Songs for Souls that Would Soar: Preaching and Teaching Christ from the Psalms

Course Syllabus and Overview

Course Description:

Often relegated to “fill-in” between sermon series, the Psalms are deserving of much more attention than they often receive from preachers. We need to be reminded anew that the New Testament quotes from the Psalms at least 140 times and that our Lord often quoted from the book of Psalms and died with a Psalm on his lips. This being the case, it behooves us as preachers to focus on this too often neglected, yet rich, sermon source. The purpose of this three-weekend course is to deepen the student's understanding of the Book of Psalms in order to see the opportunities it holds for preaching and teaching. This course will help pastors, seminary students, lay leaders and Christians, in personal study to understand how the psalms relate to Christ so they will be better equipped to preach and teach the psalms with relevance and power. Students will be required to write a paper on preaching or teaching from an assigned Psalm and to preach a sermon or teach a lesson demonstrating that they have mastered the course.

Pre-requisite: PT506 (or its equivalent)

Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the historical setting and development of the Psalter.
2. Identify and analyze the different types of psalms so as to apply their message to 21st Century people.
3. Explain the universal perspectives of the psalms as they relate to preaching and teaching the Lord Jesus Christ.

Professor of Record:

Dr. Leslie Holmes served for forty years as a local church pastor in a variety of settings from rural Mississippi to San Francisco, California, and downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His congregations ranged in size from 60 to 4,300 members. He earned his BA at University of Mobile, M.Div., at Reformed Theological Seminary, and D. Min. at Columbia Theological Seminary. He also has a Doctor of Laws degree (honoris causa) from Grove City College. He has preached and taught at churches, seminaries, and universities on six continents and is the author and/or contributing editor of ten published books, contributor to three other books, and dozens of articles in professional journals, The Pittsburgh Business Times, and The Wall Street Journal. His books include Come to the Banquet: Sermons for the Lord’s Table, Lifelines: Your Final Answers to Life’s Biggest Questions, The Creed: Life Principles for Today, The Breath of Abundant Life, and When Good Enough Just Isn’t Good Enough: Pursuing Excellence in Christ’s Service.

Required reading:

**Online resource:**

*Christ in the Psalms*, one lecture by Edmund P. Clowney

**Grading Scale:**

Attendance at each meeting of the class sessions is required. Attendance will be taken. Unacceptable absences, for cause and in number, will negatively affect a student’s final grade.

While this is not a preaching competition, interactive written critiques of fellow students are required. Students will be evaluated on their ability to objectively observe strengths and weaknesses in class delivered sermons and their preachers. The student’s ability to articulate these in a spirit of grace and helpfulness is an important part of this learning experience. The grading scale will be as follows: 20% Required Reading and online assignments; 50% Two Sermons: Manuscript/Delivery; 20% In class Sermon Reviews; 10% class attendance and participation.

**Extension Policy**

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)