings back the sermon introduction’s attention grabber.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁴ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 205–6; cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 190–92.

³⁷⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 128–31; cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 181; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 241–48; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 236–40; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 243; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 204–5.

³⁷⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 111, and 128; cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 243. See more comments on illustrations in the illustration sub-section of the sermon body part of this chapter.

³⁷⁷ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 225–26, and 236. He also denotes grand style as a better way to conclude.

³⁷⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 239.

Prayer

If one prays, it should not be a means of summarizing the message. It should be a solemn plea to God for His work in His people's hearts and for them to heed the expounded truth.³⁷⁹

Specific Directions

Not every sermon needs a “how to do something” conclusion. Some sermons need a conclusion that focuses on thoughts about God. Some sermons simply need to end with a call to worship God.³⁸⁰ However, if the preacher cannot spell out clear directions about how the text fleshes out, likely, his audience will fail at doing what the text says they ought to do.³⁸¹

Visualization

Visualization shows the audience how to obey the truth at hand in a future situation.³⁸² In order to be impactful, visualization ought to be explained in such a way that is a plausible and likely scenario for the different people in the audience.³⁸³

Quotations

Quotations are cautioned against because this society tends to have “low literary appreciation.”³⁸⁴ If quotations are too long, they will likely backfire.³⁸⁵ However, a brief quotation that speaks to the heart of the message can be an effective way to conclude.³⁸⁶

³⁷⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 130.

³⁸⁰ Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 130–31.

³⁸¹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 130.

³⁸² Cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 244.

³⁸³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 131.

³⁸⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 237.

³⁸⁵ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 250.

³⁸⁶ Cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 246; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 238.

Questions

Ending with questions may be effective.³⁸⁷ However, Chapell argues that ending a sermon with questions has a “tendency to make the sermon’s message dissolve into abstraction” and may also simply indicate the preacher did not think through his conclusion.³⁸⁸ Sunukjian, along similar lines, argues against “introspective” questions, supports “affirmation” questions, but suggests “decision” questions are slightly better.³⁸⁹

In sum, taking into account the story, specific directions, and visualization, one can say that practical and concrete ways of living out God’s truth make good conclusions. Again, it is important to vary the conclusion and do so per the text and audience.

Other Conclusion Matters

Beyond the key components, a few other conclusion matters warrant attention. These are length, hope, and eye contact.

Length

A few cautions and guidelines need to be given on conclusion lengths. Long conclusions and multiple conclusions make the audience desperate.³⁹⁰ As one prepares the conclusion, its length should be that of a conclusion, not of another sermon. It is a flight landing, not an entire trip. Furthermore, once the plane starts landing, the plane should not take off again. In other words, there should not be false landings or multiple conclusions. After the sermon climaxes with its summary and final application/appeal, it ought to land.³⁹¹

³⁸⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 130.

³⁸⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 239.

³⁸⁹ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 249.

³⁹⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 238; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 179.

³⁹¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 238.

Hope

Scripture contains warning and judgment passages. At times, it is appropriate to finish the sermon with such a tone, but that should only be the exception.³⁹² God has given humanity gospel hope; therefore, sermons should end with a note of hope the majority of the time. So, while the gravity of the main idea ought to be impressed on the audience's mind, it ought to be done so with an array of hope.³⁹³

Eye Contact

More will be said about eye contact in the delivery portion of this chapter. However, suffice it to say that eye contact is particularly important in conclusions.³⁹⁴

Components to Avoid

Sermon conclusions should not include new material. They should not argue and prove the text but only summarize and apply the priorly expounded passage.³⁹⁵ They should not manipulate but biblically persuade.³⁹⁶ Sermons should not end until there has been an appropriate conclusion, and the conclusion should not be announced, as doing so may make people quit focusing before the sermon is done.³⁹⁷

³⁹² Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 251.

³⁹³ Cf. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 251.

³⁹⁴ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 251.

³⁹⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 244–46; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 132

³⁹⁶ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 204.

³⁹⁷ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 250; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 204; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 244–46.

Sermon Evaluation Template and Guide

As with the rest of the sermon parts, based on the material above, the following sermon evaluation template items were elaborated. Also included is a brief guide and fuller evaluation notes.³⁹⁸

Conclusion Evaluation Template³⁹⁹

1. Summarizes the main points and restates the main idea.⁴⁰⁰ _____
2. Applies/appeals climactically to obey the text.⁴⁰¹ _____

Comments:

Sermon Delivery

One may have diligently prepared his sermon content and as a result have a good introduction, body, and conclusion. However, beyond the actual sermon words, much communication lies in how the sermon is delivered with one's voice and body language.⁴⁰² To put it another way, preaching is not just about giving out theological facts, but about communicating theology with passion; preaching is delivering one's sermon as a "dying man to dying men."⁴⁰³ Preaching is "theology on fire."⁴⁰⁴ One does not just want fire without theology, but neither should preaching be all theology and no fire. God is glorious and holy;

³⁹⁸ The complete guide with full evaluation notes can be found in Appendix 2.

³⁹⁹ The full template can be found in Appendix 1.

⁴⁰⁰ Rogers, "Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church," 137; Akin, "Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching," 7; Robinson and Larson, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, 701.

⁴⁰¹ Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, "Sermon Evaluation Form"; Lancaster Seminary, "Sermon Evaluation Form"; Rogers, "Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church," 137.

⁴⁰² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 149–50; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 216–17.

⁴⁰³ Richard Baxter, *The Poetical Fragments of Richard Baxter*, 4th ed. (London: Pickering, 1821), 35.

⁴⁰⁴ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2012), 110; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 218.

His grace is magnanimous, and sermons ought to reflect that theological truth with a sincere passion.

In highlighting the deep impact sermon delivery has beyond its words, Robinson says, “A sermon ineptly delivered arrives stillborn.”⁴⁰⁵ Along the same lines, Chapell says, “Listeners remember the delivery of poor speakers; they remember the content of good speakers.”⁴⁰⁶ Some may argue that they cannot learn to deliver sermons differently because that would mean changing their personality. Every preacher has a personality and style and while one cannot pretend to be someone else, just as one learns to drive a car, one should learn how to deliver sermons well.⁴⁰⁷ Every preacher has awkward and detrimental habits that need to be changed, just as car drivers do. Taking into account personality, there is a need to “heighten” one’s speech so that it results in a natural and conversational delivery that reflects sound sermon delivery practice.⁴⁰⁸ The goal is to have the delivery unnoticed so the audience can receive the message and the Spirit’s work may be unhindered by the delivery.⁴⁰⁹

This part of the chapter will overview key delivery components from key preaching resources, extrapolate key delivery components from those, and elaborate its respective part of the sermon evaluation template and guide. In addition to that, comments will be made on other delivery matters.

⁴⁰⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 149.

⁴⁰⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 337.

⁴⁰⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 152–53; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 149.

⁴⁰⁸ Heightened speech refers to keeping a normal conversational speech in the pulpit, and not letting the nervous stress of public speaking alter that, Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 336–37.

⁴⁰⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 337.

Overview

Here is an overview of the different authors' delivery components in order to determine what the key components are. To better visualize the components, see Appendices 5.0 and 5.1.

Fasol takes into account four voice components: “pitch, volume, rate, and pauses.”⁴¹⁰ He includes the following body components: “personal appearance,” “first impressions,” “walking into pulpit,” “eye contact,” “facial expressions,” “posture,” and “gestures.”⁴¹¹

Vines and Shaddix have a voice category with the following components: “rate,” “pace,” “volume,” “stress,” “pitch,” “inflection,” “phrasing,” and “pausing.”⁴¹² They also have a body category with “eye contact,” “gestures,” “facial expressions,” “posture,” and “mobility.”⁴¹³ They stress that the different vocal and body components must vary and not be monotonous.

Merida's voice components are “rate,” “pace,” “volume,” “stress,” “pitch,” “inflection,” and “pauses.”⁴¹⁴ The body components he mentions are “eye contact,” “facial expressions,” “gestures,” and “posture.”⁴¹⁵

Akin, Curtis, and Rummage's voice components are “vocal quality,” “unnecessary words and sounds,” “pitch and volume patterns,” “enunciation,” “rate,” “volume,” “expressive[ness],” “optimal pitch,” and “pronunciation.”⁴¹⁶ They address the need for voice

⁴¹⁰ Al Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1996), 46–70. He also takes into account inflection as a part of pitch, and pace as part of rate (48, and 64). He also has chapters on more fundamental matters of voice that deal with “full vocal production” and “articulation,” and chapters on finer delivery matters such as “oral interpretation” and “radio and television” (8–45, and 88–11).

⁴¹¹ Fasol, 74–76, 79, and 81.

⁴¹² Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 352–60.

⁴¹³ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 362–68.

⁴¹⁴ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 215, and 218. He also addresses other delivery items.

⁴¹⁵ Merida, 218–19. He also includes movement as he writes about posture (219).

⁴¹⁶ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 232, 233, 234, 235, 237, and 239. They also address inflection under the category of pitch variation (226), and pace and pauses with rate (236).

variation to stress particular points.⁴¹⁷ They have a chapter on the body, dealing with “eye contact and gestures,” and a chapter on “lasting impression,” that includes “facial expressions” and “movement and posture.”⁴¹⁸

The voice components Broadus highlights are “pitch,” “volume,” “penetrating power,” and “melody.”⁴¹⁹ In his “action” section, he speaks of “posture,” “gestures,” and “countenance,” a category in which he includes eye contact and facial expressions.⁴²⁰

The voice components Carter, Duvall, and Hays cover are “pitch,” “pace,” “volume,” and “articulation.”⁴²¹ The body components they list are “hands and feet,” “face,” and “look;” they also comment about the fact that the delivery should be “animated.”⁴²²

In the voice category, Chapell lists the voice components “volume,” “variety,” and “intensity,” and under variety, he includes pitch and rate.⁴²³ Concerning the use of body gestures, he includes “eye contact,” “include everyone,” “facial animation,” “hand gestures,” and “posture.”⁴²⁴

The components Richard puts forth are “face, gestures, and voice.”⁴²⁵ The face component includes facial expressions and eye contact. Under gestures, he speaks of the rest

⁴¹⁷ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 235.

⁴¹⁸ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 241–47, and 248–55, see esp. 242, 244, 249, and 251.

⁴¹⁹ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 4, chap. 2, sec. 1, and sec. 2.

⁴²⁰ Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, pt. 4, chap. 3.

⁴²¹ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 151–53. They address rate under the pace category (152).

⁴²² Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 154–59. They also have helpful comments on variation, on being conversational, and on visual aids (159–61).

⁴²³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 337–40.

⁴²⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 340–44. In the posture category he takes into account movement as well (344).

⁴²⁵ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 136.

of the body's movement.⁴²⁶ Regarding the voice, he takes into account "pitch," "quality," "articulation and pronunciation," "rate," and "volume."⁴²⁷

Robinson distinguishes voice and gesture as key to delivery, and further elaborates those categories with "groom and dress," "gestures and movement," "eye contact," and "voice."⁴²⁸ In the voice category, he includes "pitch," "punch," "progress," "pause," "rehearsal," and "feedback."⁴²⁹

Key Components

The key delivery components that impact how a sermon is communicated can be broken down into two basic categories: voice and body.⁴³⁰ An integral aspect of the delivery communication is variation. "Variation and movement means life; flatline means death."⁴³¹

Voice

The voice delivery components are pitch, volume, rate, and articulation. One must vary his vocal pitch, volume, and rate to appropriately support the sermon contents with his delivery.⁴³²

⁴²⁶ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 138.

⁴²⁷ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 139–40. Under pitch he includes inflection, and under rate, includes pauses.

⁴²⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 149, 153–59.

⁴²⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 161–64. He addresses inflections as changes in pitch (161).

⁴³⁰ Cf. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 352; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 136.

⁴³¹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 352.

⁴³² The other voice components are taken as parts of these: inflection with pitch (Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 161), rate with pace, and pause with rate (Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 152). Also, stress or emphasis is found throughout the various components.

Pitch

Pitch refers to the “tonal quality” of a voice.⁴³³ A normal pitch may either be high or low depending on the person.⁴³⁴ The pitch includes inflections.⁴³⁵ A preacher must find his optimal pitch for speaking. An effective way to do that is singing the lowest note one can sing with ease on the piano, and then going up five notes from that lowest note. That fifth note is one’s “optimal pitch.”⁴³⁶

Variety in pitch avoids monotony and is a critical component needed to keep the audience engaged.⁴³⁷ As a general rule, one should remain within his regular pitch range but vary to stress important matters in the sermon.⁴³⁸ It is possible that one might have a monotony problem, using only a small and limited range with either a high pitch or a low pitch.⁴³⁹ Another problem is that if a speaker starts the sermon with a high pitch, when he wants to climax at the end he is already at the top of his pitch range.⁴⁴⁰ A further problem a speaker may have is the tendency to start sentences with a high pitch and then let his pitch fall at the end.⁴⁴¹

Those are pitch problems, but what is the solution to create a healthy pitch variety? Along with the optimal pitch as the norm, the speaker should change his pitch per the textual content he desires to emphasize.⁴⁴² That stands in contrast to the pitch variation starting strong at the sentence beginning and dying off at the end. Also, simply following the text

⁴³³ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 48.

⁴³⁴ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 152.

⁴³⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 161.

⁴³⁶ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 237.

⁴³⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 162.

⁴³⁸ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 152.

⁴³⁹ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 51.

⁴⁴⁰ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 358.

⁴⁴¹ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 49.

⁴⁴² Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 50–52; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 340.

contents and saying them as one means them should cause the pitch to vary. If the text is about joy or sadness, one should vary the pitch appropriately and intentionally based on the subject.⁴⁴³

Volume

Volume refers to how loud or soft one speaks. The basic goal with volume is that the volume would be audience-appropriate in such a way that the audience would always hear one speak.⁴⁴⁴ Just as with pitch, one may err in monotony by speaking at the same volume, whether that be too loud or too soft, using just a narrow range of volume or starting sentences loudly and ending them inaudibly.⁴⁴⁵ Beyond being heard, a preacher absolutely must speak with variation to emphasize key text contents. That emphasis can be accomplished by going up to a loud exclamation or down to a whisper.⁴⁴⁶ Variation in volume also is necessary to keep the audience engaged.⁴⁴⁷ That being said, variation on the low side should always be heard, and variation should not be so loud that it overwhelms the audience.⁴⁴⁸

Rate and pauses

The rate refers to the speed at which one speaks.⁴⁴⁹ The goal of the rate is to facilitate audience attention and comprehension.⁴⁵⁰ If the rate is too fast, the audience will not understand; if the rate is too slow, the audience will go to sleep.⁴⁵¹ Again, the key is variation. One may speak at a faster rate when there is “excitement or passion” and at a

⁴⁴³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 340.

⁴⁴⁴ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 153.

⁴⁴⁵ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, 153; Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 56–58.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 162; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 153.

⁴⁴⁷ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 356.

⁴⁴⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 162.

⁴⁴⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 162.

⁴⁵⁰ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 152.

⁴⁵¹ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 152.

slower rate when a concept is “new” or of particular importance.⁴⁵² An average rate should be around “125 to 150 words-per-minute.”⁴⁵³

Pauses are closely related to the speaking rate.⁴⁵⁴ Their purpose is to make the audience “think” about or “feel” what is being said.⁴⁵⁵ In that way, pauses emphasize a particular point. Longer pauses can be used to transition from one matter to the next to get the audience to focus.⁴⁵⁶ Pauses are a necessary part of a sermon and should not be avoided by running sentences together or by using filler words like “uh.”⁴⁵⁷

Clarity

Some comments were already made on clarity in the body part of the sermon. Nonetheless, a few additional comments are deemed helpful. Taking into account the whole sermon, words and sentences should be “clear” and “simple,” not complicated and cluttered.⁴⁵⁸ Beyond the words themselves, there should be clarity in how the different phrases and thought units are put together.⁴⁵⁹ Articulation should also be clear. Articulation and pronunciation should effectively communicate to the respective audience and context. This means the audience clearly understands the speaker’s words and that his manner of speaking is not a hindrance to the message.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵² Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 236.

⁴⁵³ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 64.

⁴⁵⁴ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 66.

⁴⁵⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 163; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 153.

⁴⁵⁶ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 67.

⁴⁵⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 163.

⁴⁵⁸ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 215.

⁴⁵⁹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 360; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 258–62.

⁴⁶⁰ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 153–54.

Body

Beyond communication with one's voice is communication with one's body with the following components: eye contact, facial expressions, posture, and gestures. Much of the sermon's communication happens through nonverbal communication, so it is vital to take these components into account for an effective sermon delivery.⁴⁶¹

Eye contact

Eye contact is an indispensable component of nonverbal communication.⁴⁶² Some preachers make little or no eye contact. They may look down at the carpet, up at the second balcony (even if there isn't one), or somewhere off to the side of the auditorium. Doing so is distracting and detrimental to the message they seek to communicate.⁴⁶³ Such behaviors make the preacher seem "untrustworthy," "aloof, afraid, or incompetent."⁴⁶⁴ On the other hand, eye contact can and should communicate a loving intention.⁴⁶⁵ Eye contact also allows one to adjust communication as he looks at the audience and sees whether they are zoning out, puzzled, or engaged.⁴⁶⁶

Preachers must look at each individual in the audience and must look them in the eye. To look at the entire the audience the speaker must move his sight from side to side to each section of the audience, making eye contact with individual people as he does so. If the audience is large, the speaker may not be able to make eye contact with every person but instead will focus on small pockets of individuals.⁴⁶⁷ The eye contact should not be one that

⁴⁶¹ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 137.

⁴⁶² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 341; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 157.

⁴⁶³ Cf. Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 137.

⁴⁶⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 341.

⁴⁶⁵ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 157.

⁴⁶⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 158.

⁴⁶⁷ Robinson, 158; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 363.

“stares.”⁴⁶⁸ Furthermore, while periodical looking down at sermon notes is normal, or looking down intentionally for a particular reason, eye contact is necessary even if one manuscripts sermons.⁴⁶⁹ The time proportion one should be interacting with the audience via eye contact is “75 to 90” percent.⁴⁷⁰

Facial expressions

Facial expressions, including eye contact, communicate abundantly. An audience can tell by the preacher’s face whether he is nervous, joyful, sad, excited, or angry.⁴⁷¹ Every preacher has a base facial expression and should be aware of it. Some preachers’ base impression looks “stern” or has a “deadpan look,” and it may be like that because they are nervous or want to emulate a certain speaker.⁴⁷² The base facial expression should avoid both a constant stern or angry look and a fixed superficial smile.⁴⁷³ That being said, may God’s work in a preacher move him more towards a joyful expression.⁴⁷⁴

While there is a base facial expression, again, variety is important. Speakers need to vary their facial expressions per the text contents, naturally and sincerely.⁴⁷⁵ Speaking on the joys of heaven with an expressionless or stern facial expression contradicts the sermon and may discredit it. On the other hand, if one preaches on hell, his facial disposition should not be a joyful one but a sober one.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁶⁸ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 157.

⁴⁶⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 341; Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 363.

⁴⁷⁰ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 244.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 156.

⁴⁷² Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 156; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 249.

⁴⁷³ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 137.

⁴⁷⁴ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 251.

⁴⁷⁵ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 366.

⁴⁷⁶ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 156. For ways to improve facial expressions, see Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 250–51; Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 251.

Posture

Posture varies per speaker. One should aim for a posture that is “comfortable” and “communicates eagerness and confidence.”⁴⁷⁷ Other words that can or should describe what posture communicates are “vigor” and “energy.”⁴⁷⁸ A speaker with appropriate energy and who appears comfortable or “relaxed” is much easier to listen to and is more effective than one who is nervously “rigid” or slack.⁴⁷⁹

The posture one should have can be defined as a posture with feet about shoulder width, a chest that is “slightly out,” shoulders that are squared, and a chin that is parallel to the ground.⁴⁸⁰ One must avoid a posture that slouches or leans his elbows on the pulpit as it may communicate a lack of care or indifference.⁴⁸¹ One may lean into the pulpit from time to time as it may positively convey “intimacy or informality.”⁴⁸² Also, one should avoid having a posture that looks down on the audience with a puffed-up chest, communicating arrogance or disrespect.⁴⁸³ Beyond what the posture communicates, a good posture enables good breathing, volume, movement, and gestures.⁴⁸⁴

Gestures

Gestures refer to “movement of the hands and arms, but also the legs, torso, and head.”⁴⁸⁵ Sermon content must drive gestures.⁴⁸⁶ Gestures can be used to emphasize key

⁴⁷⁷ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 79.

⁴⁷⁸ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 251.

⁴⁷⁹ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 251; Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 79.

⁴⁸⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 343; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 251.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 251.

⁴⁸² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 343.

⁴⁸³ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 344; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 252.

⁴⁸⁴ Fasol, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, 70; For cues on how to improve posture, see Fasol, 80–81; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 252–55.

⁴⁸⁵ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 155.

⁴⁸⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 154; Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 155.

textual content⁴⁸⁷ in order to help further describe it, so as to help keep the audience focused.⁴⁸⁸ Preachers may err by not moving or moving too much. On the one hand, they may freeze behind their pulpits without movement, though they speak a glorious message. On the other hand, they may flail their hands in a distracting and random manner; they may do so because they are nervous or because they are trying to imitate another preacher.⁴⁸⁹ Beyond the fact that movement should be purposeful and reflect the textual content, movement should be natural, not “stiff.”⁴⁹⁰ Furthermore, the basic or default position from which one makes gestures is with hands by his side or having one’s hands “rest on the front of the pulpit.”⁴⁹¹

There are various ways that gestures may be helpfully executed. Hand gestures or walking on the platform can be used to indicate transitions by moving hands from left to right or by moving from one place to the next on the platform. Also, intentional gestures can be movements like “the pointing finger, the querying eyebrows, the wide arms, the clenched fist, the open palms....”⁴⁹² On the other hand, distracting mannerisms that should be avoided are things like “rattling keys in their pocket... scratching their nose, or worse.”⁴⁹³

Other Delivery Matters

Beyond the key components are other noteworthy delivery matters: delivery methods, visual aids, the preacher’s person, and the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁸⁷ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 138.

⁴⁸⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 155–56; cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 245.

⁴⁸⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 335–36.

⁴⁹⁰ Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 138; cf. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 365.

⁴⁹¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 342.

⁴⁹² Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 138; cf. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 364.

⁴⁹³ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 155.

Delivery Methods

There are four delivery methods important to address; three are Biblical, and one is not. The methods range from manuscript or complete notes, to extemporaneous or few notes, to memorization.⁴⁹⁴ The fourth style is speaking without preparation, and that contradicts expository preaching.⁴⁹⁵ While there may be times in which one is called upon to share the Word last minute, improvising still is not an appropriate method. As one may be called upon to impart God's Word without notice, he should share a concise passage that he knows well.⁴⁹⁶ Also, while different preachers have different styles, personalities, and capacities, they cannot make excuses to avoid trying to improve their respective styles.⁴⁹⁷

Manuscript or substantial notes

Manuscript preaching refers to preaching with a word-for-word manuscript. *Substantial notes* refers to preaching with a full outline and fully developed thoughts on points and sub-points, though the notes are not the sermon word-for-word. The danger with manuscripts and, to a lesser extent, with substantial notes is that it may be harder to establish good eye contact with the audience.⁴⁹⁸ It is also harder to make the sermon sound like an oral message as opposed to a written paper. That being said, one can certainly take those notes in the pulpit and not look at them much.⁴⁹⁹ Also, there is a benefit to this preaching method. The

⁴⁹⁴ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 151; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 256–60; cf. Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 370; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 353–57.

⁴⁹⁵ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 257.

⁴⁹⁶ cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 257.

⁴⁹⁷ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 150.

⁴⁹⁸ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 371; cf. Wilbur Ellsworth, *The Power of Speaking God's Word: How to Preach Memorable Sermons*, 2001, 10–12.

⁴⁹⁹ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 150.

preacher is forced to spell out the different sermon parts so is less likely to forget parts of it.⁵⁰⁰

Memorization

One extreme is being completely dependent on a manuscript; the other is memorization the sermon. Memorization refers to going into the pulpit with no notes, having memorized either a manuscript or other substantial notes one elaborated during his preparation.⁵⁰¹ One needs special giftedness to do this. The advantage of memorization is that having no notes, one is free to have more eye contact and body communication with the delivery. A disadvantage is the danger of forgetting sermon parts.⁵⁰²

Extemporaneous

While some may refer to extemporaneous speaking as improvising, in preaching it means that “the basic flow, structure, and content of the message are carefully planned, while the precise wording of the message is composed during the delivery of the speech itself.”⁵⁰³ With this style, the preacher starts with substantial notes but then summarizes or condenses them to more skeletal-like notes.⁵⁰⁴ Extemporaneous preaching seems to allow for more fluid delivery than manuscript preaching and prevents forgetting sermon details, a problem of the memorization model. However, a possible danger for those who use this method is that they may fail to develop particular thoughts fully in the preparation work.⁵⁰⁵ A further caution for

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 353.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 150; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 257.

⁵⁰² Cf. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 258.

⁵⁰³ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 259.

⁵⁰⁴ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God's Word*, 150; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 355.

⁵⁰⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 355.

the extemporaneous preacher is that he should keep a full manuscript of his sermons as he will likely not remember the complete sermon contents if he wants to use the same sermon a few years down the road.⁵⁰⁶ With the fuller or manuscript notes and the extemporaneous notes, one may vary the degree to which he reads his notes. With whichever method one uses, how much one uses his notes should go unnoticed and should not hinder the delivery.⁵⁰⁷

Visual Aids

Visual aids refers to using technology to project sermon points, images, or video clips, as well as props used in a sermon.⁵⁰⁸ Some recommend the use of visual media as long as it is “helpful and appropriate.”⁵⁰⁹ Visual media indeed can be very helpful if one takes into account a few caveats. Visual aids should be used only if their use helps explain, illustrate, argue, or apply the sermon. Visual aids may not stand by themselves or be a show. Also, there should be few slides and little content on each slide. Too much content clutters the sermon and may distract the audience from the sermon.⁵¹⁰ Using slides to show limited content means only displaying the sermon’s main points, some limited images, or the Scripture text.⁵¹¹ The preacher should vary his visual aids to not bore the audience.⁵¹²

Though visual aids may be helpful, they are not indispensable and should be used with caution.⁵¹³ Too much media use may disconnect the sermon from the speaker and may

⁵⁰⁶ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 151.

⁵⁰⁷ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 376.

⁵⁰⁸ Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 161; Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 288.

⁵⁰⁹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 345.

⁵¹⁰ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 346; Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 221; McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 207.

⁵¹¹ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 346.

⁵¹² Carter, Duvall, and Hays, *Preaching God’s Word*, 162.

⁵¹³ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 222.

diminish the oral quality of the sermon.⁵¹⁴ One ought to consider the power of the oral description of a situation before displaying an image on a screen. “A stronger appeal to imagination comes with a vividly described scene than with a photograph or painting presented.”⁵¹⁵ There are definite pressures for preachers, to use visual aids in a rapidly changing image and video-bombarded age. Despite that, one ought to carefully think through if and how he will use such technology, lest he ends up using those sermon assistants as “substitutes for preaching.”⁵¹⁶

The Preacher

Who the preacher is as a person is far more important than delivery “techniques.” Preaching as a mere task is not true pastoring. The preacher should express truth with sincerity and tender care for his flock.⁵¹⁷ The preacher’s care for the flock ought to be heard, seen, and felt (1 Thess 3:1–2).⁵¹⁸ Another important aspect of the preacher is that he would have humble courage. The preacher’s courage should not be arrogant, communicated with a tone that one has arrived; rather, it is a humble courage, speaking as a sinner to sinners. It is one that exhibits a fear of God, not a fear of man, by proclaiming God’s Word boldly and courageously as opposed to softening biblical exhortations for fear of man (Acts 20:27).⁵¹⁹

Genuine care for God’s sheep and humble courage should be the fruit of a private walk before God.⁵²⁰ Scripture makes much of the pastor’s personal life (1 Thess 2:7–8; Titus

⁵¹⁴ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 207.

⁵¹⁵ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 208.

⁵¹⁶ Vines and Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, 347.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 152.

⁵¹⁸ Cf. Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 224; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 14.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 299, 320; Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 19.

⁵²⁰ Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 290–92.

2:7; 2 Cor 6:3–4; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 2:15–16). May the preacher’s love for God be seen not just in how he conveys a sermon, but in the daily care for the body.⁵²¹

The Holy Spirit

The preacher cannot change people with his sermons. He is but one who sows and waters (1 Cor 3:6), and God gives the growth. The Spirit regenerates and sanctifies believers (John 3:3; Gal 5:16, 22–23). He gives the power to transform, and preachers just have the privilege of wielding His sword (Eph 6:17).⁵²² If God, in His infinite wisdom, has chosen to save or do a sanctifying work in someone, then and only then will it happen. That may even happen when one feels he has delivered a bad sermon. This truth should drive pastors to their knees, asking God to save and sanctify sinners (2 Thess 3:1; 1 Tim 2:1–4) and asking Him for boldness (Acts 4:29).

Sermon Evaluation Template and Guide

The following sermon evaluation template items were elaborated, along with fuller notes and a brief guide.⁵²³ That has been done based on the above sermon delivery material and on the sermon evaluation templates cited below.

Having established the importance of sermon delivery, something to keep in mind when evaluating is the following: how one uses his voice and the rest of his body in sermon delivery is not as important as, first, the contents of his sermon, and second, his relationship with God and with the church. That should be reflected in the feedback that is given. God’s gospel power saves sinners, not a speech technique (1 Cor 1:18–25).

⁵²¹ Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, 224–25.

⁵²² Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 11.

⁵²³ The guide and fuller notes can be found in Appendix 2.

Delivery Evaluation Template⁵²⁴

1. Varies voice rate, volume, and pitch per sermon content (avoids ums and uhs)⁵²⁵ _____
2. Makes eye contact and has a good posture⁵²⁶ _____
3. Makes gestures and facial expressions that reflect content (avoids quirky mannerisms)⁵²⁷ _____
4. Displays sincere care and humble courage⁵²⁸ _____

Comments:

Overall Sermon

The prior key components of the introduction, body, conclusion, and delivery categories came from preaching book overviews and sermon evaluation templates. This “overall” category is taken more from sermon evaluation templates than from the preaching books, so no key component overview will be made for this category. That is not to say that this section is not in accord with those books; rather, since those books are on preaching, not on sermon evaluations specifically, this part is not a primary category in those books. The point of this category is that after evaluating the sermon as a whole one would reflect on a few summary points that encompass the whole sermon’s evaluation.

⁵²⁴ The full template can be found in Appendix 1.

⁵²⁵ Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 138; Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

⁵²⁶ Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

⁵²⁷ Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

⁵²⁸ Cf. Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 138.

Understood to Apply

All of the sermon explanation purposes to apply the sermon to someone's life.⁵²⁹ So, a good summary question to assess the overall sermon effectiveness is whether or not one understood the Scripture truth that was explained and knows how to apply it to his life.⁵³⁰

Clear and Coherent Progress

Another overall sermon evaluation component is clear and coherent progress.⁵³¹ In essence, the sermon is clear, not cluttered or complicated. The sermon progresses to a climax, as opposed to one with disjointed thoughts, or one that is coherent for the most part of it but strays to unrelated topics.

Length

Particular introduction and conclusion length comments were made above. However, beyond those comments is the question of whether or not the sermon is too long as a whole. Does the sermon feel long? Does the preacher take his audience along with him until the end and quit before his audience's attention does, or does he just keep going though he has lost his audience? Some advocate for twenty-minute sermons, and this author believes that such short sermons seem to diminish God's Word. A range of "35 to 40 minutes" seems more reasonable, and if one can maintain the audience's attention for longer than that, he can

⁵²⁹ Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 191.

⁵³⁰ Cf. Rogers, "Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church," 139.

⁵³¹ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 167; Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 69; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91; Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*, 109.

preach longer.⁵³² Along those lines is the question of if enough time is given to do justice to the passage. Was the essence of the passage clearly and accurately preached?

Strengths and Weaknesses

Distinguishing a couple of strengths and weaknesses from the evaluation is helpful.⁵³³ It helps highlight what the preacher is doing well and needs to keep doing confidently. Then, it points out the most important point or two that he needs to work on. That gives him a focused and manageable item or two to tangibly work on and improve.

Sermon Evaluation Template and Guide

The following sermon evaluation template items were elaborated, along with a brief guide and fuller evaluation notes.⁵³⁴ They were elaborated based on the above material that came from sermon evaluation templates cited below.

Overall Evaluation Template⁵³⁵

1. I know specifically what God said and what I need to do about it.⁵³⁶ _____
2. Made clear and coherent progress⁵³⁷ _____
3. Maintained attention and appropriate overall length⁵³⁸ _____
4. Two strengths:⁵³⁹
5. Two weaknesses:⁵⁴⁰

⁵³² Akin, Curtis, and Rummage, *Engaging Exposition*, 209; contra Millar and Campbell, *Saving Eutychus*, 137.

⁵³³ Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 138; Akin, “Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching,” 8.

⁵³⁴ The guide and fuller notes can be found in Appendix 2.

⁵³⁵ The full template can be found in Appendix 1.

⁵³⁶ Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 139.

⁵³⁷ Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form”; Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 138.

⁵³⁸ Lancaster Seminary, “Sermon Evaluation Form.”

⁵³⁹ Cf. Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 138; Akin, “Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching,” 8.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. Rogers, “Developing a Plan for Sermon Feedback to Evaluate the Expository Preaching of the Pastors of Open Arms Church,” 138; Akin, “Book 2 Sec. 35 Improving and Evaluating Your Preaching,” 8.

Comments:

Chapter IV

SERMON EVALUATION RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Two sermon evaluation groups were conducted using the sermon evaluation template and guide with complementary notes. The participants consisted of a fellowship of men who preach in various like-minded churches in Spain. There were three participants in each group, plus this project's undertaker. One group evaluation was conducted in person with live preaching and a subsequent evaluation. The other group, unable to meet in person due to logistics of travel and distance, met online. That evaluation was conducted with pre-recorded sermons, which were listened to and evaluated prior to gathering. Then the group met for an interactive video conference session in which live feedback was given.

The evaluations were carried out in the following way. Each participant took a turn being evaluated by the other participants, after he preached. Once his evaluation was done, the group moved on to evaluate the next participant. The project director and the other participants of the respective group took turns giving feedback. The participants commented based on the sermon evaluation template. Beyond the comments that were made as they went through the sermon evaluation, a numerical score was also given.

Each of the participants agreed to fill out the pre- and post-evaluation feedback mechanism forms. The forms were anonymous for the participants to respond freely without the concern of their responses being known. Here are the results.

Pre-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism

The pre-evaluation feedback mechanism form asked each participant questions about their recent preaching. *Recent* was defined as over the past few months. The questions were

about the extent to which their preaching did or did not line up with key expository preaching elements. Twenty-one of those questions had four different answer responses: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. One additional question was asked about the feedback mechanism, and it was an open-ended question.¹

Pre-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism Results and Analysis

The summary of the results and the analysis of the results are the following, starting with the sermon introduction questions:

In the introduction, my preaching:

1. Gets attention that connects to the main idea (disagree: 1; agree: 5).
2. Speaks to a need related to the main idea (agree: 5; strongly agree: 1).
3. Raises the subject or the complete biblical main idea (agree: 5; strongly agree: 1).
4. Provides the necessary context (disagree: 1; agree: 4; strongly agree: 1).
5. Previews the sermon and/or transitions well to the sermon body (disagree: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).
6. Reads the sermon Scripture passage (agree: 3; strongly agree: 3).

In the introduction, the sermon evaluation participants mostly perceived that they practiced the introduction key components, as shown by their responses (agree responses: 24; strongly agree responses: 8; disagree responses: 4). The weakest area was the sermon preview, with two disagrees, and the strongest area was the passage reading with three agrees and three strongly agrees. This tallies up to 32 positive responses versus 4 negative responses in the introduction, being an 8:1 ratio.

The results summary and analysis continue with the sermon body:

Over the development of the sermon body, my preaching:

7. Develops ideas that support the main idea, per the text structure and emphasis (disagree: 1; agree: 3; strongly agree: 2).
8. Explains the text clearly and accurately, making it understandable (agree: 5; strongly agree: 1).

¹ For full survey results please see Appendix 6, translated from Spanish.

9. Convinces people to believe the text, answering legitimate questions (agree: 3; strongly agree: 3).
10. Illustrates to help see the text's explanation, argumentation, and/or application (agree: 3; strongly agree: 3).
11. Applies the text to real-life situations in a specific and detailed way (agree: 4; strongly agree: 2).
12. Expounds theological truths within the confines of expository preaching (agree: 4; strongly agree: 2).
13. Relates the text to the biblical storyline (strongly disagree: 1; agree: 4; strongly agree: 1).
14. Teaches Christ's gospel to unbelievers and believers (agree: 3; strongly agree: 3).
15. Uses transitions to indicate movement between points (disagree: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).

With regard to the sermon body, the participants also considered that they generally implemented key elements of expository preaching well, as shown by their responses (strongly disagree responses: 1 disagree responses: 3; agree responses: 31; strongly agree responses: 19). The weakest area was the sermon transitions, with two disagrees. Several areas were similarly esteemed to be strong: explanation, argumentation, illustration, application, theology, and gospel. The total positive responses are 50 and the negative ones are 4, giving a 12.5:1 ratio.

Next are the conclusion results summary and analysis:

In the sermon conclusion, my preaching:

16. Summarizes the main points and restates the main idea (disagree: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).
17. Climactically applies/appeals (agree: 3; strongly agree: 3).

In the conclusion, the overall conclusion responses were esteemed as very good (disagree responses: 2; agree responses: 5; strongly agree responses: 5). The participants opined that their conclusion contents fulfilled expository preaching key elements, with the climactic appeal responses all being positive. However, the summary and main idea restatement part was only two-thirds favorable. That being said, the total positive responses were 10, while the negative are 2, which means the ratio is 5:1.

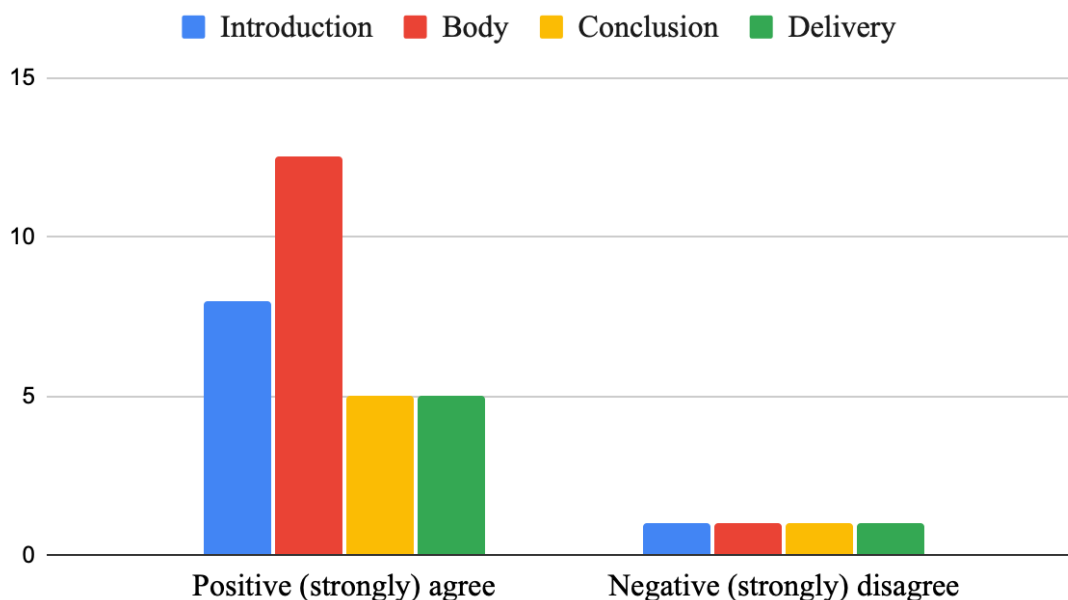
Subsequently, the sermon delivery results summary and analysis are:

In my sermon delivery, I:

18. Vary voice rate, volume, and pitch, per sermon content, and avoid “ums” and “uhs” (disagree: 2; agree: 3; strongly agree: 1).
19. Make eye contact and have a good posture (agree: 4; strongly agree: 2).
20. Have gestures and make facial expressions that reflect content, and avoid quirky mannerisms (disagree: 2; agree: 4).
21. Display sincere care and humble courage (agree: 4; strongly agree: 2).

The participants’ sermon deliveries were also esteemed to be favorably executed. The summary responses were the following: disagree responses: 4; agree responses: 15; strongly agree responses: 5. The two weaker delivery components were the voice and gesture ones, each having two disagree responses. The two stronger delivery components were eye contact and posture, and care and courage, with only positive responses. The total positive responses were 20, while the negative ones were 4. That gives a ratio of 5:1.

Pre-Evaluation Actual Ratios



In sum, the feedback mechanism before the preaching evaluation revealed that the participants perceived that their preaching efforts generally reflect what expository preaching

should reflect. There are some points to be improved upon, but answers were mostly positive, again as demonstrated by the respective ratios: 8:1, 12.5:1, 5:1, and 5:1.

Lastly, the open-ended question result summary and analysis is:

22. Do you think that this feedback mechanism could be improved, if so, how?

In addition to the actual preaching questions, this question was about the feedback mechanism. A selective summary of the answers is the following: one answer lauded the questionnaire; another answer suggested adding a question about preaching time; and another one suggested a different range of answer possibilities like never, infrequently, frequently, and always. The gist of the answers was that except for the few suggestions, the feedback mechanism was well-executed and did accurately reflect the expository preaching.

Post-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism

The post-evaluation feedback mechanism form asked each participant questions about how the sermon evaluation feedback impacted their preaching efficacy. The questions about the extent to which their preaching was improved or not were questions about key expository preaching elements. Twenty-five questions were asked about how the preaching evaluation impacted their preaching efficacy. The first twenty-one of those twenty-five questions had the following five different answer responses: strongly disagree, disagree, not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation), agree, and strongly agree. The last four questions had the same possible answers except for the *not applicable* option. In addition to those questions, there were four other questions, one about the received feedback competency, one

about the time one had been preaching, and two open-ended questions about the utility of the sermon evaluation and if the feedback form could be improved upon.²

Post-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism Results and Analysis

The summary of the results and their analysis of the results are the following, starting with the sermon introduction:

In the introduction, the evaluation helped my preaching:

1. Get attention that connects to the main idea (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 3; agree: 3).
2. Speak to a need related to the main idea (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).
1. Raise the subject or the complete biblical main idea (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 1; agree: 5).
4. Provide the necessary context (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 1; agree: 3; strongly agree: 2).
5. Preview the sermon and/or transition well to the sermon body (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 1; agree: 2; strongly agree: 3).
6. In the reading of the sermon Scripture passage (disagree: 1; not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 2; strongly agree: 3).

The overall introduction sermon evaluation feedback was deemed very helpful by the participants as indicated by the following responses: agree: 15; strongly agree: 10. Several answers were not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation: 10), and one was negative (disagree: 1). Overall, 25 (69%) answers were positive, 10 (28%) were neutral/non-applicable, and 1 (3%) was negative. The ratio of positive to non-applicable and negative answers is 2.27:1.

The results summary and analysis continue with the sermon body:

Over the development of the sermon body, the evaluation enhanced my preaching for it to:

7. Develop ideas that support the main idea, per the text structure and emphasis (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 3; agree, 1; strongly agree, 2).
8. Explain the text clearly and accurately, making it understandable (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 2; agree, 2; strongly agree, 2).

² For the full survey results, please go to Appendix 7, translated from Spanish.

9. Convince people to believe the text, answering legitimate questions (agree 3; strongly agree 3).
10. Illustrate to help see the text's explanation, argumentation, and/or application (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 2; agree, 2; strongly agree, 2).
11. Apply the text to real-life situations in a specific and detailed way (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 1; strongly agree, 5).
12. Expound theological truths within the confines of expositional preaching (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 1; agree, 2; strongly agree, 3).
13. Relate the text to the biblical storyline (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 2; agree, 2; strongly agree, 2).
14. Teach Christ's gospel to unbelievers and believers (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 3; agree, 1; strongly agree, 2).
15. Use transitions to indicate movement between points (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation], 1; agree, 2; strongly agree, 3).

The sermon body part of the evaluation was deemed very beneficial by the participants. The results were the following: not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 15; agree: 15; and strongly agree: 24. Therefore, 39 (72%) of the answers were positive, 15 (28%) were neutral/non-applicable, and none (0%) were negative. The ratio of positive to non-applicable answers is 2.6:1.

Next are the conclusion results summary and analysis:

In the sermon conclusion, the evaluation bettered my preaching for it to:

16. Summarize the main points and restate the main idea (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 1; agree: 3; strongly agree: 2).
17. Climactically apply/appeal (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).

The conclusion part of the sermon evaluation was seen as valuable by the participants. The answers were the following: not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 3; agree: 5; and strongly agree: 4. There were 9 (75%) positive answers, and 3 (25%) neutral/non-applicable answers. The ratio of positive to non-applicable answers is 3:1.

Then, the sermon delivery results summary and analysis are:

The evaluation helped my sermon delivery to:

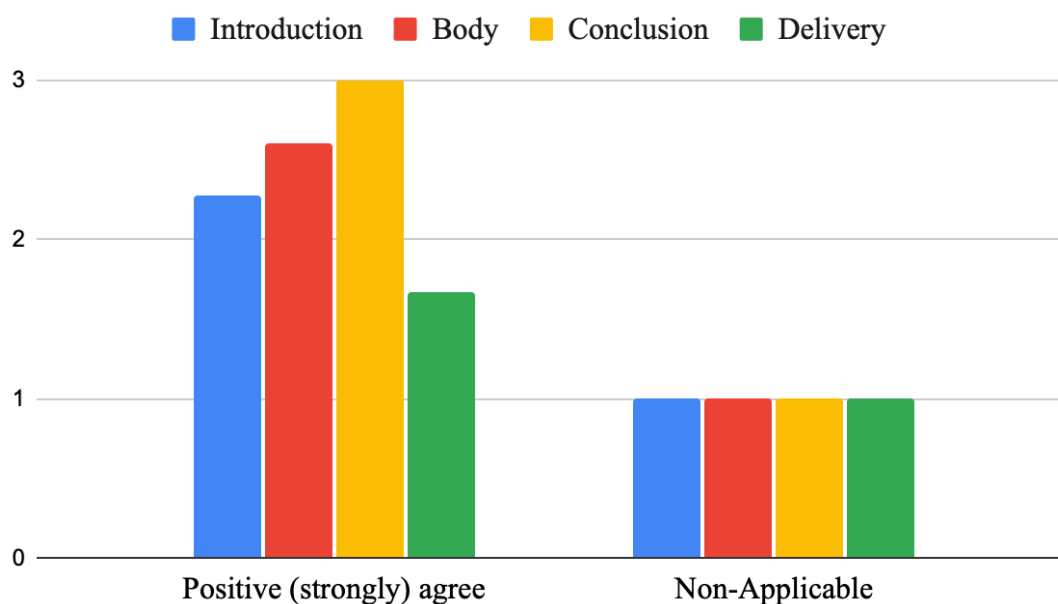
18. Vary voice rate, volume, and pitch, per sermon content, and avoid "ums" and "uhs" (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).

19. Make eye contact and have a good posture (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).
20. Gesture and make facial expressions that reflect content, and avoid quirky mannerisms (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 2; agree: 2; strongly agree: 2).
21. Display sincere care and humble courage (not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 3; agree: 2; strongly agree: 1).

The sermon delivery evaluation also was deemed useful by the participants. The results were the following: not applicable [I already did that before the evaluation]: 9; agree: 8; and strongly agree: 7. There were 15 (63%) positive answers and 9 (37%) neutral/non-applicable answers.

Beyond the mere benefit of the sermon evaluation, it is interesting to compare the pre-evaluation feedback mechanism and the post-evaluation feedback mechanism, as their results are revealing. The pre-evaluation ratios of the preacher's actual preaching indicate that their perspective of their preaching is generally good, with some aspects that can be improved (8:1, introduction; 12.5:1, body; conclusion, 5:1; and 5:1, delivery). Therefore, one would expect the post-evaluation results to correspond to those results, reflecting little benefit from a sermon evaluation. Nevertheless, the post-sermon evaluation improvement ratios show that there is a benefit in the evaluation (2.27:1, introduction; 2.6:1, body; 3:1, conclusion; and 1.67:1, delivery). Those ratio results indicate more positive responses than not-applicable ones, meaning there is an overall benefit from the evaluation. One would expect the post-evaluation's not-applicable responses and ratio to dominate, so as to correspond to the preachers' strong sense of execution in their pre-evaluation results. In sum, this does not mean that the preachers did not know how to preach as well as they thought they did, though that could be the case. The very least that these results do indicate is that even if the participants know how to preach well, they still found the sermon evaluation to be beneficial.

Post-Evaluation Improvement Ratios



Another way to look at the results is the following: The different parts of the sermon evaluation (introduction, body, delivery, conclusion, and overall questions) demonstrated that the participants profited from the sermon evaluation. Again, their respective positive results were 69%, 72%, 75%, 63%, and 100%. There only was one negative answer in the introduction. The rest of the answers were non-applicable in that the preachers thought they already practiced that area of preaching, with the respective results being 28%, 28%, 25%, and 37%.

The overall preaching delivery results summary and analysis are:

The evaluation made me more aware of my overall preaching in:

22. Making people know specifically what God said and what they need to do about it (agree, 4; strongly agree, 2).

23. Being clear and having coherent progress (agree, 5; strongly agree, 1).

24. Maintaining attention: having an appropriate introduction and overall length (agree, 3; strongly agree, 3).

25. Knowing my key strengths and weaknesses (agree, 3; strongly agree, 3).

The sermon evaluation overall questions also showed the participants found the evaluation to be valuable (agree, 15; strongly agree, 9). All of the answers were positive.

Lastly, the other questions' section result summary and analysis are:

Other questions:

26. The feedback I received was competent (agree, 4; strongly agree, 2).

27. Do think that this feedback mechanism could be improved, and if so, how (maximum 500 words)?

Here is a summary of the three answers for this question. One answer said no. Another answer suggested a further question on interspersed application would help. A third answer commented that for preachers, the sermon evaluation is good, but that if it is used for those who are learning to preach, it would not work. Those who are learning should do this evaluation with a professor in order to have adequate feedback.

28. Was the sermon evaluation helpful, and if so, how (maximum 500 words)?

There were five answers given, and here is a select summary of those answers. The answers varied between comments affirmed the helpfulness of the evaluation, despite already knowing some strengths and weaknesses based on past feedback, and comments that only spoke of the importance and necessity of this exercise.

29. I have been preaching for (0–5 years, 1; 6–10 years, 4; 11–20 years, 1; 20+ years). Of the six participants, one has been preaching for 0–5 years, four for 6–10 years, and one for 11–20 years.

A few comments should be made about the answers concerning the “other questions” of the sermon evaluation. The feedback was esteemed to be valuable. With regard to the question about if the feedback mechanism could be improved, there were a few minor comments that were made. Lastly, question 28 asked about whether or not the sermon evaluation was helpful. The participants could express their answer in words instead of just checking a box. The answers to that question corroborated the rest of the results, indicating that such a sermon evaluation was indeed helpful.

Conclusion

In sum, the pre-evaluation feedback mechanism indicated that, for the most part, the men understood how to preach. Nonetheless, the participants also saw much benefit in doing the sermon evaluation. These results affirm this project's thesis: sermon evaluations, as

described in this project, generally will benefit one who preaches God's Word. They will help him preach better and bless the church. May it be so to God's glory!

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

Chapter one declared a thesis: sermon evaluations improve preaching. The implication of the thesis is that as ministers of God's Word, preachers should want to better their preaching or the edification of the church and for God's glory, and therefore, should participate in sermon evaluations.

Chapter two, in which biblical foundations supporting sermon evaluations were delineated, focused on a particular kind of sermon evaluation. The project's thesis defended the benefit of evaluations between men who preach. Those evaluations can take place between seasoned preachers who sharpen one another and between seasoned and novice preachers, in which there is a counselor to counselee relationship. The manner of evaluation has to be constructive criticism given in love and received in humility. Therefore, the type of sermon evaluations that are purported to benefit preaching are those by qualified men, given in love and received in humility.

Chapter three gave the basis for sermon evaluations. The basis for the evaluations was established via sermon key components for the introduction, body, conclusion, delivery, and the overall sermon. The sermon evaluation template and its guide and fuller notes were taken directly from chapter three's key components.

Chapter four set forth results and analysis of the sermon evaluations. Those were carried out with a group of men who preach, and that group was divided into two control groups. Prior to the sermon evaluation, the participants filled out the pre-evaluation feedback mechanism form, and after it, they filled out the post-evaluation feedback mechanism form.

The pre-evaluation feedback mechanism results indicated that the preachers thought they understood how to preach, with some limited exceptions. The post-evaluation feedback mechanism form results showed that the men found the preaching evaluation to be very beneficial. The results also showed that some of the preaching evaluation components did not apply to them in the sense that they already knew how to preach, so the evaluation did not impact them in that area.

In sum, though the men know how to preach, they found much benefit from the sermon evaluation. The results confirm the project's thesis: this kind of sermon evaluation improves preaching.

APPENDIX 1

Sermon Evaluation Template

Fill in the blank from 1–4 (1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 agree; 4 strongly agree)

Introduction:

1. Gets attention that connects to the main idea _____
2. Speaks to a need related to the main idea _____
3. Addresses the subject or the complete biblical main idea _____
4. Provides the necessary context _____
5. Previews or transitions well to the sermon body _____
6. Reads Scripture _____

Comments:

Body:

1. Develops ideas that support the main idea, per the text structure and emphasis _____
2. Explains the text clearly and accurately, making it understandable _____
3. Convinces to believe the text, answering legitimate questions _____
4. Illustrates to help see the text's explanation, argumentation, and/or application _____
5. Applies the text to real-life situations in a specific and detailed way _____
6. Expounds theological truths within the confines of expositional preaching _____
7. Relates the text to the biblical storyline _____
8. Teaches Christ's gospel to unbelievers and believers _____
9. Transitions to indicate movement between points _____

Comments:

Conclusion:

1. Summarizes the main points and restates the main idea _____
2. Applies/appeals climactically to obey the text _____

Comments:

Delivery:

1. Varies voice rate, volume, and pitch per sermon content (avoids *ums* and *uhs*) _____
2. Makes eye contact and has a good posture _____
3. Makes gestures and facial expressions that reflect content (avoids quirky mannerisms) _____

4. Displays sincere care and humble courage _____

Comments:

Overall:

- 1. I know specifically what God said and what I need to do about it. _____
- 2. Made clear and coherent progress _____
- 3. Maintained attention; appropriate introduction and overall length _____
- 4. Two strengths:
- 5. Two weakness:

Comments:

APPENDIX 2

Sermon Evaluation Guide and Fuller Notes

Sermon Evaluation Guide

Gather with pastors from other churches (and/or from your church) to conduct sermon evaluations. Ideally, gather between 3 to 7 pastors. Gather so that your sermons are evaluated once every 6 to 12 weeks (though, initially or in particular training circumstances, gathering more often may be best for a time). The evaluated sermon should reflect the preacher's regular and recent preaching.

The evaluation takes place after listening to the preaching. Having evaluated the sermon using the sermon template, and fuller notes if necessary, constructive feedback is given by the preachers who evaluated to the one who preached. In evaluating the sermon, the preachers take turns and rotate from preacher to evaluator for all to evaluate and be evaluated. May the feedback be truth spoken in love for the building up of each other.

Sermon Evaluation Fuller Notes

Introduction

1. Gets attention that connects to the main idea. The attention grabber is not meant to be sensational. It is a tool to get the audience's attention in such a way that guides them to the heart of the passage, the main idea.
2. Speaks to a need related to the main idea. The need reflects humanity's fallen condition and is the one found at the heart of the particular passage.
3. Addresses the subject or the complete main idea. The main idea reflects the original text and successfully crosses the interpretive river to the contemporary audience. It applies the text to the hearers and ideally is memorable.
4. Provides the necessary context. The context is succinct and only provides information that is relevant to the sermon body.
5. Previews or transitions well to the sermon body. The preview or transition bridges the introduction and sermon body in such a way that the audience is not lost but is tracking with the speaker.
6. Reads Scripture. The Scripture passage is announced a few times for the audience to be at the passage with the speaker and then appropriately read.

Body

1. Develops ideas that support the main idea, following the text structure and emphasis. The developmental ideas are developed in unity, presenting the sermon as a whole, reflecting the passage's progression, and treating each textual idea proportionately.
2. Explains the text clearly and accurately, making it understandable. The other functional elements are servants of explanation. Explanation reflects the structure and emphasis of the text. Explaining the text includes showing where one is in it as he progresses.
3. Convinces the listener to believe the text, answering legitimate questions. Whatever is proved, God's Word remains the final authority.

4. Illustrates to help the audience see the text's explanation, argumentation, and/or application. The illustrations do not stand by themselves. The best illustrations are real-life stories but also can be analogies.
5. Applies the text to specific and detailed, real-life situations to show and call upon the audience to act on the truth. Application impacts the heart and behavior and impacts the entire audience.
6. Expounds theological truths within the confines of expositional preaching. Key theological doctrines in the text are dealt with in a manner consistent with biblical doctrine and in a way that the sermon does not lose the expositional unity.
7. Relates the text to the biblical storyline. The sermon is not isolated but is related appropriately, per the passage and broader context, to the bigger picture of God's glory and Kingdom with Jesus at the center of God's Kingdom.
8. Teaches Christ's gospel to unbelievers and believers. Sermons are not moralistic, merely appealing to "do this and don't do that." They are grounded in the gospel and take into account that salvation, including conversion, sanctification, and glorification, is by grace alone.
9. Transitions to indicate movement between points. The audience is taken along and not left behind.

Conclusion

1. Summarizes the main points and restates the main idea. The summary looks back at the main points of the sermon by briefly stating keywords or thoughts and drives home the main idea of the sermon again.
2. Applies/appeals climactically to obey the text. The conclusion makes a final appeal for the audience to obey God's Word. They know what to do with it; they know how to respond to it tangibly.

Delivery

1. Varies voice rate, volume, and pitch per sermon content. The preacher varies his voice to emphasize key sermon content. He is not monotone, and he avoids pausing his speech with *ums* and *uhs*.
2. Makes eye contact and has good posture. Though he may occasionally look at his notes, he makes much eye contact with the entire audience. His posture is effective for speaking and shows comfort and confidence.
3. Makes gestures and facial expressions that reflect content (avoids quirky mannerisms). Though his base posture is standing behind the pulpit with hands to his side, intentional gestures are made to highlight key passage content and to make transitions, as needed. Base facial expressions show pastoral care and are not stern or superficially happy. They are varied in such a way that matches the text.
4. Displays sincere care and shows humble courage. The pastor expresses truth in a caring and sincere way, not in a pharisaical way. When challenging the audience, he does not shrink back from declaring all of God's Word, and he declares it with humility, not arrogance.

Overall

1. I know specifically what God said and what I need to do about it. In other words, I understood the text explanation from God's inspired Word, and I understand how it specifically applies to my life.
2. Made clear and coherent progress. The sermon was clear, not cluttered or complicated. The sermon sounded like one sermon that progressed to a climax as opposed to disjointed thoughts.
3. Maintained attention and appropriate overall length. The passage was explicated enough to do justice to it, and the sermon was not too long.
4. Two strengths. The idea here is to highlight what the preacher has done well and needs to keep doing confidently.
5. Two weaknesses. The idea here is to point out a couple of the most important matters that the preacher needs to work on.

APPENDIX 1 (SPANISH)

Plantilla de Evaluación de Predicación

Rellenar los espacios en blanco 1–4 (1 en fuerte desacuerdo; 2 en desacuerdo; 3 de acuerdo; 4 muy de acuerdo)

Introducción:

1. Obtiene la atención de manera que conecta con la idea principal _____
2. Habla de una necesidad relacionada con la idea principal _____
3. Plantea el tema o la idea principal completa _____
4. Proporciona el contexto necesario _____
5. Da vista previa o transiciona bien al cuerpo del sermón _____
6. Lee las Escrituras _____

Comentarios:

Cuerpo:

1. Desarrolla ideas que apoyan la idea principal, y siguen la estructura y el énfasis del texto _____
2. Explica el texto de forma clara y precisa, haciéndolo comprensible _____
3. Convence a creer el texto, contestando a preguntas legítimas _____
4. Ilustra para entender la explicación, argumentación y/o aplicación del texto _____
5. Aplica el texto a situaciones específicas y detalladas de la vida diaria _____
6. Expone las verdades teológicas dentro de los límites de la predicación expositiva _____
7. Relaciona el texto con la historia bíblica _____
8. Enseña el evangelio de Cristo a incrédulos y creyentes _____
9. Hace transiciones que señalan movimiento entre puntos _____

Comentarios:

Conclusión:

1. Resume los puntos principales y reafirma la idea principal _____
2. Aplica/apela de manera climática _____

Comentarios:

Presentación:

1. Varía la velocidad de la voz, el volumen y el tono, según el contenido del sermón y evita decir *mmm* y *eeh* _____

2. Tiene contacto visual y tiene buena postura _____
3. Hace gestos y expresiones faciales que reflejan el contenido y evita gestos peculiares _____
4. Demuestra preocupación sincera y valor humilde _____

Comentarios:

En General:

1. Sé específicamente lo que Dios dijo y lo que necesito hacer al respecto _____
2. Hubo un progreso claro y coherente _____
3. Atención mantenida y duración total adecuada _____
4. Dos puntos fuertes:
5. Dos debilidades:

Comentarios:

APPENDIX 2 (SPANISH)

Guía de Evaluación de Sermones y Notas Complementarias

Guía de Evaluación de Sermones

Reúnete para realizar evaluaciones de sermones con pastores de otras iglesias (y/o de tu propia iglesia). Lo ideal es reunir entre 3 y 7 pastores. Reuníos para que vuestros sermones sean evaluados una vez cada 6 a 12 semanas (aunque inicialmente o en circunstancias particulares de capacitación, reunirse con más frecuencia puede ser mejor por un tiempo). El sermón evaluado debe reflejar la predicación regular y reciente del predicador.

La evaluación se realiza después de escuchar la predicación. Después de evaluar el sermón usando la plantilla de sermón, y notas más completas si es necesario, los predicadores que evaluaron brindan *feedback* constructivo al que predicó. Al evaluar el sermón, los predicadores se turnan y rotan de predicador a evaluador para que todos evalúen y sean evaluados. Que los comentarios sean la verdad dicha con amor, para la edificación mutua.

Notas Complementarias Sobre la Evaluación del Sermón

Introducción

1. Obtiene la atención de manera que conecta con la idea principal. El captador de atención no pretende ser sensacional. Es una herramienta para captar la atención de la audiencia de tal manera que la guíe al corazón del pasaje, la idea principal.
2. Habla de una necesidad relacionada con la idea principal. La necesidad refleja la condición caída de la humanidad abordada; la necesidad particular abordada es la que está en el corazón de cada pasaje en particular.
3. Plantea el tema o la idea principal completa. La idea principal refleja el texto original y cruza bien el río interpretativo hacia la audiencia contemporánea. Aplica el texto a los oyentes e idealmente es fácil de recordar.
4. Proporciona el contexto necesario. El contexto es conciso y sólo proporciona información relevante para el cuerpo del sermón.
5. Da vista previa o transiciona bien al cuerpo del sermón. La vista previa o transición une la introducción y el cuerpo del sermón de tal manera que la audiencia no se pierde, sino que sigue al orador.
6. Lee las Escrituras. El pasaje de las Escrituras se anuncia varias veces para que la audiencia esté en línea al orador, y luego se lee apropiadamente.

Cuerpo

1. Desarrolla ideas que apoyan la idea principal, y siguen la estructura y el énfasis del texto. Las ideas se desarrollan en unidad, presentando el sermón como un todo, reflejando la progresión del pasaje y también tratando cada idea de manera proporcional.
2. Explica el texto de forma clara y precisa, haciéndolo comprensible. Los demás elementos funcionales sirven de explicación. La explicación refleja la estructura y el énfasis del texto. Explicar el texto incluye mostrar dónde se encuentra en él a medida que avanza.
3. Convince a creer el texto, contestando a preguntas legítimas. Cualquier cosa que se argumente se hace de manera que la Palabra de Dios sigue siendo la autoridad final.

4. Las ilustraciones ayudan a entender la explicación, argumentación y/o aplicación del texto, y no son independientes a estas. Las mejores ilustraciones son historias de la vida diaria, pero también pueden haber analogías.
5. Aplica el texto a situaciones específicas y detalladas de la vida diaria, mostrando y pidiendo a la audiencia que actúe según dicta la Palabra. La aplicación impacta el corazón y el comportamiento, e impacta a toda la audiencia.
6. Expone las verdades teológicas dentro de los límites la predicación expositiva. Las doctrinas teológicas clave en el texto se tratan de manera consistente con la doctrina bíblica y de manera que la predicación no deja de ser expositiva.
7. Relaciona el texto con la historia bíblica. El sermón no está aislado, sino que está relacionado apropiadamente según el pasaje y el contexto más amplio, con el panorama más amplio de la gloria y el reino de Dios, y con Jesús en el centro del reino de Dios.
8. Enseña el evangelio de Cristo a incrédulos y creyentes. Las predicaciones no son moralistas, simplemente apelando a hacer esto y no hacer aquello. Se basan en el evangelio y tienen en cuenta que la salvación entera (la conversión, santificación y glorificación), es únicamente por gracia.
9. Hace transiciones que señalan movimiento entre puntos. Los oidores siguen al predicador y no se quedan atrás.

Conclusión

1. Resume los puntos principales y reafirma la idea principal. El resumen analiza los puntos principales, comentando brevemente palabras o pensamientos claves y resalta nuevamente la idea principal del sermón.
2. Aplica/apela de manera climática. La conclusión hace un llamado final a la audiencia a obedecer la palabra de Dios. Saben qué hacer con la predicación; saben cómo responder a ella de una manera tangible.

Presentación

1. Varía la velocidad de la voz, el volumen y el tono, según el contenido del sermón. El predicador varía su voz para enfatizar el contenido clave del sermón. No es monótono y evita pausar su discurso con los *mmm* y *eeh*.
2. Tiene contacto visual y tiene buena postura. Aunque ocasionalmente mira sus notas, tiene mucho contacto visual con toda la audiencia. Su postura es eficaz para hablar y muestra comodidad y confianza.
3. Hace gestos y expresiones faciales que reflejan el contenido y evita a los gestos peculiares. Aunque la postura básica que tiene es estar detrás del púlpito con las manos a sus lados, se hacen gestos intencionales para resaltar el contenido clave del pasaje y hacer transiciones, según sea necesario. Las expresiones faciales básicas muestran cuidado pastoral, no son severas ni superficialmente felices. Se varían de tal manera que coincidan con el texto.
4. Demuestra preocupación sincera y valor humilde. El pastor expresa la verdad de una manera afectuosa y sincera, no de manera farisaica. Cuando exhorta a la audiencia, no duda en declarar toda la Palabra de Dios, y la declara con humildad, no con arrogancia.

En General

1. Sé específicamente lo que Dios dijo y lo que necesito hacer al respecto. En otras palabras, entendí la explicación del texto de la Palabra inspirada por Dios y entiendo cómo se aplica específicamente a mi vida.
2. Hubo un progreso claro y coherente. El sermón fue claro, no confuso ni complicado. El sermón progresó en unidad hasta un clímax, no consistió de pensamientos inconexos.
3. Atención mantenida y duración total adecuada. El pasaje fue suficientemente expuesto para hacer justicia al mismo, y el mensaje no fue demasiado largo para el ello.
4. Dos puntos fuertes. La idea aquí es resaltar lo que el predicador ha hecho bien y necesita seguir haciendo con confianza.
5. Dos debilidades. La idea aquí es señalar uno o dos asuntos importantes en los que el predicador necesita mejorar.

APPENDIX 3

Functional Elements Key Components					
Authors	KC 1	KC 2	KC 2	KC 4	KC 5
Robinson	explanation	argumentation	application	illustration	restate
Sunukjian	explanation	argumentation	application	illustration	
Vines and Shaddix	explanation	argumentation	application	illustration	
Richard	explanation	argumentation	application	illustration	
Merida	explanation	<i>argumentation</i>	application	illustration	
Akin, Curtis, and Rummage	explanation		application	illustration	
Chapell	explanation	<i>argumentation</i>	application	illustration	
Broadus	explanation	argumentation	application	illustration	
Stott	explanation	argumentation	application	illustration	
McDill	explanation	argumentation	application	illustration	
Carter, Duvall, and Hays	explanation	<i>argumentation</i>	application	illustration	

Chart notes

The writing in italics indicates that the author considers the component to be part of another category, either of explanation or application.

The writing in bold indicates that the component is not taken as a functional element, but as support material to the elements.

APPENDIX 4

Conclusion Key Components							
	KC 1	KC 2	KC 2	KC 4	KC 5	KC 6	KC 7
Authors	summary	application/appeal	climax				
Robinson	summary	application/appeal	climax				
Sunukjian	summary	application/appeal	climax				
Vines and Shaddix	summary	application/appeal	climax	cohesion			
Richard	summary	application/appeal	climax				
Merida	summary	application/appeal	climax				
Akin, Curtis, and Rummage	summary	application/appeal	climax	cohesion	brief	fits the message	prepared
Chapell	summary	application/appeal	climax	termination			
Broadus	summary	application/appeal	climax	specific	length	final words	prepared
Stott	summary	application/appeal	climax	pray			
Chart note							
Akin, Curtis, and Rummage also include clear, good timing, element of surprise, appeal to real and specific people, and flows out of the body of your message.							

APPENDIX 5.0

Delivery Voice Key Components					
Authors	KC 1	KC 2	KC 3	KC 4	KC 5
Fasol	pitch	pitch/inflection	volume	rate	rate/pace
Vines and Shaddix	pitch	inflection	volume	rate	pace
Merida	pitch	inflection	volume	rate	pace
Akin, Curtis, and Rummage	pitch	inflection	volume	rate	rate/pace
Broadus	pitch		volume		
Carter, Duvall, and Hays	pitch		volume	pace/rate	pace
Chapell	variety/pitch		volume	variety/rate	
Robinson	pitch	pitch/inflection	loudness or punch	progress or rate	
Richard	pitch	pitch/inflection	volume	rate or speed	

Chart note

Where the forward slash (/) is used, the first word is the broader category under which the second item is treated. Akin, Curtis, and Rummage also include vocal quality, unnecessary words and sounds, and being expressive. Robinson's rehearsal and feedback are not in the chart as they are post and pre-delivery.

Delivery Voice Key Components (continued)					
KC 6	KC 7	KC 8	KC 9	KC 10	KC 11
pauses					
pauses	stress	phrasing			
pauses	stress				
rate/pause	volume, pitch/emphasis	enunciation and pronunciation			
			melody	penetrating power	
		articulation			
	intensity				
pause					
rate/pause		articulation and pronunciation			quality

APPENDIX 5.1

Delivery Body Key Components						
Authors	KC 1	KC 2	KC 2	KC 4	KC 5	KC 6
Fasol	eye contact	facial expressions	posture	gestures		
Vines and Shaddix	eye contact	facial expressions	posture	gestures	mobility	
Merida	eye contact	facial expressions	posture	gestures	posture/movement	
Akin, Curtis, and Rummage	eye contact	facial expressions	posture	gestures	movement	
Broadus	countenance	countenance	posture	gestures		
Carter, Duvall, and Hays	look	face		hands and feet		
Chapell	eye contact	facial expressions	posture	hand gestures	posture/movement	
Robinson	eye contact			gestures	movement	
Richard	face/eye contact	face		gestures		

Chart note

Fasol also includes personal appearance, first impressions, and walking into the pulpit.

Chapell also has a category called include everyone.

Robinson also includes groom and dress.

Carter, Duvall, and Hays also include animated.

APPENDIX 6 (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)

Pre-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism Results

Gets attention that connects to the main idea
agree
agree
disagree
agree
agree
agree
Speaks to a need related to the main idea
agree
strongly agree
agree
agree
agree
agree
Raises the subject or the complete biblical main idea
agree
agree
disagree
agree
agree
agree
Provides the necessary context
agree
strongly agree
agree
agree
agree
disagree
Previews the sermon and/or transitions well to the sermon body
disagree
agree
disagree
agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Reads the sermon Scripture passage

agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Develops ideas that support the main idea, per the text structure and emphasis

disagree

agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Explains the text clearly and accurately, making it understandable

agree

agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

agree

Convinces people to believe the text, answering legitimate questions

strongly agree

agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Illustrates to help see the text's explanation, argumentation, and/or application

agree

strongly agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Applies the text to real-life situations in a specific and detailed way

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

agree

Expounds theological truths within the confines of expositional preaching

agree

agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Relates the text to the biblical storyline

strongly disagree

agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

agree

Teaches Christ's gospel to unbelievers and believers

agree

strongly agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

agree

Uses transitions to indicate movement between points

disagree

disagree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Summarizes the main points and restates the main idea

disagree

disagree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Climactically applies/appeals

agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

Vary voice rate, volume, and pitch, per sermon content, and avoid “ums” and “uhs.”

agree

agree

disagree

disagree

strongly agree

agree

Have gestures and make facial expressions that reflect content, and avoid quirky mannerisms

agree

strongly agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

agree

Display sincere care and humble courage

agree

agree

agree

disagree

agree

disagree

Demuestro preocupación sincera y valor humilde

agree

strongly agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

agree

Do you think that this feedback mechanism could be improved, and if so, how (máximo 500 words)?

- Maybe you could ask something about the language and terminology used, and its being simple and understandable to the listener. Perhaps you could ask a question about whether the preaching time is appropriate for the exposition of the text and for the audience. I see the rest as very good for analyzing the act of preaching.

- I think it would be clearer if the feedback mechanism forms would use a word like "usual" (not at all usual, unusual, usually, very usual) or some similar word (often, frequently, etc). I say this because agreeing puts me in conflict with the questions. For example: Do you use transitions between points? I totally agree that it is necessary, but I don't do it regularly, or "not very often, or "infrequently."

- One thing specifically is concerning the second question about the conclusions. "Apply climatically" I get intuitively, but I don't know 100% what it means. Perhaps for those who preach but have not prepared at the seminary level it is difficult to understand.

- It is a very good tool for preachers who seek or try to preach as well as they can, as this tool asks questions about the preacher and his sermon.

APPENDIX 6

Pre-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism Results

Obtiene la atención de manera que conecta con la idea principal

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

en desacuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

Habla de una necesidad relacionada con la idea principal
--

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

Plantea el tema o la idea principal bíblica completa
--

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

en desacuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

Proporciona el contexto necesario

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

en desacuerdo

Da una vista previa del sermón y/o hace una buena transición al cuerpo del sermón

en desacuerdo

de acuerdo

en desacuerdo

de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo

Lee adecuadamente el pasaje bíblico del sermón

de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo

Desarrolla ideas que apoyan la idea principal, según la estructura y el énfasis del texto

en desacuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo

Explica el texto de forma clara y precisa, haciéndolo comprensible

de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
de acuerdo

Convince a las personas a creer el texto, respondiendo a preguntas legítimas

muy de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo

Ilustra para ayudar a ver la explicación, argumentación y/o aplicación del texto

de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo

Aplica el texto a situaciones de la vida real de forma específica y detallada

de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
de acuerdo

Expone verdades teológicas dentro de los límites de la predicación expositiva

de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo

Relaciona el texto con la historia bíblica

muy en desacuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
de acuerdo

Enseña el evangelio de Cristo a incrédulos y creyentes

de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
de acuerdo

Utiliza transiciones para señalar movimiento entre puntos

en desacuerdo
en desacuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo
muy de acuerdo

Resume los puntos principales y reafirma la idea principal

en desacuerdo
en desacuerdo
de acuerdo
de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

Aplica/apela climáticamente

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

Vario la velocidad, el volumen y el tono de la voz según el contenido del sermón y evito decir “mmm” y “eeh”

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

en desacuerdo

en desacuerdo

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

Tengo contacto visual y tengo una buena postura

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

Hago gestos y expresiones faciales que reflejan el contenido y evito gestos peculiares

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

en desacuerdo

de acuerdo

en desacuerdo

Demuestro preocupación sincera y valor humilde

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

¿Crees que esta herramienta de *feedback* podría ser mejorada? En caso afirmativo, ¿cómo (máximo 500 palabras)?

- Quizas podria preguntar algo sobre el lenguaje y la terminología que se utiliza si es simple y comprensible al oyente.... (No recuerdo que haya una pregunta sobre eso)
O alguna pregunta sobre si el tiempo de predicación es adecuado para la exposicion del texto y para la congregación que escucha...

Lo demas lo veo muy bueno para analizar el Acto de Predicación.

- Creo que sería más claro si los grados de evaluación usarán alguna palabra como "habitual" (nada habitual, poco habitual, habitualmente, muy habitual) o alguna palabra similar (a menudo, frecuentemente, etc). Lo digo porque estar de acuerdo me pone en conflicto con las preguntas. Por ejemplo: ¿Usa transiciones entre los puntos? Estoy totalmente de acuerdo en que es necesario, pero no lo hago habitualmente, o "no muy a menudo, o "poco frecuente".

- Una cosa específicamente es sobre la segunda pregunta sobre las conclusiones. "aplicar climáticamente" intuyo, pero no sé 100% qué significa. Quizá para el que predica pero no se ha preparado a nivel de seminario es difícil de entender.

- Es una muy buena herramienta para que los predicadores busquen o intenten realizar la mejor predicación posible ya que esta herramienta hace preguntas tanto para el predicador como para su bosquejo.

APPENDIX 7 (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)

Post-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism Results

Get attention that connects to the main idea
--

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

agree

agree

Speak to a need related to the main idea
--

strongly agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

strongly agree

Raise the subject or the complete biblical main idea.

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

agree

agree

agree

agree

Provide the necessary context

strongly agree

agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

strongly agree

agree

Preview the sermon and/or transition well to the sermon body
--

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

strongly agree

agree

agree
 strongly agree
 strongly agree

In the reading of the sermon Scripture passage

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 disagree
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 strongly agree

Develop ideas that support the main idea, per the text structure and emphasis

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 agree

Explain the text clearly and accurately, making it understandable

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 agree
 agree
 strongly agree
 strongly agree

Convince people to believe the text, answering legitimate questions

agree
 strongly agree
 strongly agree
 agree
 agree
 strongly agree

Illustrate to help see the text's explanation, argumentation, and/or application

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 agree
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 agree
 strongly agree

Apply the text to real-life situations in a specific and detailed way

strongly agree
 strongly agree
 strongly agree
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 strongly agree

Expound theological truths within the confines of expositional preaching

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 agree
 agree
 strongly agree
 strongly agree

Relate the text to the biblical storyline

agree
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 agree
 strongly agree

Teaches Christ's gospel to unbelievers and believers

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 agree
 strongly agree
 strongly agree

Use transitions to indicate movement between points

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 agree
 strongly agree
 agree
 strongly agree

Summarize the main points and restate the main idea

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)
 strongly agree
 strongly agree
 agree

agree

agree

Climactically apply/appeal

agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

strongly agree

strongly agree

Vary voice rate, volume, and pitch, per sermon content, and avoid “ums” and “uhs”

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

strongly agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

Make eye contact and have a good posture

agree

strongly agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

strongly agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

Gesture and make facial expressions that reflect content, and avoid quirky mannerisms

strongly agree

strongly agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

Display sincere care and humble courage

agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

strongly agree

not applicable (I already did that before the evaluation)

Making people know specifically what God said and what they need to do about it

agree

strongly agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

agree

Being clear and having coherent progress

agree

strongly agree

agree

agree

agree

agree

Maintaining attention: having an appropriate introduction and overall length.

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

agree

strongly agree

agree

Knowing my key strengths and weaknesses

agree

strongly agree

agree

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

The feedback I received was competent

agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

strongly agree

agree

Do think that this survey could be improved, and if so, how (maximum 500 words)?

- This tool is useful when participants already know expository preaching and could be teachers of other students. I think it would not work in the case of people who are starting their journey because they would not have solid criteria regarding the evaluation. In these cases it is better to have a teacher evaluate the preaching. But as a tool for preachers who are already doing it regularly, it seems good to me.

- I don't think so.
- Perhaps a section could be included on whether there has been direct application for each point of the message.

Was the sermon evaluation helpful, and if so, how (maximum 500 words)?

- It was useful, although most of the things they told me had already been said to me by other preacher brothers. I also usually ask other brothers who have gone to seminary, so that I may improve. Even so, there were details that I did not know or that I did not usually implement, such as talking about the human condition in the introduction, or trying to relate the passage to biblical history. I will try to implement these details.
- Listening to evaluations from other preachers highlights specific needs for improvement.
- Yes, it helped me to continue improving in the exposition of the Word, and to make me see things that perhaps I do not pay attention to but are important for the congregation to clearly understand the message.
- Yes, it is necessary, and for every preacher, because before such an important task, one must always want to improve the presentation and content of the message, and above all, remain humble at all times.
- It was very useful: it is something that helps to improve a lot if it is done between mature brothers with whom there is trust.

I have been preaching for

- 6–10 years
- 6–10 years
- 0–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–20 years

APPENDIX 7

Post-Evaluation Feedback Mechanism Results

<p>Obtener la atención de manera que conecta con la idea principal</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p>
<p>Hablar de una necesidad relacionada con la idea principal</p> <p>muy de acuerdo</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>muy de acuerdo</p>
<p>Plantear el tema o la idea principal bíblica completa</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p>
<p>Proporcionar el contexto necesario</p> <p>muy de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>de acuerdo</p> <p>muy de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p>
<p>Dar una vista previa del sermón y/o hacer una buena transición al cuerpo del sermón</p> <p>no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)</p> <p>muy de acuerdo</p> <p>de acuerdo</p>

de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Leer adecuadamente el pasaje bíblico del sermón

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 en desacuerdo
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Desarrollar ideas que apoyan la idea principal, y siguen la estructura y el énfasis del texto

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo

Explicar el texto de forma clara y precisa, haciéndolo comprensible

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Convencer a las personas a creer el texto, respondiendo a preguntas legítimas

de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Ilustrar para ayudar a ver la explicación, argumentación y/o aplicación del texto

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Aplicar el texto a situaciones de la vida real de forma específica y detallada

muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Exponer verdades teológicas dentro de los límites de la predicación expositiva

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Relacionar el texto con la historia bíblica

de acuerdo
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Enseñar el evangelio de Cristo a incrédulos y creyentes

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Utilizar transiciones para señalar movimiento entre puntos

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

Resumir los puntos principales y reafirmar la idea principal

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

Aplicar/apelar climáticamente

de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

muy de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

Variar la velocidad, el volumen y el tono de la voz según el contenido del sermón y evitar decir “mmm” y “eeh”

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

muy de acuerdo

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

Tener contacto visual y tener una buena postura

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

Hacer gestos y expresiones faciales que reflejan el contenido y evitar gestos peculiares

muy de acuerdo

muy de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

de acuerdo

de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

Demostrar preocupación sincera y valor humilde

de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

muy de acuerdo

no aplica (ya lo hacía antes de la evaluación)

Hacer que la gente sepa específicamente lo que Dios dijo y lo que deben hacer al respecto

de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo

Ser claro y tener progreso coherente

de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo

Mantener la atención: tener una introducción y duración total adecuada

de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo

Conocer mis fuerzas y debilidades

de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo

El *feedback* que recibí fue competente.

de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 muy de acuerdo
 de acuerdo

¿Crees que esta herramienta de *feedback* se podría mejorar y, de ser así, cómo (máximo 500 palabras)?

- Esta herramienta es útil cuando los participantes ya conocen la predicación expositiva y podrían ser profesores de otros alumnos. Creo que no funcionaría en caso de personas que están comenzando su andadura porque no tendrían un criterio sólido en cuanto a la

evaluación. En estos casos es mejor un profesor que evalúe las predicaciones. Pero como herramienta para predicadores que ya están haciéndolo habitualmente me parece buena.

- Creo que no
- Quizá se podría incluir un apartado de si ha habido aplicación directa en cada punto del mensaje

¿Fue útil la evaluación del sermón y, de ser así, en qué medida (máximo 500 palabras)?

- Fue útil, aunque la mayoría de cosas que me dijeron ya me las habían dicho otros hermanos predicadores. Yo también suelo preguntar a otros hermanos seminaristas para que me ayuden a mejorar. Aún así hubo detalles que desconocía o que no solía utilizar como hablar de la condición humana en la introducción, o tratar de relacionar el pasaje con la historia bíblica. Estos detalles intentaré implementarlos.
- Escuchar las evaluaciones de parte de otros predicadores hace resaltar necesidades específicas para mejorar.
- Si, me ayudó a seguir mejorando en la exposición de la Palabra, y a hacerme ver cosas que quizás no les presto atención oero son importantes para quea congregación entienda con claridad el mensaje.
- Sí, es necesario, y para todo predicador, porque antes semejante tarea tan importante debe uno siempre desear mejorar la presentación y contenido del mensaje, pero sobre todo mantenerse humilde en todo momento
- Muy util, es algo que ayuda a mejorar mucho si se hace entre hermanos maduros y en confianza e intimidad

Llevo Predicando

- 6–10 años
- 6–10 años
- 0–5 años
- 6–10 años
- 6–10 años
- 11–20 años

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