

Lecture 1

Hermeneutics and Homiletics: A Christ-Centered Vision
(Portions drawn from a lecture by Pastor Tony Merida)

**Introduction to 6100 Bible Exposition:
Hermeneutics and Homiletics**
A Christ-Centered Vision
Luke 24

In the 21st century we stand on the shoulders of some great scholars and preachers....

The early **church fathers**, also called the Apostolic Fathers, who were pastors and sometimes prominent bishops, generally preached simple homilies that retold the story of Christ.

- Polycarp (70-155), Clement of Rome (c. 95), Irenaeus (c. 200), Papias (70-163), and Ignatius (35-110) were among early gospel preachers.
- Some of their letters remain today, but due to the lack of surviving sermons, little can be known about their preaching.

More is known about the public ministry of the **apologists** (a subset, in a sense, of the church Fathers).

- The leading Greek apologists included Justin (100–165), Clement of Alexandria (c. 160–c. 220), and Origen (185–254).
- These men were defenders of Christianity, but not true expositors.
- Justin (Martyr) was more of a rhetorician and philosopher than a preacher. Nevertheless, he left us with an example of the importance of the preached Word in the public gatherings. He said:

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gathered together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent saying, Amen”.

Two preachers, later in this period, represent the apex of early preaching: Augustine in the West and John (Chrysostom) in the East.

Augustine

- Augustine (354–430) began preaching at age thirty-six and later became Bishop of Hippo. He was African.
- We presently have over four hundred of his sermons, in addition to many of his classical theological works.
- His sermons could be called exegetical, but Augustine used allegorical interpretation too frequently to be labeled as a model of expository preaching.

- His instincts were right, but his methodology flawed. It is often said that Catholics are heirs to his theology of the church and Protestants to his theology of salvation.
- Augustine wrote *De Doctrina Christianus (On Christian Doctrine)*, which was the first influential homiletics book.
- He incorporated rhetorical and interpretive principles to discuss preaching. Augustine said, “**There are two things necessary to the treatment of the Scriptures: a way of discovering those things which are to be understood, and a way of teaching what we have learned.**”
- Preaching books today often follow this approach of combining the discipline of hermeneutics and homiletics – as our books do.

John Chrysostom of Antioch (347–407), nicknamed “the golden mouth,” stands as the premier patristic (Church Fathers) example for contemporary preachers.

- Chrysostom preached for twelve years in the Cathedral of Antioch before becoming Bishop of Constantinople in 398.
- He wrote *On the Priesthood*, the first attempt at a book on preaching, but it dealt more with the pastor and his character.
- Chrysostom’s sermons lasted for about an hour.
- We have over 700 of his sermons today.
- He normally preached through books of the Bible, using faithful historical-grammatical interpretative principles (not allegory).
- Chrysostom also applied the text in a down-to-earth manner.

Though there were influential preachers in the Middle Ages like Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and John Hus (1369-1415), the next great era of preaching was the Reformation.

Reformation

Affirmed Sola Scriptura (“Scripture alone”).

- German reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546),
- French reformer John Calvin (1509–1564),
- Swiss reformer Huldreich Zwingli (1464–1531),
- Scottish reformer John Knox (1513–1572), and
- English reformer William Tyndale (1494–1535).

These men also practiced a more literal, grammatical, and redemptive-historical approach to biblical interpretation, in contrast to the allegory method of spiritualizing the text.

Luther (1483-1546) was a theology professor—not a pastor—but he preached constantly.

- Between 1510 and 1546, he preached over 3,000 messages!

- He preached several times a week, and often numerous times a day.
- Luther: preaching the Word should be central in corporate worship.
- In *Table Talk*: Preach in “**the plain mother tongue, which every one is acquainted with.**” Catholics in the Middle Ages preached, if they preached at all, in Latin which the common people did not understand.

John Calvin (1509-1564) provides the best example for expository preaching today from this period.

- Dillenberger rightly stated, “[Calvin] assumed that his whole theological labor was the exposition of Scripture.”
- After preaching on Easter of 1538, he was banished by the City Council (of Geneva). He returned in September 1541 and picked up the series in the next verse (3 years later)! He was a model expositor.
- Calvin preached with a homily style, giving a running commentary of the text with simple and direct applications.
- Calvin’s commentaries are still in print today and are available online at no cost at www.ccel.org. I regularly consult them.

The Puritan movement followed the Reformation throughout England, parts of Europe, and America.

- William Perkins (1558–1602), was a mighty preacher and teacher of preachers.
- Sinclair Ferguson said, “Christians throughout the world today owe a considerable but largely unrecognized debt to the great Puritan preacher and theologian William Perkins.”

1700 Awakenings – Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), John Wesley (1703-91) and George Whitfield (1714-1770) were the outstanding preachers of this era. They were faithful Bible preachers but not expositors.

1800’s Dargan called the nineteenth century the greatest period in the history of preaching.

- Charles Simeon (1759–1836),
- Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887),
- Philips Brooks (1834–1893),
- John Broadus (1827–1895),
- Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892). His sermons are available at no cost online at “Spurgeon Gems” and “The Spurgeon Archive.” I read these with much profit, especially devotionally. His 3 volume work on Psalms, “The Treasury of David,” is magisterial.
- D. L. Moody (1837–1899),
- John C. Ryle (1816–1900),

- Alexander McLaren (1826–1910),
- G. Campbell Morgan (1863–1942),
- Gardner Taylor (1918-2015),
- Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968),
- Billy Graham (1918-2018),
- W.A. Criswell (1909-2002). His sermons are available at no cost online at the “W.A. Criswell Sermon Library,”
- Adrian Rogers (1931-2005) see “Love Worth Finding” for his sermons,
- John Piper (1946 -). His sermons are available online and free at “Desiring God.”
- John Broadus. During his time at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Broadus wrote the most influential book on preaching in years, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1871). The original and the Dargan revision are by far the most reliable.

1900’s many books – on preaching emerged. Two influential ones:

- **Martyn Lloyd Jones (1899-1981)** wrote *Preaching and Preachers* – “Renewed preaching heralds the dawn of a new reformation.”
- **John Stott (1921-2011)** – *Between Two Worlds* used the analogy of “the bridge” showing how preaching connects the world of the Bible to the world of today.

BACK TO OUR ROOTS: JESUS AND PREACHING

Luke 24 (cf. John 5:39)

In this text we see Jesus, the Resurrected Lord, expounding the Bible!

- This shouldn’t surprise us: our God is a talking God. Our God speaks! “God is the first preacher.” “He is there and He is not silent” (Francis Schaeffer)
- And Jesus was the greatest of all prophets.... Prophets of course preached!

This passage **gives us a vision for Christ-centered Exposition.** For a commentary series on the whole Bible dedicated to Christ-Centered Exposition see the “Exalting Jesus In” series edited by Akin, Merida and Platt.

What do we learn from Jesus about hermeneutics and biblical exposition in Lk 24?

- 1. Jesus models a commitment to Biblical Exposition**
- 2. Jesus must be central in our Biblical Exposition**
- 3. Jesus shows the need for Illumination in Biblical Exposition**
- 4. Jesus sends us to the nations to do Biblical Exposition**

1. Jesus Models a Commitment to Biblical Exposition (Lk 24:13-27)

Luke 4 – inaugurates his ministry explaining the text (cf. Neh. 8; 1 Tim. 4:13).

Luke 24: After the resurrection he leads a couple on a Bible study.

Luke 24:13-24

- They're confused. They need clarity about the Messiah.
- Jesus gives good news to sad and searching people.

Luke 24:25-26: Rebuked! You should know this!

You should know it because the Scripture foretells it, and you should know this because I kept telling everyone! They had a hard time understanding a crucified Messiah. Their biases hid the meaning of the Scriptures that are there if we have eyes that see!

Verse 27: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he interpreted** [explained] to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

This word “**explained**” or “**interpret**” is the word from which we derive the word **hermeneutics**, the art and science of Bible interpretation.

dierméneutés: an explainer, an interpreter

Phonetic Spelling: (dee-er-men-new-tes)

- Jesus explained what the Scriptures meant.
- “The Word of God incarnate explained the written Word of God.” (Kent Hughes)
- Matt 1:23: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which *means* [**methermeneuomenon**], God with us).
- Mark 5:41: Taking her by the hand he said to her, “Talitha cumi,” which *means* [**methermeneuomenon**], “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”
- Mark 15:22: And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means [**methermeneuomenon**] Place of a Skull).

- Mark 15:34: And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means [*methermeneuomenon*] “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
- John 1:38: Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means [*methermeneuomenon*] Teacher), “where are you staying?”
- Acts 4:36: Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means [*methermeneuomenon*] son of encouragement)
- 1 Corinthians 12:10: to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation [*hermeneia*] of tongues. (also 1 Cor 14:27-28)
- Hebrews 7:1-2: For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation [*hermeneuomenos*] of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.

The writers of Scripture are often translating, or explaining/interpreting phrases for the readers, taking them from Aramaic/Hebrew/or Unclear speech explaining it in Greek.

After discerning what a text says, the work of hermeneutics involves the work of interpreting what the text means. This is followed by “homiletics,” that is, the science and art of proclaiming what the text means.

- The task of hermeneutics is to determine the meaning of the Word of God.
- Hermeneutics includes rules by which we interpret or exegete the Scripture.
- **Exposition** involves exposing the meaning of the text to people.
- We are trying to minimize our opinions; maximizing God’s voice.

2. Jesus Must Be Central in Biblical Exposition (Lk 24:25-27)

In verses 25-27, we see a very important principle for interpreting the Scriptures: **The whole Bible points to Jesus!** Now, how it does this is hotly debated. This will be addressed.

BF&M 2000: "All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation."

In Luke 24, Jesus is showing us how to read the Bible. The apostles follow His pattern, especially in Acts and Hebrews which contain a number of sermons.

We must always read the Bible with Jesus' person and work in constant view!

*We must read the little stories, the small parts, in light of the big story, in light of the whole (Creation → Fall → Redemption → New Creation)

The Bible is a unity. It is one Big Story with King Jesus as the hero! That's one of the most stunning facts about the Bible that too many miss! All of it is about Him!

- Over 40 authors wrote in a period of over 1600 years, and yet the Bible is remarkably consistent in its message.

Interpretation Principles: A brief introduction (!)

Let us put this principle of interpretation in the context of other principles that you will learn this semester: reading the Bible Christocentrically, or Christotelically.

7 Points to Keep in Mind:

- 1. Read the whole Bible a whole lot!**
- 2. Read the Bible in an attitude of prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit. (Lk 24; also Ps 119; 1 Cor. 2:10-16)**
- 3. Remember that context is queen and the text is King (my take!).**
 - a. Context means "that which goes with the text" both before and after, near and far.
 - b. Ripping verses out of context, and using them in a way that does not represent the authorially intended meaning of the human author and the Holy Spirit, is irresponsible and inexcusable.
 - c. Ask yourself, "How does this passage fit within the surrounding context?" What was the intended meaning conveyed by the author and Author?
- 4. Look for the historical meaning first.**
 - a. **There's both historical particularity and broad sweeping unity.**
 - b. **Appreciate and draw attention to both the diversity and unity of Scripture.**
- 5. Identify the type of literature (genre) in which the verse is found.**
 - a. How we get to Christ will differ depending on context, content, genre, types, etc.
 - b. Narratives are not always normative.

Ex- Paul's hankerchief ministry in Acts 19:12. This is clearly descriptive, not prescriptive!

6. Remember that the whole Bible points to God’s redeeming work in Jesus.

- WE must not retreat to **allegory** like the Patristics. There is no need to and it misuses the text.
 - Authors intend to say things they want us to know and understand per their intended meaning.
- **The Bible is telling us a story.**
 - **God didn’t give us a systematic theology book. He gave us a story.**
 - He’s not mentioned in every story, but every story is somehow related to Him.
 - All of Scripture is Christian Scripture. We do not read the Bible like Jewish rabbis.
- **The Bible has themes embedded in it.**
 - These themes develop as the Scriptures unfold (Progressive Revelation).
 - There’s progression throughout the narrative
 - **Since the Bible is a unified testimony, always look for theological themes in the selected passage.**
- **The Bible is a Book about salvation**
 - Scriptures make us wise for salvation
 - Salvation through Jesus is the primary focus of the Bible.

7. Interpret Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is its own best interpreter.

From Interpretation to Exposition:

- Study the text
- Identify the main idea or theme.
- Construct an outline that honors the structure of the text.
- Develop the applications that emerge from the text.
- Add an introduction and conclusion, being sure a gospel invitation is planned and extended.

3. Jesus Shows the Need for Illumination in Biblical Exposition (Luke 24:28-45)

A. Illuminated their minds

- V. 31 – he opened their eyes
- V. 45 – he opened their minds

John Owen the great Puritan used two categories:

- (1) saving illumination (2 Cor 4);

- (2) interpretive illumination (not only to understand but to apply and **see the significance** of a text)

The Word and the Spirit go together. “Burn your Bibles if you don’t see the necessity of the Spirit.”

Saving Illumination: Regeneration.

Interpretive Illumination: What God illuminates in the study, he empowers in the pulpit.

B. Ignited their Hearts

4. Jesus Sends Us to the Nations to Do Biblical Exposition (46-53)

Sent with the Message

Sent with the Power

Look at Acts to see this fleshed out.

1. The book begins and ends with an emphasis on teaching.

- “all that Jesus began to do and teach.... For forty days speaking about the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:1-3)
- “proclaiming and teaching about the Lord Jesus...” (Acts 28:31)

2. Acts 1-11. The preaching and teaching of the Word of God is emphasized through the number of speeches within Acts, and the references to the ministry of the Word.

Here’s a few:

- Acts 1 – Applying Scripture to the need to fulfill the office
- Acts 2 – Peter’s sermon – death, resurrection, exaltation, Lordship of Jesus (he expounds Joel 2; Ps. 16, Ps.110)
- Acts 2:42 – “devoted to the teaching...”
- Acts 3 – Peter and John at Solomon’s portico, apply Deut, 18, Gen 22 to describe their place in redemptive history
- Acts 4:12 – salvation in no one else
- Acts 5 – persecution, “you have filled Jerusalem with this teaching”
- Acts 6:4 – devoted to the word
- Acts 7 – Stephen narrates the whole story – longest speech in Acts
- Acts 8 – Philip – expounds Isaiah 53
- Acts 9 – Saul converted, and then begins teaching in Jerusalem, confounding people proving that Jesus was the Christ

- Acts 10 – Peter preached to the Gentiles, v 42, “he commanded us to preach”
- Acts 11 – Paul and Barnabas taught for a whole year in Antioch

3. Luke has at least 10 summary statements of the growth of the church, often linked to the ministry of the Word.

- **2:41:** "So those who received the word were baptized and there were added that day about 3,000 souls."
- **2:47:** "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."
- **4:4:** "Many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to about 5,000."
- **5:14:** "More than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."
- **9:31:** "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied."
- **13:49:** "And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region." (Pisidian region.)
- **16:5:** "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily." (Galatian region)
- **19:20:** "So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily." (In Ephesus.)
- **21:20:** “You see brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed”

4. Acts 13:1-End.

- Paul’s ministry is occupied with the Word.
 - 13:13ff – First sermon
 - Acts 14 – Iconium and Lystra
 - Acts 16 – Lydia
 - Acts 17 – Thessalonica (17:2-4)
 - Athens
 - Acts 18 – Corinth, “occupied with the Word”
 - Acts 19 – Hall of Tyrannus
 - Acts 20 – Paul’s speech “I didn’t shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God
 - 21-28 – Journey to Jerusalem then to Rome
 - Filled with Speeches 26:22-23 – sounds like Jesus.

5. Everyone is spreading the Word (Acts 8:4)

- Those who were scattered by persecution, spread the Word.
- The gospel went forth by ordinary Christians.

- But, “I’m not a preacher, so why do I need this?” Good question with a good answer!
 - Preaching is tied to so many doctrines, every Christian must study it for their own understanding of the faith and growth in discipleship.
 - Everyone needs hermeneutics to study the Bible.
 - Everyone needs it to teach the Bible – and everyone must teach the Bible!
1. **The believer’s task of making disciples among all nations involves *teaching* (Matt 28:18-20).** We have the privilege of knowing God intimately, and speaking God’s word faithfully.
 2. **Luke says that God’s people taught others about Jesus, who is the hero of the Bible, in all sorts of contexts:** “And every day, in the temple, and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42).
 3. **While it is most certainly true that God has gifted some in the church with a unique ability to teach and preach (Eph 4:11; Rom 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10-11; Heb 13:7; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9), all believers share this responsibility in different ways:**
 - “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, *teaching and admonishing one another* in all wisdom” (Col 3:16a).
 - “[Y]ou yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and *able to instruct one another*” (Rom 15:14b).
 - “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet 3:15, cf., Col 4:5).

There’s no greater service you can render to the church and the world than to teach the truth of Scripture.

Our prayer is that we all teach the Word of Christ more faithfully and effectively, and that we will treasure the Christ of the Word more deeply.