

Introduction to Preaching Syllabus
Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall, 2009

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
 - 1994-200 – 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 and teach 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.

Why Johnny Can’t Preach by T. David Gordon

A very short book that packs a major punch, hitting several of the themes we will focus on in class: particularly the purpose of preaching, and the need to pay attention to the details of texts.

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

“Application” by John F. Bettler.

“Confessions of a Reformed Bore” by Philip Campbell

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

“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 Assignments and Grade Structure

Percentage	Assignment
15%	Evaluations of Three sermons you have listened to
5%	Book of James Preaching Portion Assignment
5%	Book of James Theme and Purpose Statement Assignment
5%	Your Assigned Passage Study and Theme Assignment
5%	Outline Assignment
5%	Illustration Assignment
5%	Application, Introduction and Conclusion Assignment
5%	Christ-Centered Preaching Assignment
50%	Your final written sermon manuscript and summary outline
100%	Total

Course Schedule of Topics and Reading/Written Assignments

Class Date	Topic	Reading Assignment Due	Written Assignment Due
Sep 1	Preparing Yourself for Preaching, The Place of Preaching	Chapell, Chapters 1, 3 Gordon, Chapters 1-2 Robinson, "The Case for Expository Preaching" Galli, "Fair to Middling Preacher"	
Sep 8	Preaching with Purpose	Chapell, Chapter 2 Adams, Chapters 1-8 Gordon, Chapters 3-5 Robinson, "What's the Big Idea?" Bettler, "Application" Campbell, "Confessions of a Reformed Bore"	Book of James Preaching Portion Assignment
Sep 15	The Process of Sermon Preparation	Chapell, Chapter 4-5 Adams, Chapter 13 Stott, "A Call to Study" and "Preparing Sermons" Knecht, "Sermon Structure and Flow"	Book of James Theme and Purpose Statement Assignment Sermon Evaluation 1
Sep 22	The Process of Sermon Preparation	Chapell, Chapter 6 Adams, Chapter 9	Your Assigned Passage Study and Theme Assignment
Sep 29	The Process of Sermon Preparation	Chapell, Chapter 7 Adams, Chapters 14-15	Outline Assignment
Oct 6	The Process of Sermon Preparation	Chapell, Chapters 8-9 Adams, Chapters 10-11, 18-19	Illustration Assignment Sermon Evaluation 2
Oct 13	Fall Break	No Class!	
Oct 20	Christ-Centered Preaching	Chapell, Chapters 10-11 Adams, Chapter 20	Application, Introduction and Conclusion Assignment
Oct 27	The Delivery of Sermons	Chapell, Appendices 1-5 Adams, Chapters 16, 21-22 Fant, "The Oral Manuscript"	Christ-Centered Preaching Assignment Sermon Evaluation 3
Nov 10			Written and Outlined Sermon Due by email

Assignment Descriptions

You will be assigned 3 sermons to listen to off of the internet. Write up a no more than one page evaluation of the sermon. How effective was the presentation? How was the content? Was it biblical or not? Was the purpose of the sermon clear? What is Christ-centered? Etc.

The weekly assignments are described in the table below. Type out these assignments and turn them in to me on the day they are due. I will give them back to you the next week. Keep all of the assignments together, as they will help you in writing out your final sermon assignment.

The final assignment is one written sermon manuscript to be turned in at the conclusion of the course. It must be written out as a manuscript, but I would also like you to turn in a summary outline of your sermon. In other words, if you were going to preach your sermon just from an outline and not from a manuscript, turn in on one or two pages what the outline of your sermon would look like. All of the other assignments you are to do are preparatory for this final sermon. On the first day of class, you will be assigned your preaching text from the book of James.

Class Date Due	Assignment	Description of Written Assignment
Sep 1	None	
Sep 8	Book of James Preaching Portions	Read through the book of James, and divide it up into preaching portions as best you can, based upon what you believe to be manageable, unified preaching units in the book
Sep 15	Theme and Purpose Statement	For each of your preaching portions in the book of James, briefly state what you believe is the basic theme of the passage, and the purpose of the passage. Try to get both in one sentence.
Sep 22	Study, Theme and Purpose	Take your assigned sermon passage and study it, using whatever resources you like. Take notes. And come up with a refined theme of the passage, and a purpose for YOUR sermon.
Sep 29	Outline	Write down an outline for your sermon from your assigned passage. Try several different outlines. See which one you think works best
Oct 6	Illustration	For the various exposition and points in your passage, write down at least 5 illustrations to illustrate the points you are trying to make. You can do more if you like.
Oct 20	Applications Introduction and Conclusion	Write at least three introductions to your sermon, and at least three conclusions to your sermon. Also, write down at least one point of application for each point you make in your sermon.
Oct 27	Christ Centered Focus	Write down as many ways you can think of how you can make this sermon Christ-centered and gospel-centered, rather than just moralistic, legalistic, and performance based.
Nov 10	Final Written Sermon and Outline due	Email your final written sermon manuscript, typed double spaced , and your final sermon outline, all together, to brucemcrae@att.net by 6:00 pm.

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.