

Preaching I Syllabus Fall, 2008

Instructor: Dr. Bruce H. McRae

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My Background...

- An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America since 1986
- Educational Background
 - BA from Washington University in St. Louis
 - M Div from Westminster Theological Seminary
 - D Min from Fuller Theological Seminary, Los Angeles, California
 - MBA from Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
- Ministry History
 - 1986-1988 -- Assistant Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Doraville, GA
 - 1988-1994 -- Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church (PCA), Los Angeles, CA
 - 1994-2000 – Senior Pastor, Brookwood Presbyterian Church, Snellville, GA
 - 2000-2002 – Associate Director and Professor of Practical Theology, Atlanta Seminary for Ministry and Theology, Atlanta, GA
 - 2002-2003 – Executive Pastor, North Park Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA
 - 2003-2007 – Executive Pastor, PCA Church of the Redeemer, Atlanta, GA
 - 2005-2007 – Marketing Manager, UPS, Atlanta, GA
 - 2003 and current – Teacher of practical theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta, GA
 - 2008 and current – Director of Church Relations, Great Commission Publications (the publishing company owned by the Presbyterian Church in America)

Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to teach students how to effectively prepare to communicate the word of God through both teaching and preaching. We will focus particularly on preparing sermons, but the course is not limited to “sermon preparation” in the narrow sense. Rather, we will look at the essential principles for preparing messages that are intended to effectively and practically proclaim the gospel of Christ and the Word of God – in whatever context the message is given. The principles we discuss will apply to any kind of public presentation of the Word of God that you will be called upon to give.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, I would like each student to...

1. Understand preaching and teaching in the context of ministry – particularly how effective preaching and teaching can only flow out of a person who is living out the gospel

2. Understand the place and importance of expository preaching in the church
3. Be able to preach and teach in way that is purpose-driven – that is, be able to explain and apply the main idea and purpose of a biblical text in a way that will help bring about the change that God desires to see in peoples’ lives
4. Be able to go through the whole process of sermon/message preparation from the initial stages through the actual delivery of the message
5. Preach and teach in a way that takes sin seriously, and is Christ-centered in its focus

Course Textbooks

There are three textbooks for this course. They contain principles to which you will come back again and again in your preaching and teaching ministry. You should re-read them periodically.

Preaching with Purpose, by Jay Adams

A very helpful short book, with great emphasis on the importance of preaching that is driven by the purpose of seeing life-change in your hearers.

Christ-Centered Preaching, 2nd Edition, by Bryan Chapell

What I consider to be the modern classic on sermon preparation today. A complete textbook on all aspects of sermon preparation, but with a major emphasis that most textbooks on preaching do not have – a focus on making Christ and the gospel central to preaching.

Him We Proclaim by Dennis Johnson.

A book which captures the Reformed concept of biblical-theological preaching, that all texts lead to Christ, and that they must be preached in a way that is focused on Christ and his work.

Course Articles (downloadable off the course website)

The Book of James in parallel translations

“A Case for Expository Preaching” and “What’s the Big Idea” by Haddon Robinson

“The Fair to Middling Preacher” by Mark J. Galli

“The Call to Study” and “Preparing Sermons” by John Stott

“Preaching as Application” by John F. Bettler.

“Confessions of a Reformed Bore” by Philip Campbell

“Sermon Structure and Flow” by Glenn Knecht

“The Oral Manuscript” by Clyde Fant

Course Outline

Good preaching, as everything else in life, is characterized by simplicity. I do not believe that there are thousands of principles to keep in mind in preparing messages. Rather, there are a few simple principles to which you will come back again and again. In our class periods together, I will be discussing and illustrating these basic principles. Here is the basic course outline:

- I. Preparing Yourself for Preaching and Teaching
- II. The Place of Preaching and Teaching in Ministry
- III. Purpose-Centered Preaching and Teaching
- IV. The Process of Preparing Messages
 1. Select the Passage
 2. Study the Passage
 3. Find the Big Idea and the Purpose
 4. Outline the Passage Around the Purpose and the Big Idea
 5. Pray through the passage
 6. Study the World into which the Passage is Spoken
 7. Illustrate the passage
 8. Apply the passage
 9. Introduce the sermon
 10. Conclude the sermon
- V. The Priority of Christ in Preaching and Teaching
- VI. The Delivery of Messages

Course Format

This course is the first part of two courses that are co-requisite with each other: Preaching I and Preaching I Lab. In Preaching I you will study the basic principles of good gospel communication, and in the Preaching I Lab you will practice these principles through the actual giving of messages. These courses are deliberately “front-loaded” during the semester – you are getting the basic principles of preaching early on, so that you can then begin to practice them during the lab in the second half of the semester. Preaching I classes will consist of lecture and discussion, and I will use PowerPoint to make my presentation, and the PowerPoint notes will be available on the course website by at least the day prior to the course meeting.

Course Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Class Date	Topic	Reading Assignment Due	Written Assignment Due
August 26	Preparing Yourself for Preaching, The Place of Preaching	Chapell, Chapters 1-3 “A Case for Expository Preaching” “The Fair to Middling Preacher”	
Sep 2	Preaching with Purpose	Chapell, Chapter 4 Adams, Chapters 1-8 “What’s the Big Idea?” “Preaching as Application” “Confessions of a Reformed Bore”	Book of James Preaching Portion Assignment
Sep 9	The Process of Sermon Preparation, Part I:	Chapell, Chapter 5 Adams, Chapter 13 “Sermon Structure and Flow” “A Call to Study” and “Sermon Preparation” by John Stott	Theme and Purpose Statement Assignment
Sep 16	The Process of Sermon Preparation, Part II	Chapell, Chapter 6 Adams, Chapter 9 Johnson, Chapter 6	Passage Study and Theme Assignment
Sep 23	The Process of Sermon Preparation, Part III	Chapell, Chapter 7 Adams, Chapters 14-15 Johnson, Chapter 7	Outline Assignment
Sep 30	The Process of Sermon Preparation, Part IV	Chapell, Chapters 8-9 Adams, Chapters 10-11, 18-19 Johnson, Chapter 8	Illustration Assignment
Oct 7	Christ-Centered Preaching	Chapell, Chapters 10-11 Adams, Chapter 20 Johnson, Chapter 9	Application, Introduction and Conclusion Assignment
Oct 14	The Delivery of Sermons	Chapell, Appendices 1-5 Adams, Chapters 16, 21-22 Johnson, Chapter 10 “The Oral Manuscript”	Christ-Centered Preaching Assignment
Oct 28			Final Written and Outlined Sermon Due

Highly Recommended Books on Preaching

Using Illustrations to Preach with Power, by Bryan Chapell. *Since illustrations are such a critical part of preaching and communication, it is wise to study them further. This is an excellent book further exploring how to use illustrations in preaching.*

Preaching by Fred Craddock. *Craddock comes out of a more liberal theological tradition, and he is a primary proponent of the narrative school of preaching. He is a master communicator, and his book contains great insight about connecting with people.*

The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text, by Sydney Greidanus *A fairly academic treatment of biblical preaching, but it synthesizes a great deal of material from other books. It also gives helpful information about how to approach the different kinds of biblical genre from a preaching point of view.*

Inductive Preaching, by Ralph L. Lewis with Gregg Lewis
A very good “one-point” book on the topic of inductive preaching – that is, preaching to help people listen. The basic point is that preaching is most effective when you start with where people actually are, and then work them back into the biblical text.

Preaching and Preachers, by Martin Lloyd-Jones. *A classic from a great preacher on his view of the essence of preaching.*

The Preacher and Preaching, edited by Samuel T. Logan (Puritan and Reformed).
A collection of 17 articles on preaching, all from a Reformed perspective, ranging from the theology of preaching to the practical preparation of sermons. Since it is a collection of articles by 17 different authors, it is a veritable goldmine of insight on preaching.

12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching by Wayne McDill
Another great textbook on the basic methods and skills of preaching, which covers similar ground to Bryan Chapell’s and Haddon Robinson’s books on preaching.

A Primer for Preachers and Preaching: A Kind of Folly by Ian Pitt-Watson. *Two short but insightful books on preaching by an excellent English preacher.*

Biblical Preaching, by Haddon Robinson.
A book which covers similar ground to Bryan Chapell’s book on preaching, but which is so simple, clear, and precise, it is an amazing model of communication.

The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching by Paul Scott
A book out of the mainline, narrative school of preaching, but with a helpful paradigm: that a sermon should have one focus with four “pages” – trouble in the Bible, trouble in the world, grace in the Bible, and grace in the world.

Between Two Worlds, by John Stott
Stott covers the whole gamut of preaching, from the challenge of preaching to the theology of preaching to the study for preaching to the preparation of sermons – as always, synthesizing vast amounts of information and summarizing it clearly and concisely.

Assignment Descriptions

Here are the assignments that are to be completed by the date specified in the chart above.

Here is how the assignments are to be done. I am not going to collect these on the day it is due, but there will be some class discussion on the assignment. The assignment will be due at the end of course, along with the final written sermon. The assignments build on each other, and you will use these assignments to help “flesh out” the written sermon that you will turn in. Although you can type these assignments if you want, I would recommend that you do all of the assignments on a lined 8.5 by 11 pad, and simply write them down. At the end of the course, just turn in the whole pad, along with your written sermon and outline. Note that for the most part, the assignments will apply only the preaching portion you have been given.

Class Date Due	Assignment	Description of Assignment
Aug 26	None	
Sep 2	Book of James Preaching Portions	
Sep 9	Theme and Purpose Statement	
Sep 16	Study, Theme and Purpose	
Sep 23	Outline	
Sep 30	Illustration	
Oct 7	Applications Introduction and Conclusion	
Oct 14	Christ Centered Focus	
Oct 28	Notes, Final Written Sermon, Outline	