

# Proclaimers: Unit V

## PREAMBLE:

- Good evening. Good to have you tonight. If you have your homework with you, please turn that in. How'd it go? Was it difficult?
- Before we review last week, I want to do a check-up. Be honest with me. How is this class going? Are you learning anything?
- Is it overwhelming? Am I making it easier for you to understand the bible and teach it? Or is all this making it more difficult?
- If at any point you are feeling overwhelmed, please reach out. Call or email.

## REVIEW:

- Last week, we looked at literary forms. What do you remember from this? [Include in handout] How do you read different literary forms differently? What happens when you read one literary form like another?
- Then we looked at propositions. We're going to spend some more time on this tonight. It's really important. But it can also be challenging. The whole point—I mentioned this last week—is to uncover the main point. The main argument being made by the text. Identifying the main proposition will help you see the flow of the argument. And it will become the basis of your teaching.
- So it's important, we will spend some time tonight looking at propositions and modifiers again tonight. The objective tonight is to get you close to identifying the main point of a passage from the supporting points of a passage and thereby begin the process of putting together a teaching on that passage. We're getting there.

## EXPOSITORY TEACHING/PREACHING:

- Point your Bibles to Nehemiah chapter 8. I'll give you a minute to find it.
- There are different styles of teaching and preaching. This course is based on doing expository sermons/teachings. Expository preaching is mainly what we do here at CornerstonePiqua.
- Expository preaching means, basically, the point of the sermon/teaching is the point of the text. The text drives the agenda. You begin with the text and work from it throughout. The shape and the emphasis of the text drives the shape and emphasis of the sermon/teaching.
- This is different from other approaches to teaching the bible in which you begin with a conclusion in mind, then go to the text to find verses to support your conclusion. Doing that is not necessarily wrong. Topical messages are not bad. (At least I hope—since we just finished a topical series.) Topical preaching/teaching is not wrong so long as the conclusion is also driven by the text. However, I would say that it is wise to do mainly verse-by-verse expositional teachings.



- Can you think of some reasons why exposition is preferable to topical? [Discussion & whiteboard]
  - *Can't skip uncomfortable texts; pays attention to context; lifts up Bible instead leaders ideas; bible not written topically...*
- The expository sermon has three parts—three main ingredients. It's like chicken noodle soup. Chicken noodle soup can have many ingredients. But it must have at least three ingredients or it is not chicken noodle soup. What are those three ingredients? Chicken, and noodles, and liquid/soup. You can add carrots or celery (if you're so inclined...by the devil). But if you don't have chicken or noodles or soup, then its not chicken noodle soup. Same thing with expository sermons. Three ingredients.
- Lets see if you can identify them from Nehemiah 8. This is a beautiful passage telling the story of Israel's reacquaintance with the word of God after they returned from exile in Babylon. Let's read from verse 1 down to verse 8. We're looking for the three parts of an expository sermon.
- [Read Nehemiah 8:1-8]
- Did you catch them? Read verse 8 again. Three parts. Can you find them? First the **presentation** of the word. The priests read from the book of the Law of God. Second, the **explanation** of the word. The priests made it clear and gave the meaning. And then, the **exhortation** based on the word. They made it so the people understood the reading and how it applied to their life. Presentation, explanation, and exhortation. Read the word, explain the word, and give application.
- Now turn to Luke chapter 4. We'll see that Jesus used these same elements. Verse 16-22. Jesus stood up and read. There is the presentation of the word. Following the reading, He began to explain it and—this is implied—he began to exhort them with application. They marveled at the gracious words coming from His mouth.
- Turn to 1Timothy 4. 1Timothy 4:13, **“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.”** What are the three things Paul tells young pastor Timothy to devote himself to? Reading, exhortation, and teaching. See that? Read the Bible, explain the bible, and exhort from the bible.
- Flip ahead to 2Timothy 4:2. **“preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”** Preach the word (different word from 1Timothy 4), here preach means to proclaim. So that'd fall under? Present. **“In season and out of season”** just means when its popular and when its not. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort—there is your exhortation. With complete patience and teaching. There is the explanation piece.
- Even in Matthew 28, the great commission, we see these elements. Go and make disciples...how? Three things. **“Teaching them to obey everything I commanded you.”** Teaching—there is explanation. To obey—there is exhortation. Everything I commanded you—my word—presentation.
- When you're building a expositional sermon or lesson, these are the three ingredients. There can be more. Like illustrations or whatever, but it must have those three things. Like chicken noodle soup.



- If you just read the Bible, that's not exactly exposition. Why? Because you didn't explain it. Because you didn't give exhortation. If you read the text and explain it and don't give application, that's not properly exposition either. Your audience may not know how to apply it. What if you did explanation and application but skipped presentation? There is no authority and your talk is simply lifestyle advice. Its nothing more than a TED talk.
- Three ingredients: presentation, explanation, exhortation. All necessary. They don't always have to come in that order. I think presentation of the word should be first. But I have started sermons off with application and showed how the exhortation comes from scripture. Nothing wrong with that. Paul did it with the 1Timothy and the 2Timothy passages. The order is not critical, the ingredients are.
- These three parts answer three questions. So when you sit down to prepare to teach a passage, you must be able to answer these three questions: (1) What does God say? (2) What does God mean? and, (3) What should I do?

#### *Ingredient I: Presentation—What Does God Say?*

- Of course the easiest step is the first one, right? What does God say? Literally you're just reading the scripture. Pretty easy. But you should read it aloud and your reading of the text should reflect the tonal quality of the text.
- We didn't really talk about this last week, but texts have a tonal quality. There are certain tones to a text. What I mean is that some texts have a forceful tone, a rebuking tone. Other texts are soft and gentle in their tone. Its important that when you study a text that you're getting the tone.
- And when you read the text, let your reading reflect the tone. Read slowly, and let the tone of your voice reflect the tone of the passage. For example: turn to Matthew 23. Matthew 23:13 and following. Take a look at that passage. Read it for a few seconds. What is the tone of this passage?
  - *How should it be read? What is lost if you fail to read the tone of the passage?*
- Turn to Galatians 3. Paul calls the Galatians foolish. How should it be read? Loudly?! *O foolish Galatians!* Or, with a sort of heart broken, rhetorical, drawing out sort of tone? *O foolish Galatians!* Do you see Paul as bowing and shaking his head as he reads this? Or do you see him with a fierce gaze and stiff lips? Context will determine that for you. We'll talk more about that in a few minutes. Either way, your reading should be as close to the tone of the passage as you can.
- Now turn to John 21. Look at vv15-19. Read that to yourself. What is the Lord's tone with Peter? When you teach this passage, your reading of the text should reflect the Lord's gently, restorative, healing tone.

#### *Ingredient II: Explanation—What Does God Mean?*

- For the relative ease of the presentation ingredient, the explanation ingredient is the most difficult. It's the one that takes the longest time to discover. Much of this course is setup to help you with this ingredient. There are a number of steps to discovering meaning. We've already covered some of them.



- First, *observe*. Read the text. Re-read the text. When you think you've seen it all, read it again. We spent two sessions on this. Remember the fish and the professor parable? That's what we do first, we observe. The more you observe, the closer you are to discovering meaning.
- Second, from last week. We ask questions. *Interrogate* the text. In this step you take the passage and examine it. Why would the author use that word? What is the significance of that metaphor? How does this compared to this? One question I often ask is, "Why does he go from here to here?" Try and get in the mind of the author. How is this text built? If this text were a building, what are the parts? Whats the foundation, whats the frame, whats the roof?
- Thirdly, how is it *related* to me/us? Remember the bridge metaphor? What did the passage mean to the original audience? What are the similarities to their situation and mine? What are the differences? Remember that? That's what we do here. So it matters that we discover what it meant to the original audience. And it also matters that we discover what it means to us. This will lead us to the third ingredient...application.

### *Ingredient III: Exhortation—What should I do?*

- Application. How do I take what is in the text and apply it to my life? What is this telling me to do? As a result of what I have just learned, what should I do?
- Its during the exhortation portion of your teaching that you *must* get to Christ. Engage your audience with questions of how they have failed to live this out in their lives? How did Jesus do what you didn't? How do you respond?
- The goal of application is simple: to cause a change in the way people think and feel and therefore act. The goal of Bible teaching is not to produce moral people, but people changed by the gospel. You really haven't got to application until your audience has seen how their self-induced problem has been solved by Christ in the gospel.
- Jonathan Edwards believed that true change comes from a heart change. Behavioral change is easy. You can a persons behavior through fear and/or pride. Thats superficial change, it's moralism. But actual heart change —what Edwards called 'true virtue' —comes from the heart seeing what God has done for them in Christ.
- The practice of pointing to the self-imposed falseness of man—our sin—is one thing that keeps the message from becoming a do-it-yourself-life-improvement pep talk. There must be an acknowledgment of sin, a call to repentance, and exhortation to holiness.
- If your audience comes away with a sense of, "My problem is x, so if I do those three things, I can fix x." then you haven't really taught the text. You've given them moralism, self-righteousness. We will spend an entire session on something called the "redemptive historical" method of biblical interpretation. There I hope to be able to share with you ways you can connect whatever passage you're in to Christ, which is—in my opinion—the point of the Bible.
- So teachers must get to the gospel every time. There are going to be two extremes of people in your audience. They both have the same problem. The religious person is trusting in themselves that they are righteous before



God. And the irreligious person has the same issue. They are also trusting in themselves that they are righteous. The gospel gets at both. Both people must see that they are not nearly righteous enough.

- Remember the bridge analogy? The bridge has been broken by sin and restored by Christ. Application comes through responding to God's grace in Christ. The gospel not only is the beginning of the Christian life, it is the middle and the end.
- There are a lot of Christians who think they are justified by grace through faith. And they are sanctified by trying really hard to live out the commandments. But the reality is, we are justified by grace and we are sanctified by grace. We look to the cross not just to make us Christians, but to keep us acting like Christians.
- Charles Simeon told his students the aims of an expository sermon were to: "*humble the sinner; exalt the Savior; and promote holiness.*" That is what we are doing in application. Humbling those who think they are righteous. Exalting the one who actually is righteous. And promoting actual righteousness in our hearers.
- We'll talk more about application in the weeks ahead.

## **Explain The Text: Uncovering the Meaning**

- Alright, getting to meaning. This is the second ingredient. Explain the text. First we answer, "What did God say?" And here we answer "What did God mean?" This is less complicated that you might think. Generally the text itself tells you what it means, or at least the surrounding texts do.
- Think of it like a puzzle. Your job is to explain one piece of the puzzle. You may be able to make out some detail from the imprint on that one piece. But to really know the impact of that one piece, you need to see where it fits into the whole puzzle.

### *Look At the Picture On the Box*

- When you're putting together a puzzle, you look at the picture on the box, right? You take an individual piece and try and see where it fits.
- So the first thing we should do to uncover the meaning of a text is to read the text and to read the passages surrounding the text. Ideally, you will want to read the book your teaching from all the way through several times.
- Last year, I knew that we would be going through the gospel of John. So I began to read John on my own. I read it through several times, looking for repeated phrases and themes. I bought commentaries and flipped through the opening chapters which deal with themes and such.
- Then I taught it to my kids. We took several months last year in our family worship and went through every verse of the gospel together. My thinking was: If I can't explain each passage to my teenagers in a way they can understand them and apply it to their lives, then I haven't really understood the passage at all.



- So the first step is to read the whole book from which you are teaching. Here is what you need to figure out: *what is this book about?* What is the main point of the book. Every book of the Bible has a them, an overall point that it is making. Some books come out and tell you.
- John wrote his gospel, so that his readers would believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing, they would have life in His name. So believe and live. That is the theme. That's the picture on the box. Every chapter, every story, every paragraph somehow leads to that end. And your job as a Bible teacher is to discover how it fits in there.
- If you have a good study Bible, bible themes are generally outlined in there. You can refer to the introduction to a book. Personally I prefer to make those conclusions on my own. But an outline can be very helpful.

### *Look at the Whole Section*

- Once you've got a good grip on the theme of the book, then you can begin to break down the different parts of the argument in the book. Why is this here? Some questions to ask, *"What would be lost in the argument of this book if this chapter/paragraph was not there?"*
- The meaning of a text—the main point—will often be seen once you've understood how it fits into the context of the letter. Without this, you'll misconstrue the meaning. Context matters. I will give you an example. Point your Bible to 1Corinthians 13. Lets read vv4-7.
- Where do you hear these verses most often? In weddings, right? Seems to make sense. Its about love. What's more loving than marriage? If you are going to teach this paragraph, how do you know whether or not this passage is about married love?
- Look at your list. Read the passage. Read the chapter. Read the chapters around it. Read the whole letter. So you do this and then you'll learn the context in which this appears. And through the context, meaning begins to emerge.
- Chapter 13:4-7 all about love. What comes before it? Some talk about tongues and prophetic powers. So you read what comes after it. More about tongues and prophesy and...nothing really about marriage. So you read chapter 12 and you find out that its all about spiritual gifts. Then you read chapter 14 and you read its all about the abuse of tongues a spiritual gift. You're confused so you read the whole book.
- You learn chapter 13 falls into a part of 1Corinthians where Paul keeps using this phrase, "Now concerning". Which began in chapter 7:1, when he says, "**Now concerning the matters about which you wrote...**". You learn in chapter 1 that the first six chapters are concerning some problems reported to Paul about the church by the house of Chloe (1:11). And then you find out chapters 7-16 are Paul's response to a letter the Corinthian church sent him.
- So it turns out 13:4-7 has nothing to do with married love at all. It has to do with maintaining unity within the church, each member using their gifts not to prop themselves up, but to build up and edify the church. If you're going to live in Christian community and you are going to operate in the gifts God has given you, you must do it



with love toward one another. You go back to the passage with this in mind and it takes on a whole new meaning. [Read again]

- Now, can these verses apply to a marriage? Yes. But they are not the main point. And if you are *teaching* on marriage, you are hereby forbidden from using this as your main text. Why? Because that's not the main point.

### *Look For the Shape Of The Piece*

- Then you look for the shape of the text you are working on. What is the point of this paragraph and how does it relate to the whole book? This is what we started to do last week. We looked at propositions. The propositions will tell us the main point of a section, a paragraph.
- Meaning will appear in the propositions. Sometimes they are hard to find because there is so many of them.
- Last year, a few of us went to Indiana for the Gospel Coalition National Conference. At the conference, John Piper made this point. Imagine your friend came to you and said, "I can't talk now, I am running late, if I don't leave now, I will miss my train." There were four propositions in that statement. And you were able to filter through them instantly. Four propositions. You just filtered through those four and were able to discern the main one—I am running late.
- I am running late, therefore I can't talk now. I am running late, therefore I must leave now. Or...the result is she will miss her train.
- When you're studying the Bible, there are propositions like that in your passage. And your responsibility is to find the main one. The main one will be the point of your teaching.
- Examples...

### **Homework:**

