

## “Expository Preaching & Teaching at GBF”

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### 1. Three kinds of preaching:

- A. Topical sermons—giving a talk on a particular theme, using loosely disconnected verses sporadically; the emphasis is on the topic, not on what a biblical passage says; this style lends itself to what the preacher thinks about something, not necessarily what the Bible teaches; example titles might include, “Why Christians Should not Dance,” “Why Drums are of the Devil,” “Ten Ways to be Happy and Feel Good about Yourself,” “God wants you Healthy”
- B. Textual sermons—using a Bible verse or passage as a springboard to talking about whatever the preacher wants to talk about—in this case the Bible passage simply is a “proof-text” and can be manipulated into saying whatever the preacher prefers; finding the original meaning of the biblical author is not the goal
- C. Expository sermons—the goal is to explain the original intent of the author in a given Bible passage; what did Paul, Moses, or Jesus mean by what they said?; ‘exposit’ means to ‘explain’—so ‘expository preaching’ is explaining the original intent or meaning of the author; considering the context of the passage at hand is a priority; it’s an objective study of the text; teaching in a way that lets the Bible speak for itself—it answers the question: “What does the Bible say?”; it’s not preaching about the Bible, it’s actually preaching the Bible itself

### 2. The Emphasis in Expository Preaching:

Expository preaching depends on the Scripture for its content; the other two kinds of preaching may depend on outside sources to make or validate the main points; thematic and textual sermons will draw heavily from “human opinion,” “human research,” circumstances in life, personal experience, analogies in life, felt needs, non-biblical stories, stats, popular topics, movies, history, etc.; expository preaching will be typified by an approach that says, “Thus says the LORD,” whereas non-expository preaching is content saying, “So and so says...”; expository preaching is corporate Bible study

### 3. A Simple Definition of Expository Preaching:

Expository preaching entails a) reading the text (proclamation), b) explaining the text (explanation/teaching), and then c) telling the people how to apply the text (application/exhortation); this three-fold biblical mandate is clearly delineated in 1 Timothy 4:13 where Paul reminded Timothy what his priority was to be as a pastor in the local church:

*“Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching”*

Nehemiah 8:8 says the exact same thing about how Ezra and other men of God preached:

*“And they read from the book, the Law of God, translating to give the sense, so that they understood the reading”*

So expository preaching entails: 1) reading Scripture; 2) explaining Scripture; 3) applying Scripture.

#### **4. The Nature of Expository Preaching:**

Jesus was the Master expository preacher; He read/proclaimed Scripture, then explained it, and then exhorted people to obey it; this was the essence and emphasis in Jesus' ministry; Mark 1:14-15 summarizes Jesus' ministry as follows:

*“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching [kerusso, κηρυσσων]”—Jesus was first and foremost a “preacher” (cf. Luke 8:1).*

The most popular NT word for “preaching” is *kerusso* and it means “to proclaim, to herald, to declare”—it’s an authoritative verbal declaration of truth for all to hear; John the Baptist (Matt 3:1), the Apostles (Acts 28:31), and Timothy (2 Tim 4:2) all “preached”; the Pastor of a church is to first and foremost be a “preacher,” declaring publicly the truth of God’s Word.

In addition to *kerusso* there are over 30 other different words used in the NT to describe the nature of biblical expository preaching, including common words like *euaggelizo* (to preach the good news—Luke 8:1), *marturew* (to testify, to bear witness—John 1:7-8), *didasko* (to teach—Matt 28:20).

As to vocation, Jesus was recognized as a “Teacher.” Nicodemus said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher” (John 3:2). ‘Rabbi’ means ‘teacher.’ A teacher was one who expounded on and explained the Scriptures. That’s what Jesus did—that was His ministry—He came preaching and teaching God’s Word.

So the nature of expository preaching according to the NT and the example of Jesus, is related to proclaiming, declaring, teaching, explaining and testifying on behalf of the Scriptures, the Word of God.

#### **5. The Content of Expository Preaching:**

Paul commanded Pastor Timothy to “*preach the word*” (2 Timothy 4:2). In 1 Timothy 4:13 Paul commanded Timothy to teach “*Scripture*.” Jesus preached and taught the Word of God. In His teaching, He frequently quoted Scripture, and often said, “It is written” (Matt 4:4) which was a direct reference to the content of Scripture. The early church made a priority of studying “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42) which we now have recorded in the Bible. So the content of what the church is supposed to be studying, teaching and preaching is the Bible, the Scriptures, the Word of God in written form.

#### **6. The Prerequisites of Expository Preaching:**

Since the goal of expository preaching is to explain the meaning of the biblical text, then studying the biblical text is a priority. The process of studying the Scripture in order to discover the original intent of the biblical author (and the Holy Spirit Who inspired the text), is called “exegesis.” ‘Exegesis’ means “to draw out.”

So the goal of the Bible expositor in study is to “draw out” the true, objective meaning of the text as intended by the original author. Opposite, illegitimate, but common alternatives to “exegesis” include “reading into the text,” “deconstructing the text,” or “infusing the text with one’s personal opinion.” These are subjective approaches to looking at Scripture and are not “exegesis,” but rather “eisogesis.” In order to discover and ‘draw out’ the original meaning and intent of the biblical author, a working and functional knowledge of the biblical languages is inevitable. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. Getting back to the original languages is invaluable and requisite for discovering the original meaning.

Careful study is a mandate. Paul charged Pastor Timothy to “*study to show thyself approved to God as a*

*workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth*” (2 Tim 2:15). Paul studied hard as a pastor and Bible teacher (2 Tim 4:13). Jesus and the Apostles were all well versed in at least three different languages. God holds Bible teachers to the highest standard of accountability and reward (James 3:1; 1 Tim 5:17).

**Example:** if we try to study the Bible based strictly on an English translation then our study will be hampered and confused at times. Take for example, 1 Corinthians 7:1 in the New International Version [NIV], which reads, *“It is good for a man not to marry.”* This is an illegitimate translation of this verse. The Greek text actually says, *“It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”* The King James, New American Standard and New King James all translate the Greek accurately.

Paul’s intent in this passage is to tell the Corinthian Christian men who are single “not to touch a woman” if they are not married. In other words, he is saying a couple things: being single and abstinent is good, and if you are single you are not to be having sexual intimacy with a woman.

The NIV translation makes it sound like marriage is bad or even preferred to singleness—that idea is antithetical to biblical teaching. See Genesis 2:18, 24-25; Prov 18:22 and 1 Tim 4:1-3.

### **7. The Benefits of Expository Preaching:**

Expository preaching requires the Bible teacher to give the true meaning of the text. Therefore each word, phrase, verse, paragraph and chapter within any given book of the Bible needs to be studied in context. Context determines meaning of words. For example, what is the following word and how should it be pronounced...

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Depending on the context there are two ways to pronounce it, and even more ways to define it. Context is paramount. To determine the real meaning of any Bible passage its context needs to be studied and taught. So if we want to know what Ephesians 5:18 really means, then we need to study and teach on Ephesians 5:17 and 5:19, as well as all of chapters 1-3 and chapter 6, because Paul stated 5:18 in the context of an entire personal letter, with a logical progression of thought, to a specific group of people in a specific historical situation. So to understand Ephesians 5:18, it is inescapable that we study the whole book of Ephesians in order to draw out the full, objective, original meaning of 5:18.

The by-product of this approach of study and teaching compels us to do as Paul did when he taught—he told the churches that he *“proclaimed the whole counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27). He taught everything God wanted the churches to know. He did not pick and choose certain things he liked or wanted to teach on. He was not selective. We need to do the same thing. We must preach and teach the whole counsel of God—the whole book of Ephesians, all of Paul’s 13 epistles, the whole NT, the whole Bible.

This truth is at the heart of the Great Commission that Jesus charged to the Church when He said, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you”* (Matt 28:19-20).

Teaching the “whole counsel of God” (the whole Bible) is a requirement for the Church. Paul, *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching”* (2 Timothy 3:16). This verse says we need to teach all Scripture...Leviticus, Revelation, all of Ephesians, etc. Topical preaching is not interested in verse by verse inquiry of entire books of the Bible. Textual preaching does not try to understand Scripture comprehensively or systematically. Only expository preaching has the functional goal of explicating, explaining, and applying the whole Bible in its fullness.