

Church Revitalization and Christ-Centered Expository Preaching

I. Why Preach Expository Sermons As Your Basic Bread and Butter Diet For Your People?

1) John MacArthur: “The only logical response to inerrant Scripture is to preach expositionally. By expositionally, I mean preaching in such a way that the meaning of the Bible passage is presented entirely and exactly as it was intended by God.”

2) Mark Dever: “The first mark of a healthy church is expositional preaching. It is not only the first mark; it is far and away the most important of them all, because if you get this one right, all of the others should follow... This is so important that if you were to miss this one and happen to get all the other eight marks right, in a sense they would be accidents. You would have just happened to get them right. They may be distorted, because they wouldn't have sprung from the word and they would not continually be reshaped and refreshed by it. But if you establish the priority of the word, then you have in place the single most important aspect of the church's life, and growing health is virtually assured, because God has decided to act by His Spirit through His word” (Mark Dever, *9 Marks Of A Healthy Church*, p. 42-43).

3) The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy and Hermeneutics (Article XXV)

“We affirm that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God.” “We deny that the preacher has any message from God apart from the text of Scripture.”

4) J.I. Packer: “The true idea of expository preaching is that the preacher should become the mouthpiece of his text, opening it up and applying it as the Word of God to his hearers, speaking in order that the text may be heard, and making each point from his text in such a manner that his hearers may discern the voice of God.”

5) Steven Olford: “Whether we are facing an individual, a study group, or a Sunday morning congregation, our handling of the Word of God should be expository, if it is to be authentic in the Biblical sense. I am aware, of course, that homileticians maintain that there are other ways to preach a sermon, but I argue that for an utterance to be truly scriptural it must derive from sound exegesis and exposition.”

II. What Are The Blessings and Benefits Of An Expository Preaching Diet?

D.A. Carson:

- 1) It is the method least likely to stray from Scripture
- 2) It teaches people how to read their Bibles.

- 3) It gives confidence to the preacher and authorizes the sermon.
 - 4) It meets the need for relevance without letting the clamor for relevance dictate the message.
 - 5) It forces the preacher to handle the tough questions.
 - 6) It enables the preacher to expound systematically the whole counsel of God.
- D.A. Carson, "Accept No Substitutes: 6 reasons not to abandon expository preaching." *Leadership* (Summer 1996): 87-88.

Jerry Vines:

- 1) Using the expository method makes it possible for the preacher to learn the Word.
- 2) Preaching expository messages through books of the Bible keeps the preacher out of a rut.
- 3) Expository preaching enables us to deal with passages that might otherwise have been overlooked or even intentionally avoided.
- 4) The expository method makes the preacher work.
- 5) Preaching through books of the Bible removes anxiety about what to preach.
- 6) Expository preaching gives great confidence to the preacher.

- 7) Expository preaching gives people strength.
- 8) Expository preaching encourages the people to become students of the Word themselves.
- 9) Expository preaching has a way of broadening people's horizons.
- 10) Expository preaching will provide the preacher with an increasingly maturing congregation.

- Jerry Vines, *A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 20-24.

Alistair Begg:

- 1) It gives glory to God, which ought to be the ultimate end of all we do.
- 2) It demands that the preacher himself become a student of the Word of God.
- 3) It enables the congregation to learn the Bible in the most obvious and natural way.
- 4) It prevents the preacher from avoiding difficult passages or from dwelling on his favorite texts.
- 5) It assures the congregation of enjoying a balanced diet of God's Word.

6) It liberates the preacher from the pressure of last-minute preparation on Saturday night.

- Alistair Begg, *Preaching for God's Glory* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999), 33-39.

III. What Is Expository Preaching?

1) “Expository preaching is text-driven preaching. The biblical text determines the structure and substance of the sermon.”

2) “Expository preaching is Christ centered, text driven, Spirit led preaching that transforms lives.”

3) “Expository preaching is text driven preaching that honors the truth of Scripture as it was given by the Holy Spirit. Its goal is to discover the God-inspired meaning through historical-grammatical-theological investigation and interpretation. By means of engaging and compelling proclamation, the preacher explains, illustrates and applies the meaning of the biblical text in submission to and in the power of the Holy Spirit, preaching Christ for a verdict of changed lives.”

VI. Components of Christ-Centered Expository Preaching

1) **Christ-centered preaching follows a holistic hermeneutic.**

Historical → grammatical → theological → Christological

Scripture drives and determines, shapes and forms the sermon as it was given by God thru the human author. A text cannot mean today what it did not mean then. But, it may mean more than the human author understood.

2) Christ-centered preaching honors the Grand Redemptive Storyline of the Bible.

Creation → Fall → Redemption → New Creation

The Bible is “His Story.” We find our place in that Story.

3) Christ-centered preaching follows the pattern of Jesus and the apostles revealed in the Bible.

All of the Bible is about Christ! The incarnation of the Son of God is the key that unlocks the meaning of the whole Bible (Luke 24:25-27, 44-49; John 5:39; 2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 1:1-3).

4) Christ-centered preaching sees Jesus as the hero and focus of the whole Bible.

It always asks the question: how does this text relate to or anticipate or typify the person and work of Christ? (Ex. David and Goliath. We are not David! We are the scared Hebrews shaking in their boots who need a Savior and a champion.)

5) Christ-centered preaching will be rigorously theocentric/Christocentric and not Anthropocentric.

Look for the God/Christ vision in the text. What does this text teach me about God? How does it point to Christ? (God-focused not man focused).

6) Christ-centered preaching always begins with the historical-grammatical, but it does not stop there. It always includes the theological and Christological.

(Utilize the classic categories of theology here)

7) When interpreting the Bible, especially the Old Testament, Christ-centered preaching looks for redemptive promises, prophecies, types, examples, patterns, and persons that point to or anticipate Christ.

8) Christ-centered preaching avoids the snares of moralism and legalism that promotes pride (self-righteousness) on one side and despair (self-condemnation) on the other.

This is the danger of focusing on man and not God in so much contemporary preaching.

9) Christ-centered preaching reminds us that we don't need to be good to be saved, we need a Savior (rescuer) to be saved.

(Ex. Preaching on how to have a good work ethic from Proverbs: you can't work for your salvation).

10) Christ-centered preaching sees Genesis 3:15 as a crucial interpretive key that unlocks the unfolding drama of redemption.

This is the *protoevangelium*, the first gospel promise. Let it be a hermeneutical guide.

11) Christ-centered preaching utilizes the Fallen Condition Focus principle of Bryan Chapell (Christ-Centered Preaching) (FCF) that ask, "what is there in this text that shows man's need that requires the grace of God (a Savior) for resolution?"

12) Christ-centered preaching recognizes that what we say is more important than how we say it, but how we say it has never been more important.