

# Homiletics

BPA - 370



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*Operation Test Drive Course...*

*This abbreviated sample course will give the prospective student an idea of what a CTS course will be like. It also includes abbreviated homework. Exams are not included. Courses in programs which use materials from the National Christian Counselors Association or the Institute of Theological Studies will be different and are not in the Test Drive Program. In addition to reading the Study Guide and taking the exams, the student will need to do outside reading and paper writing per the Seminary catalog, website or mentor instructions in the regular program.*

# *Colorado Theological Seminary*

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## INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE

- Topic # 1 Why this class? / Its purpose.
- A. 1 Pe.3:15 - To help us articulate the truth:
    - 1. Accurately
    - 2. Intelligently
    - 3. Interestingly
  - B. 2Ti.2:1-2 - To raise up teachers and Preachers:
    - 1. 1 Co.1:21 - God chooses "Foolishness of Preaching"
    - 2. Ro.10:14-15; Ep.6:10-18 - Am I called?
    - 3. He.5:12
  - C. Mt.11:15 - To make better listeners:
    - 1. More supportive
    - 2. More attentive
    - 3. More critical (in a good manner)
- Topic # 2 Lk.19:13 - The call, the capability, the command
- A. The call:
    - 1. Ac.6:4; Co.4:17; Ez.33:1-10; its importance
    - 2. Since it is important
      - a. We want to be good so people will listen to us, Co.4:6
      - b. We want to be careful, because we are speaking His Word presenting God Himself, Ja.3:1
  - B. The capability:
    - 1. Through the anointing
    - 2. Having the ability

- C. The command:
  - 1. Fat versus fat cells
  - 2. 2Ki.7:9 - "We do not well"

Topic # 3 Ex. chp. 3-4, The messenger: A look at Moses Universal applications from Moses' life

- A. Ex.3:1-5 - The call and response
- B. Ex.3:7-9 - Seeing through God's eyes
- C. Ex.3:10 - "I have sent you."
- D. Ex.3:12 - "I will be with you." God is our sufficiency.
- E. Ex.3:14 - "I AM hath sent you"
- F. Ex.3:19-20 - Adversity will come, and signs and wonders
- G. Ex.4:1-5, 20 - Dedicating our possessions to God

Topic # 4 The messenger - ingredients for success

- A. Audience (know yours)
- B. Alive (relevant)
- C. Articulate (good speech, grammar, language)
- D. Ability (putting together a quality message)
- E. Anointed (doing it in the Spirit and not the flesh)
- F. Attitude (positive, motivate with grace, no brow beating)
- G. Attentive (to Spirit, to needs of the people)
- H. Accountable (to God)

Topic # 5 What causes people to turn off speakers.

- A. Poor preparation (study/prayer)
- B. Poor performance (delivery)

- C. Purpose (not relevant)
- D. Passion (no zeal)
- E. Personality (too abrasive)
- F. Problems (sin, failure = loss of trust, confidence)

Topic # 6 Its purpose and how to get there, Ac.28:23-24.

- A. Purpose:
  - 1. Ja.1:19-25 - To get action; appeal to the will of man
  - 2. To get to the will of man, appeal to the emotions
  - 3. To get the will of man, appeal to the mind
- B. Prove - mind
- C. Paint - emotions
- D. Persuade - cause to believe

Topic # 7 Seven steps of motivated sequence

- A. Attention step (prove)
  - 1. Why should I listen to you?
  - 2. Key: begin with a good, catchy introduction
- B. Need step (prove) Re.3:17-18
- C. Satisfaction step (prove)
- D. Visualization step (paint)
- E. Action step (persuade)

Topic # 8 Steps to get and keep attention.

- A. Voice:
  - 1. Avoid a monotone voice
  - 2. Pitch / tone can make a major difference

- B. Activity / movement
  - 1. Action stories
  - 2. Action words
  - 3. Sermons moving from point to point
  - 4. Body movement, gestures, and expressions
- C. Reality
- D. Proximity
- E. Familiarity
- F. Novelty
- G. Suspense
- H. Conflict
- I. Humor
- J. Vital

Topic # 9 Verbal support material (putting flesh and blood on the skeleton)

- A. Explanation
  - 1. Thought or word defined
  - 2. Do not let your explanation be too long or abstract.
- B. Analogy / comparison
  - 1. Pointing out similarities between the unknown and the known.
- C. Illustration
  - 1. Story used to bring out the point we are trying to make.
    - a. Hypothetical
    - b. Factual

- 2. Some of the most powerful, life experience
  - D. Specific instance
  - E. Statistics
    - 1. Figures that show proportions
    - 2. Used to prove a point
    - 3. Beware of too much detail, becomes confusing, meaningless
  - F. Testimony
    - 1. Corroborating statements by an influential person
    - 2. Two factors to consider
      - a. Reliability
      - b. Reputation
  - G. Restatement
- Topic # 10 Three purposes of supportive material
- A. Amplify
  - B. Clarify
  - C. Verify
- Topic # 11 Five steps to preparing a message
- A. Determine the purpose of the message:
    - 1. Why am I speaking?
    - 2. What is the cause?
    - 3. Examples
  - B. Analyze the audience and occasion:
    - 1. Who are we speaking to?
    - 2. Is there a special occasion?

3. Examples

C. Determine the subject:

1. First select theme
2. Then attractive title
3. Then a catchy introduction

D. Gather material:

1. Abundance
2. Supportive material

E. Make an outline (write out message)

1. Why notes?
2. Advantages of an outline:
  - a. Not too rigid
  - b. Keeps us on track
  - c. Helps us remember by highlighting

Topic # 12 Preparing messages around four (4) questions

A. Why is it important to me to listen to the message?

1. Be convincing

B. Exactly how do I apply the message to my life?

1. Be clear

C. Who illustrates this?

1. Be correct

D. What does the message persuade me to do right now?

1. Be convicting

Topic # 13 Three (3) parts to a message

- A. Introduction
- B. Main body / outline
- C. Conclusion

Topic # 14 Different types of messages

- A. Textual - Pinpoint one (1) verse
  - 1. Notes and examples
- B. Expository - Lots of verses
  - 1. Notes and examples
- C. Topical - One subject (God's love)
  - 1. Notes and examples
- D. Doctrinal
  - 1. Notes and examples
- E. Key word outline
  - 1. Notes and examples
- F. Contrasting method
  - 1. Notes and examples
- G. Cause and effect
  - 1. Notes and examples
- H. Biographical
  - 1. Notes and examples
- I. Narrative
  - 1. Notes and examples

Topic # 15 The primacy of preaching 2Ti.4:1-4

- A. Discouragement
- B. Direction v.2
  - 1. Preach the word.
- C. Duty v.2
  - 1. Be instant in season and out of season.
- D. Description v.2
  - 1. Reprove, rebuke, exhort
- E. Demeanor v.2
  - 1. Great patience and careful instruction
- F. Demand v.3,4
  - 1. Give them the need, not necessarily what they want.
- G. Disclosure v.1
  - 1. Stricter judgment for the teacher

Closing thought: **HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, WANT SOMEONE TO HEAR IT, AND SAY IT AS SIMPLY AND DIRECTLY AS POSSIBLE**

**I. SELECTING A PROPER THEME**

Sermons need themes for the same reason that buildings need blueprints, a story needs a plot, a picture needs a center of interest, or a sales talk needs a proposition. It is lamentable that many sermons lack a clear theme that can be followed. A theme-less sermon is like a flood, it spreads in all directions. A sermon with a theme is like a river that flows within its banks in a specific direction. There is value in the river to a man. Floods are wild, destructive, and seldom of any value. A train that does not stay on the track cannot go anywhere, no matter how much power the engine has. A sermon may show a great display of steam, but it will never reach its destination without a theme.

A sermon is a means to an end. We cannot take the first step in preparation until we intelligently discern the goal to be reached. A good hunter does not fire in just any direction hoping to hit something. He first sights his game and then takes aim. A Preacher who aims at nothing will hit it. We must choose a target (subject) and then take careful aim. The choice of a worthy theme is a large step toward successful sermon construction.

We must not confuse a theme with a subject or topic. A topic will accurately describe our theme, but a theme is usually longer and more complete than a topic. The topic is what you put on the bulletin board or in the newspaper. The theme is the Preacher's statement of the purpose, or reason, of the sermon. The topic is announced at the beginning of the sermon, before the text is read, or immediately afterward. The theme is stated more fully while giving the introduction. The theme does not need to be stated if the divisions make it sufficiently clear, in which case the theme serves simply as a guide in making the divisions of the sermon. A theme could be called the proposition. Following is an illustration of the difference between the theme and the topic. It is from the text of 2Ti.4:6-8. We may call this theme, "The significance of Paul's last message to each Christian."

### "PAUL'S SWAN SONG"

II Tim. 4:6-8

- I. Its significance in life's battles - "I have fought a good fight."
- II. Its significance is life's race - "I have finished my course."
- III. Its significance in life's doubts - "I have kept my faith."
- IV. Its significance at life's end - "There is laid up for me a crown."

These words of Paul can be seen to have significance for all Christians by the phrase, "...and not to me only, but unto them also who love His appearing."

Generally speaking, we can find two kinds of themes as to their grammatical structure, the rhetorical and the logical. These terms have a specific technical meaning.

A rhetorical theme, or proposition, is a subject with its modifiers, such as: "The blessing of God's people "or" Life's journey is perilous," or "Sinners need to repent." Single words, such as "repentance" or "faith," are too general for themes. Modifiers, such as adjectives or prepositional phrases, are needed to make them specific enough for themes.

Logical themes consist of a subject and a predicate. For instance: "Faith in Christ - the means to Salvation," or "Happiness - not found in possessions." The logical theme may be a question, as: "Why is faith in Christ necessary to Salvation?" The logical theme will suggest certain divisions that will be proofs of the theme. In a question form, the divisions answer the questions. Note: the above themes have a verb and a subject.

It is important to select a proper theme for the occasion. Henry Ward Beecher always wanted the sermon to meet the current needs of the people, which tell us why he was successful. The first question to ask ourselves upon entering our time of study is, "What do

the people need most at this time?" Never should our thought be, "Where can I find a cute outline?" A doctor would not give all his patients the same medicine or any medicine without a diagnosis unless he was a quack. Any one who preaches sermons without knowledge from the Holy Spirit as to what he should be saying is no better than a quack.

People's needs are discerned in a few select ways. They most likely will be revealed to the Preacher by prayer. The Preacher/teacher should be keen in the spirit to hear the Lord's direction. At times some general condition in the community such as a calamity, a general moral trend, or an epidemic of sickness will suggest the needed theme. The holidays of the year could call for a related theme for one of the services, possibly the Sunday evening service. The retail stores and newspapers make the people conscious of the sentiment of holidays. Preachers may take advantage of this when there is a related Bible truth that God wants to express. For instance, the Fourth of July might suggest a theme like, "The Believer's declaration of independence." Near Thanksgiving the theme might be, "In everything give thanks." The evangelist must pray and get the mind of the Lord about the choice of his theme. Where he repeats repertoire sermons he should, after prayer and meditation, adjust them to fit the situation. To have success, a Preacher must preach to those who are present, not those he wishes were present.

Sermon themes need to have the following qualities: being comprehensive, Biblical, dynamic, and specific.

**A. The Theme Must Express the Whole Aim**

The theme should express the whole aim of the sermon, nothing more or less.

**B. A Good Proposition is Biblical.**

The good proposition is Biblical; else the elaboration of it could hardly be called a sermon. Secular themes should not be chosen by a Preacher, for they indeed give strength to worldly thinking.

**C. A Dynamic Theme**

A proper theme is dynamic. It starts the hearer's mind in a specific direction. A theme not arousing interest and stirring mental activity is obviously not the right proposition for the occasion.

**D. A Specific Theme**

Finally, the theme must be specific. People are not interested in the general theme of "Faith," yet will be interested in "World overcoming Faith," or "Faith that assures Salvation." When a proper theme is chosen, we are then ready to proceed to the next step.

**II. CHOOSING AND INTERPRETING A TEXT**

Since it is the responsibility of the Preacher to preach the Gospel, and the Gospel's complete revelation is in the Bible, then a sermon must be based on a Scripture text. It could be argued that we could preach truth without a Bible text. It also can be stated that the sermon would be improved with a text for divine authority, unless we care to give the idea that we are authority enough. If we are to speak with authority, we must use every opportunity to quote, teach, and honor the Scriptures.

Selecting a text will depend upon our approach to the sermon. If the theme is chosen first, then the text must support the theme without distorting or accommodating the text. This can be done by using a concordance to find the words which are synonymous with the principle word in the theme, and then applying the process of elimination. A satisfactory text may occur to our mind (with some meditation and prayer), which harmonizes with the theme chosen. Its exact wording should await the selection of a text to harmonize with them. If the Preacher feels the present need is personal evangelism, he could tentatively word the theme, "Our responsibility in personal evangelism." Then selecting the first chapter of John, verses 40-51, as a text, the Preacher might revise the theme as, "The example of the first disciples in personal evangelism." The following might be his outline:

John 1:40-51

- I. They personally learned about Jesus.
- II. They preached Jesus to another.
- III. They invited another to meet Jesus.

The following week the Preacher may desire to follow up that sermon with another sermon on successful methods of personal evangelism. The prospective theme might be, "Becoming a successful personal Evangelist." After selecting the text in Acts 8, concerning Philip and the eunuch, the theme might be revised to, "A successful revivalist shows how to evangelize." The following outline could result:

- I. The guide is the Holy Spirit.
- II. The starting point is the prospect's interest.
- III. The approach is through the Scripture.
- IV. The subject is Christ.
- V. The aim is a full surrender.

Frequently he will choose the text before the theme. Then, the text will come to him during prayer or meditation, or while the Preacher is studying the Bible. He will be strongly impressed with the practical application of this particular text to the people. Though it is best to start with a text, the needs of the people can give rise to the sermon. A theme will

then come to the Preacher. If the mind of the Preacher is saturated with Scripture and he is discerning of people's problems in the light of biblical solutions, he could think of a text when a need appears, even as a doctor thinks of sicknesses in terms of specific remedies or kinds of operations. If the Preacher is ministering a series through a book of the Bible, the text will come before the theme, though there will most likely be a general theme for the whole book given at the beginning of the series.

Since we are concerned in this chapter with the selection of a text, the following rules are suggested:

**A. Select a Real Text**

A real text has a complete statement, precept, or narrative used with the sense intended by the author. Do not use single words or fragment texts. A legitimate theme will be based on a real text. Texts which are isolated from the context, or are accommodated to an application that is foreign to the original purpose of the author, are not good texts. The words of Scripture cease to be truth when they are accommodated. For example, the words, "Let us do evil that good may come" is from the Bible, but when separated from the context it contradicts the teaching of the Sacred Author, and, as such, is not Scripture.

**B. Select the Great, Ethical Texts of the Bible**

No text gets worn out from frequent use. It is often used because it is a great preaching text. We need not fear being thought naive or a beginner because we use a familiar text. The great Preachers of all the ages have used these same great texts. People are interested in them, for they have been used for comfort and light in dark places.

**C. Avoid Texts Known to be Interpolations**

Portions or scripture, which have crept into manuscripts through scribes' errors, or were added from marginal notes, and are not found in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts, are known as interpolations. These portions are newly inserted and misleading, and can be avoided by using the newer versions for comparison, such as the New International Version or the Amplified Version. They are not numerous, however, but should not be used. None of them contain false teaching, but a sermon based on a spurious text would have no authority with such people who know of them.

**D. Avoid Uninspired Sayings When Choosing a Text**

These sayings have their place in the Bible, for they were truly spoken. However, they are not proper texts, for they lack Divine authority. Consider the words of Job's friends in the Book of Job. Some of these words sound good when isolated, but all three were in error and were rebuked by God. Other uninspired sayings include

Pharaoh, Satan, Balaam, Pilate, and other men whose words are reported, but who are not inspired Apostles or Prophets.

## **E. Do Not Choose Odd, Strange Texts**

Serious ministers have no time for novelties or curiosities. Humor, though not forbidden when in good taste, should not be humorous at the expense of God's written Word. Texts may seem strange because they are oriental or old English idioms. For instance, a Preacher once used a text from Hosea, "Ephraim is a cake not turned," with the topic being "Half Baked." This is not a proper sermon topic, for it uses the idiom of the Middle East to draw attention to itself and does not fulfill the purpose of the speaker.

Before a text can be expressed in an intelligent theme and divided, it must be properly interpreted. Observe the following rules of interpretation:

1. Use the light of the context to interpret the text.

Scripture which seems to have one meaning may actually mean something quite different when the context is read. First Corinthians 2:9 seems to refer to heaven's future glory, yet the context reveals it to be a quotation from the Old Testament predicting fuller revelations of the dispensation of grace, which we may enjoy in this present world. Hebrews 12:1 appears to charge the Believer with living carefully before their neighbors, but the context, which includes chapter eleven (11), shows its reference is to the Believer's race as encompassed by the heroes of faith, the great cloud of martyrs of chapter eleven (11), or those around us today. Colossians 2:21 says to "...touch not, taste not, handle not..." which would seem to be a good prohibition text, but it is useless for such, as it is a quotation of negative precepts that legalistic teachers had been using. Certainly there are some good texts against beverage alcohol. Texts such as we have pointed out are so numerous that we are not safe in the interpretation of a text until the context has been studied.

2. Interpret a text in harmony with the teaching of the whole Bible.

The Bible never contradicts itself. When the text could have two meanings, take the one which is in harmony with the teaching of the whole Body of Scripture. Luke 14:26 seems to say that a disciple of Jesus must hate his near relatives, but this would be contradictory to the whole Body of Scripture in its teaching on love. Therefore, "hate" must be taken figuratively as hyperbole. It means that disciples must be willing to give up all home ties to heed the call to service.

3. The text must be interpreted in harmony with sound, systematic doctrine.

Doctrines are formed by studying the whole Bible's teaching of a subject. A single text which seems contrary cannot be used against any well-established Bible doctrine. The orthodox tenets of the church have been subjected to 2,000 years of scholarly interpretation. This does not guarantee infallibility, but certainly we should take great care when interpreting a text contrary to the general consensus of opinion.

4. A text should be taken literally unless it is obviously figurative.

Unless a literal interpretation would lead to an absurdity or impossibility, take the text literally. The Bible was written in the common people's language, for the average reader. Unrestricted spiritualizing and allegorizing takes away from the truth of the Bible, and makes it a play ground for people possessed with a metaphysical mind. The spiritualizing done by Origen, and a few other early fathers, has created real problems for some later, and even some modern Preachers. That spiritualizing is wrong as seen by the fact that no two (2) such interpreters get the same result. There are some figures of speech in the Bible, but they are so obvious that there should not be any confusion. In the vast majority of the cases where the Bible narrative is allegorized, the forced application is inferior to the real and literal application.

5. We should consult the original languages.

If possible, check the original language as a help to interpretation. Some caution is needed. We should never make our own translation of words or passages of Greek and Hebrew texts, unless we have studied the grammar of these languages. Preachers who have a doctrinal axe to grind may quote Greek and Hebrew supposing to be an authority, when they have simply consulted a lexicon or an interlinear Bible. This is an unsafe, and possibly dishonest, procedure. Some Preachers will quote the original words from hearsay, trusting another's research which may or may not have been accurate. There have been some absurd renderings of Greek passages, which when traced through several persons, were found to be all quoted from hearsay. It is probably not good to quote Greek and Hebrew from the pulpit, for most of the Believers do not appreciate the quotations. We should give the benefits of good, thorough research, but do not display methods. Every artist uses a brush to paint a picture, but it is not expected that we could see the brush marks on the finished painting. This is not to discourage the Greek student; for he can profit immeasurably by his studies. There are scores of passages whose full depth cannot be seen in an English translation. There are also many homiletical hints to be discovered in the study of the original languages. Greek and Hebrew will aid the minister in interpreting his texts correctly, but he should keep these aids in his study where they belong.

6. It is good to compare the Scriptures in various translations.

Without a thorough knowledge of the original languages, we will be helped to gather the proper interpretation of the text by comparing several translations of the Bible. It will be helpful to use these three (3) different types of versions in textual study:

- a. The King James, or revisions of the King James, such as the New American Standard, or the New King James
- b. A literal translation such as Young's Literal Translation, Rotherham's Emphasized Bible, or Marshall's interlinear Greek and English New Testament
- c. A paraphrase translation, such as the Living Bible, the Amplified Bible, the New Testament, an Expanded Translation by Kenneth S. Wuest, or the New Testament in Modern English by J.B. Phillips

By comparing textual readings in several versions, misinterpretations based upon out-of-use, archaic words will be avoided. For instance, "study" in Second Timothy 2:15, will be seen to mean "strive earnestly," not study books; "charity" in First Corinthians chapter thirteen (13), will be replaced by "love"; "let" in Second Thessalonians 2:7, will give way to "hinder;" "prevent" in Second Thessalonians 4:15, will be seen to mean "precede"; "conversation" in Galatians 1:13, will be seen rather to mean "behavior," or "lifestyle." These are only a few of the many which could be listed. These show the need for consulting of either the original languages, or several translations, for correct understanding.

In the study of words, much help may be obtained by using an analytical concordance such as Young's or Strong's. Many who have not studied the original languages find great help in the use of word-books, such as Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words and Wilson's Word Studies in the Old Testament.

7. It is also good to consult parallel passages.

Scripture should be interpreted by Scripture. If the same truth is expressed in several places with somewhat different words, it is made clear by comparison. When an ethical principle is applied to different cases, it is seen as general in application and not simply a local emergency measure. Some commands and prohibitions are for local and temporary situations, while others are for the whole church for all time. The problem of application will usually be solved by comparing parallel passages.

8. We can also consult an exegetical type commentary.

Finally, consult one of the good commentaries of the critical, exegetical type. Devotional commentaries do not give much attention to interpretation. They may be helpful in suggesting points for elaboration, but we are interested now in the interpretation of the text, which always comes before elaboration. The writers of the good exegetical commentaries were careful Bible scholars who understood theology (the study of God), and the original languages. While they are not infallible, their opinions are worth considering while in the process of interpreting the text. CAUTION! Do not become a slavish follower of commentaries. Neither should we reject their explanations without good reason and careful study.

### **III. ORGANIZING A SERMON**

Concrete, wood, steel, and glass do not make a building; Stones, hammer, and chisel do not make a statue: Steel, glass, rubber, and cotton do not make an automobile: Paints, easel, and brushes do not make a painting. Facts, illustrations, proofs, and applications do not make a sermon. The difference in each case between the materials and a finished product is organization. Some do not preach organized sermons; in many cases because they do not understand the value of organization, in other cases because organizational methods are not known. Following is a list of reasons for organization in a sermon:

#### **A. Organization Facilitates the Preachers Delivery**

When sermon thoughts are arranged logically, the related thoughts follow one another easily. The whole body of material is easier to keep in mind if it has a plan. A Preacher may suppose that he has greater freedom in his delivery if he is free to say whatever comes to his mind on any subject, but many times such talk should be labeled, "Miscellaneous thoughts on religion." With any mental discipline, a Preacher will find that the organized discourse is easier to deliver; while that which he delivers will deserve the term "sermon."

#### **B. Organized Sermons are Pleasing to the Hearer**

The organized sermon is pleasing to the hearer, for it has beauty. If it is argued that one should not strive for beauty in preaching, we answer, "Why not?" Jesus on the mount preached the most beautiful sermons with beautiful illustrations to make service more attractive, so why should the sermon lack attractiveness? Chaos is admired by no one, nor can a hearer be expected to listen attentively to a helter-skelter sermon. Neither will sensational stories, humor, and pulpit antics make up for poorly planned and unorganized material.

#### **C. Organized Sermons are Easier to Remember**

The organized sermon is easier to remember. A sermon has permanent value when it is remembered. A layman does not face his problems during the service on Sunday, but while at work, as he transacts business, or in the company of worldly

men. The ability to solve problems as they arise depends upon his ability to call to mind the counsel given by his Pastor in church. If he fails in the time of trial, his Pastor, who only makes temporary impressions, is to some degree responsible for the failure. Anyone in doubt about this psychological principle should test it for himself. Let him look at a pile of stones and see if he can remember the location of each and every stone a few minutes later. However, let him pick out the white stones of a uniform size and arrange them around a flower bed and he will remember the design, order, and purpose almost indefinitely. Just so, let him call to mind the sermons he remembers and they will have design. We want immediate results from preaching, but we should strive continuously for permanent results. Look at the two following outlines and measure for yourself which you would remember.

- I. God saves mankind.
- II. Men ought to love one another.
- III. Faith is necessary to Salvation.
- IV. Sin will bring eternal condemnation.
- V. Lying is a great sin.
- VI. There are many signs of Christ's imminent return.

Text: John 3:16

- I. The great lake - God so loved the world.
- II. The river - that he gave his Son
- III. The pitcher - whosoever believeth on Him
- IV. The drink - should have everlasting life

The second outline creates a picture of a lake out of which flows a river, into which a pitcher is dripped, and from which is taken a drink. From such a picture the mind will grasp and hold an image for a long period of time. Every time afterward that one sees a lake, river, or pitcher, the sermon is likely to come to mind.

#### **D. The Organized Sermon can be easily understood**

A well organized sermon will seldom be vague, for organization dispels ambiguity. One of the best ways to determine whether one really understands a subject is to attempt to organize the subject. A person could never learn to play a musical instrument and read notes without learning one thing at a time in an organized fashion. It is known by educators that no body of truth can be transferred from one

person to another in bulk. There must be a systematic impartation of truth, followed by an appeal. The lessons must be separated, and given one at a time in their logical order, if the hearer is to clearly understand the contents and purpose of the sermon.

## **E. Organization Increases a Sermon's Effectiveness**

We should learn this from the salesman and the lawyer. The salesman knows how to approach his client and when to make his appeal and closing. He stays on the subject, presenting the merits of his product, until he conveys to the buyer a picture of himself as a delighted owner of the best product available. The lawyer carefully builds a defense, step by step, until the jury cannot see his client other than as an innocent man. The unorganized appeal would just be so much talk falling on deaf ears. We must not overlook the Holy Spirit as the greatest strength in the sermon's effectiveness. The Preacher prays over the sermon, committing it to God; but if man has a part in delivering the sermon, he must make his part as effective as he can. Humans doing their part poorly will make God's part less effective.

## **F. Qualities of Organization**

Now that we have seen the advantages of organization, let us look further to the qualities which organization will bring about.

1. The sermon structure must have unity.

Unity means that one theme flows throughout all the divisions. Each division must be related to the theme, with something in common to each division. It is like having a common denominator, to use a thought from mathematics. When sermons have unity, a common idea will flow through each division. A sermon without unity is not less than a sermon, just several little talks strung together by time. We cannot expect to be forceful enough to change man's conduct in a thirty-minute sermon unless we stay on a single idea. Prayerless people will not be turned to prayerful lives just because the Preacher made a few, or even several, remarks about prayer in the sermon, along with several other assorted ideas. However, if the Preacher devotes all his time to encouraging prayer as Christian duty, it is likely he will get good results. It may be he will need to preach a series on prayer before he sees real change in their prayer habits. If a carpenter wants to drive a nail, he will continuously pound in one place. The direct way to "go to town" is to move in a straight line.

The following outline illustrates unity. The topic: "The throne of grace." Text: Heb. 4:16.

Theme: "Approaching the Throne of Grace"

- I. How we approach the throne of grace: "With boldness."

- II. Why we approach the throne of grace: "To obtain mercy and receive help."
- III. When we approach the throne of grace: "In the time of need,"  
At all times."

Notice there is a commonality to each division and the theme flows throughout. To introduce the subject of tithing into this outline would violate the unity of it. When people need to hear about tithing, make it the whole sermon.

2. The divisions must be coherent.

In addition to unity, the divisions must have coherence. Not only must the parts be related to the common theme, they must adhere to each other. Notice that there is unity but not a lot of coherence in the following:

- I. God is the author of faith
- II. Without faith a Christian will fail
- III. Faith is necessary to Salvation

Faith is common to the above divisions, yet the divisions have very little relation to each other. Notice how the next outline has unity and coherence.

Topic: "Paul's Three I Am's"  
Text: Romans 1:14-16

The theme is Paul's state of mind regarding the preaching of the Gospel of Christ:

- I. I am a debtor to preach, v.14.
- II. I am not ashamed to preach, v.16.
- III. I am ready to preach, v.15.

Coherence is a smooth transition from point to point. This may be accomplished through transitional phrases that unite the divisions, saying something like, "Not only did Paul voice his feelings of indebtedness to preach the Gospel at Rome, he was not ashamed to do so." The divisions of a sermon are not to be a series of sermonettes that are loosely strung

together, but each division must be logically arranged to be logical steps toward the climax.

3. Another good quality of organization is progress.

This quality assures the hearer's attention being carried along to the climax. Hearing a sermon is like riding a bicycle. When progress stops, a person falls. Progress can be achieved by arranging the divisions so that each rises toward the goal. Progress is hindered by side-tracking from the theme (rabbit chasing). Side trips will not take us nearer home. Hearers do not want to wait at a crossroads while the Preacher takes a side-path. It is further hindered by needless elaboration of a single division. If there are two or three main divisions only, there must be several sub-divisions under each division to keep the sermon moving. It will help to make progress apparent if the hearers know the mile posts from the beginning.

This is easy to do, as the following illustrates:

Text: Mark 1:14-15

- I. Jesus came - His advent
- II. Jesus came preaching - his mission
- III. Jesus came preaching repentance - His message

Note how each division rises above the preceding, reaching a climax in the last division. This outline, properly handled, would sustain interest because it progresses.

4. The structure of the sermon needs symmetry.

Proportion is necessary in works of art. A person's sense of taste is offended by things out of proportion. We do not put a porch as big as the building on a house. It would be an architectural oddity, being impractical as well. Often sermons are lacking in symmetry. Too much time is spent in the introduction and the first points, that there is not enough time to deliver the latter divisions properly. Sometimes a sub-division is raised up far out of proportion to its importance, in which case the symmetry and the progress will be violated. If the sub-division just mentioned is that important, another should be chosen as the sub-division, and the sub-division should have been made a main division. Not all the divisions should be of equal length, but an amount of time is to be given to the division equal to its importance. If the divisions are equal in importance, then they should each receive equal treatment. This is seldom the fact. It is not possible to illustrate symmetry with an outline, because symmetry is achieved mostly in the delivery. The sermon may

appear symmetrical in preparation, but when preached it may be like looking in a curved mirror.

5. The organization should have a climax.

The meaning of the word "climax" is equal to the word progress. In the Greek, it means "ladder." Today it means the final point of development. A sermon may have progress, and yet not leave the impression of reaching a goal. A sermon may steadily rise toward a goal, yet fail to arrive at what could be called a proper goal. Therefore, a sermon must not only move, it must reach an adequate goal as is indicated by the theme. A merry-go-round moves, but never goes anywhere. An arrow which is shot into the air progresses upward, yet does not reach the goal: It falls to the ground as gravity takes over from momentum. An arrow shot at a target hits the mark. It has progress and climax, and the archer is satisfied. Some sermons stop because of a loss of momentum, while others hit the mark and people are satisfied. Climax may be achieved in the construction, but the points must be arranged so that a climax is reached when we get to the end of the sermon. Climax is achieved in the delivery by starting with a deliberate pace and a passionless voice, while gradually increasing the emphasis and gestures as the sermon progresses, causing the most intense point to show up at the appeal. Shouting in the introduction will put a person in need of a huge amplifier at the climax. The following topical sermon outline lacks climax.

"Three reasons for believing in immortality."

- I. The Bible promises it.
- II. Nature illustrates it.
- III. All men expect or desire it.

Such a sermon lacks climax, for many reasons could be added to the three (3) given. It moves, but does not arrive. The following illustrates climax.

Topic: "Christian Attainment"  
Text: Ph.3:13-15

Theme: The Christian's attitude toward attainment.

- I. His attitude toward past attainment, humble forgetfulness.
- II. His attitude toward present attainment, earnest reaching forth.

- III. His attitude toward future attainment, confident expectation of perfection.

The above is not a perfect sermon, but it reaches a goal to which nothing should be added, as it has a climax.

To go over it again, the qualities of the good sermon organization are:

- a. Unity
- b. Coherence
- c. Progress
- d. Symmetry
- e. Climax

#### **IV. SERMON CLASSIFICATIONS, AND WHEN TO USE EACH ONE**

We have talked about selecting a theme, choosing and interpreting a text, and organizing a sermon. We will now examine the kinds of sermons and how each functions. Everyone does not classify sermons the same way. They are usually classified as topical, textual, or expository. These classifications are based upon the use made of the text in the construction of the sermon.

##### **A. The Topical Sermon Uses From the Text, a Topic, or Subject**

The divisions are decided by the Preacher in agreement with the rhetorical possibilities of the subject, combined with the Preacher's knowledge of the subject as it is dealt with in the whole Bible.

Examples: "REDEMPTION"

- I. The meaning of redemption
- II. The necessity of redemption
- III. The method of redemption
- IV. The results of redemption

"EVIDENCE OF GOD'S LOVE"

- I. As seen in the Bible
- II. As seen in nature

### III. As seen in providence

This method gives liberty of composition and gives complete treatment of any subject. It gives freedom to the Preacher's innovative ideas, and opens a wide door to rhetorical eloquence. However, the topical sermon is usually colored more than other types of sermons with personal views and prejudices. It is usually too general, and usually topical preaching becomes very secular. The topical method may be objected to, as it develops a sermon by extension so that the divisions are like chain links instead of parts of a designed structure: The number of these divisions or links is arbitrary, as there is no reason in most cases that there could not be more or fewer divisions without harming the sermon. The second example, given above, shows no good reason, other than the limitations of time, why other "evidence of God's love" could not be included.

Though the disadvantages appear to outweigh the advantages of topical preaching, there are many uses of the method, and there are subjects which are handled by the topical method. Topical sermons are advantageous in the following situations:

1. When the subject is not well, or completely, dealt with by any passage of Scripture
2. When a subject is to be dealt with in a general way, such as presenting a doctrine which is unfamiliar to the hearers
3. When we want to present evangelistic truth to a group of unsaved persons who are obviously unfamiliar with the Bible
4. When dealing with social or moral problems not prevalent in Bible times, or not dealt with by Bible writers

### **B. The Textual Sermon Takes a Subject and Main Divisions**

The main point of the sermon is only the stated, or clearly inferred, one by the Scripture upon which the sermon is based. However, the sub-divisions are to be invented in the way that the divisions are invented in the topical sermon.

Example: "The Minister An Example"  
1Ti.4:12

- I. An example in word
- II. An example in conduct
- III. An example in love

IV. An example in faith

V. An example in purity

The text makes mention of the good qualities of word, conduct, love, faith, and purity. No other information is here without drawing upon other parts of the Bible, or from a persons own experience. The sermon is textual because the text forms the main divisions, and the sub-divisions (elaboration) come from other places. The King James Version was not used for this text, because "conversation" and "charity" used there are words not used today and really mean "conduct" and "love." The word "spirit" does not appear in the early Greek manuscripts so does not belong here. This shows us the wisdom of looking at other translations when we are looking at text interpretation.

Textual sermons are more scriptural in design than topical sermons, thus satisfying the hearer who expects something from the text. The textual method allows diversity in construction and selection. Textual sermons seem to the hearer much more like a finished discourse, because the quantity of divisions is determined by the material in the text. When the divisions have been dealt with, the hearer is satisfied that it is complete. The textual sermon will usually be remembered longer. When the hearer is able to follow the sermon with his Bible, a connection is fixed in his mind between the Scriptures and the Preacher's admonitions, so he can recall the message any time he re-reads the passage.

Some object to the textual method saying it restricts the Preacher's originality, that it hinders a sufficiently broad treatment of a subject. Many times sermons are too broad to begin with. Also, Preachers who use textual sermons often accommodate the text and actually do violence to the true meaning. The last objection is real, but texts do not have to be accommodated, for the actual application intended by the writer is always richer than the forced one. Preachers accommodate their text because they are following an outmoded practice, used for several generations in Europe and America, from which era many printed sermons have been borrowed. Excellent Preachers who are well trained and accept the Bible as divine revelation do not purposely force the text.

Textual sermons should be used:

1. When a single passage of Scripture will be the principal points to meet the needs of the people
2. When preaching on ethics, because the text carries greater authority when the preaching is specific evangelistic truth. A strong text bears conviction as it is fully dealt with, while the passing quotation is not as effective
3. When dealing with specific doctrinal truths.

### **C. The Expository Sermon Takes a Subject, Main Divisions and Sub-Divisions from the Text**

Most often it is based on a longer passage of Scripture than the topical or textual sermon. It may be that the text is a whole paragraph, a chapter, or it could be a whole book. Ideas must not be introduced into the expository sermon that did not come from the passage of Scripture upon which it is based. It is an exposition of that passage of Scripture, and that one only.

Example: "Temptation"  
James 1:12-15

- I. The origin of temptation, v.13-14
  - A. Not from God, v.13
  - B. From inward desire, v.14
- II. The results of yielding to temptation, v.15
  - A. First sin, v.15
  - B. Then death, v.15
- III. The reward of enduring temptation, v.12
  - A. Blessedness, v.12
  - B. A crown of life, v.12

The text of our example has four (4) verses which is a complete paragraph. It is clear that each heading and sub-heading was taken from the passage that we used for the text.

Many believe expository sermons have advantages. These perceived advantages are:

- 1. It is most like the preaching of the Apostles and other early Preachers.
- 2. It leads all involved to a greater knowledge of the Scripture.
- 3. It promotes greater respect for the Scriptures on the part of the hearer.
- 4. It helps keep down the tendency to loosely interpret and accommodate the passage.

5. It holds back the tendency to preach pet doctrines.
6. It tends to prevent a monotone voice in that the variety of material will tend to require flexibility in a Preacher's volume and pitch.
7. It is recommended when exposition is used as a series, for it makes for ease of text choice.
8. It makes introduction of hard admonitions easier, and the Preacher is then unlikely to be accused of preaching at individuals. The offensive injunction will fall within the text, thus the Preacher cannot be blamed for making remarks concerning it.

Objections to the expository method are:

1. It is not conducive to unity in the sermon. Expository sermons can and should have unity as should all types of sermons.
2. Some contend it does not meet today's problems. However, nearly, if not all, problems are dealt with in Scripture, though perhaps not specifically in application as others.
3. It is supposedly not sensational enough for today. Truth is said to be stranger than fiction. The Bible equals any source for human interest and great deeds. With any dramatic ability, a Preacher can make the Bible scenes and people alive again in a fascinating manner. The Preacher is not being sensational for sensation's sake. Sensation gets quick results, but not the kind that lasts. The root of these objections comes either from not understanding the method, or the expository sermons have been poor examples that they have been exposed to. Expository preaching may be confused with the running commentary of the Sunday school lesson variety, or the exegetical lecture that might be delivered at a prayer meeting. True expository sermons have organization, a goal, and will reach a climax, just as any other sermon.

Expository preaching should be used:

1. When the need can be met with a passage of Scripture containing all the points to meet the need.
2. When preaching a series of sermons.
3. When dealing with a narrative, parable, or psalm.

4. When there is a desire to give deal with a passage of more than one (1) or two (2) verses.
5. When preaching through a book of the Bible.
6. When preaching on a Bible character, and the material is fairly close together.
7. When preaching on the great chapters of the Bible.
8. When the sermon is designed for evangelistic preaching based on a story, parable, or incident.

We have now covered themes, texts, sermon organization, and sermon classifications, with their uses. We have selected a theme and a text. We know what qualities of organization we need, and selected the type of sermon that will be best for the need. We will now look at constructing the sermon. We will look first at the topical sermon, then the textual, and, finally, the expository.

## Homework 1 Chapter I-II

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. A theme-less sermon is like a flood, it spreads in all directions.

True or False

2. We can take the first step in preparation of a sermon even before we intelligently discern the goal to be reached.

True or False

3. A theme could be called the \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Hint                      B. Clue  
C. Proposition              D. Subject

4. Logical themes consist of:

- A. A subject and a predicate  
B. Subjects and modifiers  
C. Specifics and dynamics  
D. None of the above

5. It is important to select the proper ministry theme for the occasion.

True or False

6. It is not necessary for a sermon to be based on a Scripture text.

True or False

7. The preacher should give the people practical application of the particular text he is preaching from.

True or False

8. Texts which are isolated from the context, or are accommodated to an application that is foreign to the original purpose of the author, can still be considered good texts.

True or False

9. Humor when in good taste, should not be humorous at the expense of God's written Word.

True or False

10. Scripture which seems to have one meaning may actually mean something quite different when the context is read.

True or False

11. The orthodox tenets of the church have been subjected to \_\_\_\_ years of scholarly interpretation.

- A. 3,500                      B. 2,000  
C. 1,500                      D. 1,000

12. The Bible was written in the common people's language, for the average reader.

True or False

13. There are scores of passages whose full depth can only be seen in an English translation.

True or False

14. There are many homiletical hints to be discovered in the study of the original languages.

True or False

15. It is not important to study several different translations of the Bible when preparing a sermon.

True or False

16. By comparing textual readings in several versions, misinterpretations based upon out-of-use, archaic words will be avoided.

True or False

17. Books that are used to study the origin of words are:

- A. Matthew Henry Commentary  
B. Dake's Bible  
C. Vine's Expository Dictionary  
D. None of the above

18. Scripture should be interpreted by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Scholars                      B. Multilingual people  
C. Other Scripture              D. None of the above

19. Devotional commentaries give much attention to interpretation.

True or False

20. The writers of the good exegetical commentaries were careful Bible scholars who understood theology.

True or False

## Homework 2, Chapter III-IV

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. The difference in each case between the materials and a finished product is \_\_\_\_.

- A. Time
- B. Organization
- C. Study
- D. None of the above

2. The organized sermon is pleasing to the hearer.

True or False

3. The organized sermon is not necessarily easier to remember.

True or False

4. We should strive for immediate results from preaching.

True or False

5. When a picture is painted in the mind of the sermon, it will cause the one hearing the message to grasp or hold the image for a long period of time.

True or False

6. A sermon's unity means:

- A. It is only about one subject
- B. It is preached only one time
- C. One theme flows throughout all the divisions of the sermon
- D. None of the above

7. If the Preacher devotes all his time to encouraging prayer as Christian duty, it is likely he will get good results.

True or False

8. For a sermon to have coherence means:

- A. It has unity within its division
- B. Each division had unity in relation to the other divisions and there is a smooth transition from point to point
- C. There is no need for unity among your topic points
- D. None of the above

9. \_\_\_\_ can be achieved by arranging the divisions so that each rises toward the goal.

- A. Progress
- B. Context
- C. Enlightenment
- D. None of the above

10. Progress is hindered by:

- A. Side-tracking from the theme
- B. Needless elaboration of a single division
- C. Both A and B
- D. None of the above

11. If the divisions are equal in importance, then the second point should receive less treatment to save time.

True or False

12. The definition for the word "climax" in Greek is:

- A. Ending
- B. Ladder
- C. Completion
- D. Achievement

13. The topical sermon is usually colored more than other types of sermons with personal views and prejudices.

True or False

14. Topical sermons are advantageous when:

- A. There is little time to prepare a sermon
- B. When you are speaking to mature believers
- C. When dealing with social or moral problems not prevalent in Bible times
- D. None of the above

15. Topical sermons are more scriptural in design than textual sermons, thus satisfying the hearer who expects something from the text.

True or False

16. Textual sermons should be used:

- A. When a single passage of Scripture will be the principal point
- B. When preaching on ethics
- C. When dealing with specific doctrinal truths
- D. All of the above

17. Textual sermons are based on a longer passage of Scripture than the topical or expository sermon.

True or False

18. Expository sermons promote greater respect for the Scriptures on the part of the hearer.

True or False

19. Expository preaching should be used:
- A. When teaching a single sermon not a series
  - B. When dealing with a narrative, parable, or psalm
  - C. When the sermon is not designed for evangelistic preaching
  - D. None of the above

20. A topical classification when preaching on the great chapters of the Bible.  
True or False