

“Tools of the Trade”

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Stages in the Development of Expository Messages:

(HR) It is difficult to think. It is more difficult to think about thinking. It is most difficult to talk about thinking about thinking. Yet that stands as the basic task of homiletics. Homileticians observe how preachers work and attempt to get inside their heads to discover what goes on there as they prepare to preach. Then they must describe the process clearly enough to make sense to a student. The assignment borders on the impossible.

Two conclusions emerge from the fact that expositors go about their work in different ways.

1. Detailed instruction about how to think may sometimes get in the way of the process. The damage instruction can do.

2. Thinking is a dynamic process. Effective biblical preaching requires insight, imagination, and spiritual sensitivity—none of which comes from merely following directions. (So important!)

What, then, are the stages in the preparation of the expository sermon?

Stage 1: Choose The Passage To Be Preached.

**The obvious first question confronting is: What shall I talk about?
From what passage of Scripture should I draw my sermon?**

Plan ahead:

While all Scripture is profitable, not every Scripture possesses equal profit for a congregation at a particular time. Preachers' insight and concern will be reflected in what biblical truths they offer to their people. In their ministry.

Thought Units: Often we will work our way chapter by chapter, verse by verse, through different books of the Bible. In making our calendar, therefore, we will read through the books several times and then divide them into portions that we will expound in particular sermons. In doing this, we should select the passages based on the natural literary divisions of the material.

Examples: “The Church’s First Sermon” Acts 2:14-41; “The Spirit Filled Church” Acts 2:42-47; “The Way Of The Cross” Matthew 16:21-28

In selecting passages for the expository sermon, therefore, a general principle to follow is this: Base the sermon on a literary unit of biblical thought. (Generally a paragraph)

Topical Exposition: Sermons preached at Easter and at Christmas require special topical treatment. In addition we may preach on theological topics such as the Trinity, reconciliation, worship, marriage, and divorce.

How do we find the passage or passages to preach? If we have a broad knowledge of the Scriptures, we will be aware of passages that deal with people with those problems. **Concordance, Naves Topical Bible**

Topical Exposition Faces Two Problems.

1. The topic we are considering may be dealt with in several passages of the Scripture. Each of the individual passages, therefore, must be examined in its context. Isolating a single passage on which to base a teaching may ignore tensions built into the biblical record. Usually, topical exposition takes more study than exposition based on a single passage. (Study out several passages)

2. Problem in topical exposition is that we may read something into the scriptural account in order to read something significant out of it.

We can use texts of Scripture that we feel support what we want to say without considering the intent of the biblical author or the context of the verses.

However we select the passage, we must allow it to speak for itself. Often a passage will not say what we expected it to say. We may resort to "proof texts" for favorite doctrines by completely ignoring the context in which these texts lie.

Sermon Length: *Another factor we must consider in choosing what to preach is time. We must preach our sermons in a limited number of minutes.*

We must tailor our sermons to our time, and the cutting should be done in the study rather than in the pulpit. We need to stick to the time! Don't steal!

You are limited, of course, in the length of the passage you can present and the detail with which you develop it. You will be limited, perhaps, to the major idea of the section, and in a few strokes, show the congregation how that idea comes from the passage and applies to life.

Even if you are allowed forty-five minutes for your sermons, you must still make choices. You can seldom tell your people all you have discovered about a passage.

Stage 1: Choose The Passage To Be Preached.

Stage 2: Study Your Passage and Gather Your Notes. Our task begins with studying the passage and recording our findings. There are several things we should consider.

The Context: Context – comes from two Latin words – “with” or “together” and “to weave” something woven together. Having selected the passage, we must first examine it in its context. The passage does not exist in isolation. As individual verses rest within a paragraph, the paragraphs are part of a chapter, and the chapters are part of the book. Good!!!!

At the very least, you would want to read the whole chapter to discover how this one paragraph fits within the larger section. If you really want to understand your paragraph, you would also ask questions about how the chapter that contains your paragraph fits within the entire book. The old saw still has a sharp edge:

"The Text Without The Context Is A Pretext." (“made up excuse”)

For this reason, we begin our study of a biblical passage by relating it to the broader literary unit of which it is a part. Usually this demands that we read the book several times and in different translations. Even if we have skills in reading Hebrew or Greek, we usually find it easier to map out the broad developments of an author's thought by reading it in English.

Different Versions Of The Bible Are Available: Ranging from literal, word-for-word translations like those in interlinear's (where English words are placed under the Hebrew or Greek text) to versions that present the Scriptures in contemporary language. **(Bring Berry's Interlinear)**

Parallel Bible – (Multiple translations 4-6) Different translations serve us in different ways. We can gain an impression of the sharpness and vitality of the original Hebrew or Greek by reading different kinds of translations.

New American Standard Bible - which stays close to the original but may sound stiff and wooden when read in public.

The New King James Version - is also closer to the original texts. Others who like to be faithful to the past prefer the **King James Version**.

Paraphrase Bibles - catch the dynamic equivalent of the original text and reflect the ideas of the biblical author, for example, **Eugene Peterson's The Message**,

J. B. Phillips's paraphrase of the New Testament, The Living Bible. Good News For Modern Man.

The New Living Translation - A translation that searches for the middle ground between allegiance to the Hebrew or Greek.

New International Version – (NIV Nearly Inspired Version) By using these translations and others, we can understand the broad context of the passage.

Introductions to the Old or New Testament – “Talk Thru The Bible”

Wilkinson, “The Biblical Expositor” Carl F. Henry, “Bible Survey” J.

Lawrence Eason Introductory sections of commentaries usually discuss why a book was written and outline its contents. While commentators sometimes disagree on these matters, we can consider their frameworks as we read through the Scripture for ourselves. (**William Barclay Letters to the 7 Churches**)

Not only should our passage be placed within the broader unity of the book, but it must also be related to its immediate context.

More clues to meaning come from a study of the surrounding context than from an examination of details within a passage. (**Context Is Crucial**)

As you read the passage in different translations, do so with a pen in hand. Write out as precisely as possible the problems you have in understanding the passage. Write them all down—make yourself state them.

*Remember that you're looking for the author's ideas. **Begin by stating in rough fashion what you think the writer is talking about—that is, his subject.** Then try to determine what major assertion(s) the biblical writer is making about the subject, that is, the complements.*

If you cannot state a subject at this point, what is hindering you from doing so?

Is there a verse that doesn't seem to fit?

Is it that you can't figure out how this paragraph relates to what precedes or follows it?

Is there an image the author uses that you don't understand?

Uncovering the questions you have and writing them down can help you get at the author's subject.

Having placed the passage within its context, you must now examine its details.

In the Epistles and in parts of the Gospels - this means examining the vocabulary and the grammatical structure of the passage.

"Our Unity" Ephesians 4:4-6
Eph 4:1-6

He emphasizes the oneness that we have in Christ with the word **"One"** used **7X** in these 3 verses. The word **"All"** is used **4X**.

Narrative Passages - *you will look for statements by the author that explain what is taking place. For example, in **2 Samuel 11**, the historian reports on the sin of David without judgment. Only at the end of the chapter does he comment that "what David did displeased the Lord." Where there are no editorial comments, you must ask questions like, "Why did the biblical author include this episode?" or "Are there details in the passage that, at first, seem extraneous?"*

You need not be an expert in the Hebrew or Greek languages to use them with benefit, and almost anyone can use some of the available linguistic tools.

Lexicons - A lexicon serves as a kind of dictionary for the original languages. Through using a lexicon we can find definitions of a word as it is used in Hebrew or Greek. But it is more than a dictionary: along with the definition of a word, it gives us root meanings, identification of some grammatical forms, a list of passages where the word occurs, classification of its uses in its various contexts, and some illustrations that help give color to the word.

Concordances - Sometimes it is essential to study a word in the passages where it occurs. To determine the meaning of words through usage, we use a concordance.

Grammars - *Words must be understood as they are used in phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs such as of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, subjects and objects:* A study of syntax examines how words combine to render meaning, and grammars assist us in that study.

Word-Study Books - Much of the work of evaluating how biblical writers use words has been done for us by scholars. Word-study books provide us with insights into words used throughout the Old and New Testaments, these books deal with their grammatical use when appropriate. (**Kenneth Wuest NT Word Studies; Vincent Word Studies NT**)

Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias – **Unger's Bible Dictionary**
Unlike most of our English dictionaries, Bible dictionaries offer more than a definition of a word. They give us brief discussions of people, events, and backgrounds of the biblical material.

Commentaries - *As you teach the Scriptures, you need teachers to teach you. Through commentaries, scholars serve the church.*

“I only read the Bible!” Ephesians 4:11-12 We need teachers! (Some great teachers are dead, some we can’t physically see so books give the opportunity to know and grow.)

2 Timothy 4:13 **When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.**

books – “properly the inner bark of the papyrus plant, i.e. (by implication) a sheet or scroll of writing” Would be papyrus scrolls, perhaps of the Old Testament Scriptures;

parchments – “Latin origin (“membrane”); a (written) sheep-skin” would be books made from the skins of animals. We do not know what these “parchments” were.

As a general rule, it is wiser (and cheaper!) to select the best volumes on individual Bible books from several different series.

Critical/Analytical/Exegetical Commentaries – William Hendriksen, R.C.H. Lenski, A.T. Robertson, John R. Stott, Curtis Vaughan, Charles Ryrie, John MacArthur, Spiros Zodhiates, Robert Gromacki, Homer A. Kent, Howard F. Vos, John F. Walvoord, Edmond D. Hiebert, Leon Morris, A.W. Pink

Homiletical/Devotional Commentary – J. Vernon McGee, Warren W. Wiersbe, Harry H.A. Ironside, R. Kent Hughes, James Montgomery Boice, Ray Steadman, Roy L. Laurin, John Phillips, Jerry Vines, G. Campbell Morgan, W.A. Criswell, Graham W. Scroggie, Griffith W. H. Thomas, Alexander Maclaren, Charles R. Erdman, F.B. Meyer, George Sweeting.

Expositional Commentaries - Expositor's Bible Commentary Series, NIV Application Commentaries in both the Old and New Testaments. These volumes also deal with exegesis and exposition, but sometimes not at the same depth as the critical or expositional commentaries.

There are many books and MP3s of sermons preached by well-known preachers.

Bibliographies - **“The Minister’s Library” Cyril J. Barber (2 Volumes)** An excellent resource for building your library

1. Study Bible (Life Application)
2. Strong’s Concordance

3. Unger's Bible Dictionary
4. Webster's Dictionary
5. Warren W. Wiersbe "Be Series OT & NT, Also Expository Outlines OT & NT
6. Halley's Bible Handbook
7. "Talk Thru The Bible" Wilkinson, "The Biblical Expositor" Carl F. Henry, "Bible Survey" J. Lawrence Eason

Bible Software – (Logos Bible Software; E-Sword; Olive Tree Bible Software) They put at our fingertips a library including the Greek and Hebrew text, English translations of the Bible, concordances, commentaries (both ancient and modern), and word study aids, all keyed to particular passages.

Stage 1: Choose The Passage To Be Preached.

Stage 2: Study Your Passage and Gather Your Notes.

Stage 3: As you study the passage, relate the parts to each other to determine the exegetical idea and its development.

The Subject - The initial statement of a subject will often be too broad. To narrow it, try testing your subject with a series of definitive questions. A bit of verse tells us what those questions are:

I had six faithful friends,
They taught me all I knew,
Their names are How and What and Why,
When and Where and Who.

The Complement - *Having isolated the subject, you must now determine the complement, or complements, that complete the subject and make it into an idea.*

Hermeneutics – *“the science of biblical interpretation, the branch of theology that deals with the principles of Biblical exegesis.” The Scriptures contain many types of literature such as **parables, poetry, proverbs, prayers, speeches, allegories, history, laws, contracts, biography, drama, apocalypse, and stories.** To find the idea in any of them, we must be aware of the kind of literature we are reading and the conventions that are unique to it.*

When working in narrative literature: *we seldom have to work through a maze of complex grammatical relationships, but instead we derive the author's meaning from a broad study of several paragraphs.*

Much of the Old Testament is poetic in form: *we discover that poetry is the most-used literary form in Old Testament literature.*

One device you may find helpful is to paraphrase the passage in your own words. Be exact in thought, and carefully state the relationships you see within the text whether the biblical writer explicitly states them or not.

Summary -

At this point, as a result of your study, you should be able to do two things:

1. To state the idea of the passage in a single sentence that combines your subject and complement;

2. To state how the parts of the passage relate to the idea.

This is sweaty, difficult work, but it has to be done