

“The Theological Foundation for Expository Preaching”

1 Timothy 4:13

Pastor John Miller

I. Introduction

- A. I have been convinced for many years that the greatest need in the church is for expositional preaching of the Bible, the Word of God!
 - 1. What is expositional preaching?
 - 2. As preachers and teachers of God’s Word, our general aim should be threefold.
 - a) To preach the Word of God faithfully
 - 1) “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2 KJV).
 - b) To preach the Word of God powerfully
 - 1) “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).
 - c) To preach the Word of God skillfully
 - 1) “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).
- B. Unfortunately, faithful, powerful, and skillful expository preaching is very rare in the church today. Why?
 - 1. Many pastors and Bible teachers lack the theological foundation that forms the conviction of its importance.
 - 2. *“The essential secret is not mastering certain techniques but being mastered by certain convictions. In other words, theology is more important than methodology.”* – John Stott
 - 3. Becoming an expository preacher is more caught than taught.
 - a) The light must go on.
 - b) We need real conviction. It must be a priority.
 - 4. In his book, “Between Two Worlds,” John Stott points out five theological convictions that should undergird the practice of expository preaching.

II. A Conviction about God

- A. What is it we must believe about God?
 - 1. That God does reveal Himself to us
 - 2. How does He reveal Himself?
 - a) General revelation in nature or creation (Psalm 19:1-6)
 - b) Special revelation in Scripture (Psalm 19:7-11)
 - 1) “The testimony of the Lord is sure” (Psalm 19:7).
 - 2) God’s self-revelation describes the initiative God took to unveil or disclose Himself.
 - a. *“Revelation is a divinely initiated activity. God’s free communication by which He alone turns His personal*

privacy into a deliberate disclosure of His reality.” – Carl F. Henry

b. *“All Christian preaching springs from the truth that God has spoken in Word and deed, and that He has chosen human vessels to bear witness to Himself and His gospel.*

We speak because we cannot be silent.” – Albert Mohler

- 3) It’s a humbling truth because it presupposes that God, in His infinite perfections, is beyond the reach of our finite minds.
- 4) Without God’s self-revelation in Scripture, we would all be like the Athenians with altars inscribed “to the unknown God.”
- 5) God, who is light, has acted or spoken, and has revealed Himself in His world (creation), His written Word (Scripture), and in the Living Word (Jesus).
 - a. (John 1:14)
 - b. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

III. A Conviction about Scripture

A. We move from doctrine to revelation.

1. The doctrine of inspiration
2. Inspiration describes the means by which God chose to reveal Himself, namely by speaking to and through biblical authors.
 - a) “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV).
3. How we view Scripture determines how we preach and teach it.
 - a) *“It is certain that we cannot handle Scripture adequately in the pulpit if our doctrine of Scripture is inadequate.” – John Stott*
4. We must have a high view of Scripture.
5. Four false views of inspiration:
 - a) Natural inspiration
 - b) Dictation or mechanical inspiration
 - c) Fallible inspiration
 - d) Conceptual inspiration
 - 1) The Orthodox view (verbal-plenary)
 - 2) “Verbal” or “the words”
 - 3) “Plenary” or “all of them”
 - 4) “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18 KJV).
 - 5) *“My own definition of Biblical inspiration is that it is God’s superintendence of the human authors so that’s, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs. Several features of the definition are worth emphasizing: (1) God superintended but did not dictate the material. (2) He used human authors and their own individual*

styles. (3) Nevertheless, the product was, in its original manuscripts, without error.” – Charles Ryrie

- a. Its inerrancy
 - b. Its authority
 - c. Its sufficiency
6. If we are going to “preach the Word,” we must have these convictions about the Scripture:
- a) Scripture is God’s Word written
 - 1) We speak because God has spoken.
 - b) God still speaks through what He has spoken.
 - 1) *“The Bible is God preaching.”* – J.I. Packer
 - 2) *“The Holy Spirit train”* – J. Vernon McGee
 - c) God’s Word is powerful.
 - 1) “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11 KJV).
 - 2) Illustration- Billy Graham
 - 3) “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” (Hebrews 4:12)
 - 4) Other similarities used in the Bible to illustrate the power of God’s Word:
 - a. “A hammer”—it shatters hearts of stone.
 - b. “A fire”—it burns away sin.
 - c. “A lamp”—it lights our path.
 - d. “A mirror”—it shows us our sin.
 - e. “Seed”—causing birth
 - f. “Milk”—causing growth
 - g. “Honey”—it’s sweet to taste.

IV. A Conviction about the Church

A. Jesus said, “I will build my church...” (Matthew 16:18).

1. *“The Word of God is the scepter by which Christ rules the church and the food with which He nourishes it.”* – John Stott

B. The church was born (Acts 2)

1. The Spirit came
2. Peter preached
3. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42).
4. “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47 KJV).
5. The church was born
 - a) Spirit of God
 - b) Man of God

c) Word of God

6. The church is strengthened through God's Word.

7. The church is sanctified through God's Word.

a) (John 17)

8. The church is equipped for service through God's Word.

a) (2 Timothy 3:17)

V. A Conviction about the Pastorate

A. "Pastor" or "Shepherd" (under-shepherds)

1. Jesus said, "Feed My sheep" (John 21:17).

2. To feed God's flock is a metaphorical expression for teaching the church.

3. Pastors are to teach God's Word to God's people.

a) (Ephesians 4:11)

b) "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28 KJV).

c) "Feed the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2 KJV).

4. A good pastor or shepherd:

a) Feeds the sheep

b) Leads the sheep

c) Protects the sheep (Acts 20)

d) Heals the sheep

e) All with the Word of God

VI. A Conviction about Preaching

A. Paul's charge to Timothy is for us.

1. What are we to do?

a) Preach

2. What are we to preach?

a) The Word

3. How are we to preach the Word?
 - a) With conviction
4. Why?
 - a) The time will come
5. *“It is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching.”* – John Stott
6. How do we define expository preaching?
 - a) “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:13 KJV).
 - b) Read the text
 - c) Explain the text (exposition)
 - d) Apply the text (application)
7. First and foremost, the adjective “expository” describes the method by which the preachers decide what to say, not how to say it.
8. Illustration- Ezra and the priest—“Bring the book.” They read in the book in the Law of God distinctively, and gave the sense, causing them to understand the reading (Nehemiah 8).
9. *“Expository preaching is the communication of a Biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.”* – Haddon W. Robinson
10. Jerry Vines states, “For a sermon to be expository, the following must take place:
 - a) The meaning of the Bible passage must be found.
 - b) The meaning of the Bible passage must be related to the immediate and general context of the passage.
 - c) The sermon then must be drawn from the text itself.
 - d) The main points of the sermon must be drawn from the Scripture itself.
 - e) It’s best if the sub-points are also drawn from the text.
 - f) The hearers will be called to obey the truths drawn from the text. Good preaching aims at a decision from the hearers.”
11. *“My formal definition of an expository sermon is as follows: An expository sermon is one that expounds a passage of Scripture, organizes it around a central theme and main points, and then decisively applies its message to the listeners.”* – Jerry Vines

12. Expository preaching is inescapably bound to the serious work of exegesis.
 - a) The expository preacher is bound to the text.
 - b) The expositor is not an explorer who returns to tell tales of the journey, but a guide who leads the people into the text.
13. True preaching must be expository.
 - a) Otherwise, there is no authority in what is preached
 - b) So that I will not infringe upon Christ's headship of the church
 - c) So that I know I am ministering in concert with the Holy Spirit
 - d) We must preach God's Word, not ours.
 - e) Our aim should be Christ's glory, not ours, and our confidence must be the Holy Spirit's power, not ours.

V. Conclusion

- A. A conviction about God
- B. A conviction about Scripture
- C. A conviction about the church
- D. A conviction about the pastorate
- E. A conviction about preaching