

## **Demonstration Of An Expository Sermon**

### **Pastor Lee Coe**

Today, John has asked me to do a couple of things. I've given you a piece of paper there just to kind of follow along, and you're going to fill out the blanks. I'm going to go kind of quickly because we've already talked about these things. But he wanted me to talk about three practical things about pulpit ministry: My calling, and I'm hoping you'll see and identify with that, calling; how I developed as a preacher, and I think you're developing now as you come to this class; and then, the philosophy of preaching as well. I'm going to do a demonstration of that, and the back pages that you have in your handout is a sermon that I preached a few weeks ago. I'm in Philippians right now doing exposition—points that come directly from the text, that's the most important point that you'll learn as we go through this.

I'm going to break it up in two sections. The first is the practical, and then we'll look at a sermon and kind of briefly go through that. You'll be learning these things over and over like John said. You're going to hear it from different pastors, from Tim and Pastor Terry tomorrow. You're going to hear the same things, but I think it's good that you hear it from these different perspectives.

So, the importance of expository preaching, again over in the next few days you're going to hear a lot of different people's definitions. Here's my definition, beginning with your paper there, a definition of expository preaching. Preaching is a living process involving God, the preacher, and the congregation. I think that's one of the best definitions of what expository preaching is. It's a living process. It's alive. It's organic. You can't just listen to Pastor Chuck tapes on Sunday morning, of course, it wouldn't be tapes, it's dvd or whatever else you're listening to now. We all grew up with Chuck tapes, listening to him and all the teachers that we listened to, but again, it's a living process. It's the living God, working through the man of God, to herald or preach; and I love so much what Pastor Art was sharing about the power and the passion of the pastor. Passion is so vitally important when you're communicating the Word of God.

Then, the congregation. We're not just preaching to a tv screen, we're preaching to people. Each one has individual needs, and they all come from different backgrounds. If you've ever preached before for any amount of time, you know that as you're preaching, people are hearing different things. After the sermon, people come up and say something like, "I don't even know where that came from," but the Holy Spirit's working and speaking to them, so it's important for us to understand that—a living process involving God, the preacher, and the congregation. So, we're communicating as preachers, the Word of God, we're expounding what God's Word already says, and we're using the Scriptures, we're praying, we're allowing the Holy Spirit to use us as a vessel, filling us up. That's why it takes longer to do a sermon prep.

I could never do it on Saturday, my mind just doesn't work that way, so I start Thursdays. I devote hours to study, and I learned that from Pastor John. Honestly, as executive pastor for many years, I didn't even see him until Thursday. I saw him Sunday. He'd come in on Wednesday, right before worship started, "Hi, John." "Hi, Lee." I'd lead worship; John would

preach. He'd come in on Thursday about four because he's studying, he's studying. He's not surfing, he's studying; and he'd come in and his mind is full. I'd sit down with him on Thursday. I remember doing this, just come into your office and so I started getting a sermon. It's developing in his mind, and he's saying, "Boy, you should see this book," and he'd hold a book up and, "this is such a cool book. You should read this book. Here, check this book out." It was good. It helped develop me as a young pastor to understand the importance of studying, to really understand the text so that I could teach that text. But, obviously, you have to be born again. You have to be a child of God. You have to be a lover of Jesus Christ and a lover of the Word of God.

Let me give you now three practical things about pulpit ministry. Again, it's about how to know your call. Notice the question: How do you know you're called? First, we've already heard this, you're going to love God's Word. You're going to love it. You love to read it. You love to hear it taught. You love to hear it explained. You're going to really be a kind of person that loves God's Word. And, you'll love His church. You'll love the church and the people of God. You'll want to be with them, you'll want to enjoy fellowship with them, you'll want to eat with them. A pastor has to have a passion for the people of God because your desire is to teach them, to teach them the Word, to see them grow and be educated, so you have a passion and a love for them.

Secondly, notice here you find joy in serving at church. When I started, like maybe some of you are starting, you might start as a custodian. You find joy in picking up trash, cigarette butts, whatever it is. You find joy in making the people that come to your fellowship comfortable. How do you know that you're called? You enjoy serving the people that are in your fellowship. You get joy from that, not just happiness, joy. It's the joy in the Lord. You lay your head down at night after you've worked 16 hours, right Aaron? Hailey? All you staff? You've worked. You've worked really hard. You're tired, but you lay down and it's like, "Oh, God, it was such a blessing to serve You. Thank You for that opportunity to serve Your people." You just lay your head down on the pillow and you just rest.

It brings joy to your heart, that's how you know you're called—your calling to pastoral ministry begins by just desiring to serve God's people. That's where it begins, right there. You just want to be at church, you want to serve God's people, you want to help them, you want to assist them, you want to help set up when there's set up happening, you want to tear down, stay late, later than the pastor that's teaching. You just have a desire to do all of those things, and it doesn't matter if you're in a parking lot before church or in the bathrooms after the service.

I remember hearing, and you probably know the stories about Pastor Chuck and how he would be out in the parking lot picking up trash. I heard that story about a month ago. There was a gentleman that walked in the Red Barn, and he didn't know John was gone, but he remembered me from eons ago. He said, "You know, I just can remember Pastor Chuck. I drove up to Costa Mesa, and he was out in the parking lot picking up trash." What a great example Pastor Chuck is.

So, joy and that calling to just serve the people—pick up trash, clean the restrooms. Pastor

Chuck made the guys—all of them, I hear it from Don McClure, from some of the other men that worked there, served there under him that he made them...it was Oden, Oden Fong told me this. He said, "Oh yeah, we had bathroom duty every week." Every one of the pastors had to clean the bathrooms, and Chuck kept them humble and was teaching them ministry—these young, long-hair hippie dudes that needed Pastor Romaine to whip them into shape. What a blessing it is to have known those people. They meant a lot to me, and I've learned so much from them. If you do all of those things with joy, and that's my next point there, joy, that's the first step of knowing that you're called. You do those things. You serve the fellowship. You love God's Word.

Thirdly, you start at the bottom. I think that's really important, start at the bottom, because oftentimes, like Pastor John said, you're waiting for your call from Greg Laurie to preach at the Harvest Crusade, you know, "How come he didn't call me?" But, it's so important that you start at the bottom, and you serve the fellowship. It doesn't matter what it is—custodial work or helping assist in the sound room or usher—whatever it might be, just to be faithful to serve in God's church. You start at the bottom. God often prepares individuals for ministry over time, and that's another point that I think is emerging as I'm sharing this with you.

I started in 1979 to the church, 1980 I began to serve. I came on staff in 1986, and just continued to serve there at the Red Barn, not looking for a position, just my calling was to support Pastor John. Whatever Pastor John needed me to do, I was able to do that. I remember I didn't want to leave the youth group, and he said, "No, you need to leave the youth group." "I don't want to leave." "Well, you're more valuable with the guitar and leading worship," and at that time the bands were just starting at Calvary. This was way back in the last '80s, and Rick Founds had just wrote that song, "Jesus, Mighty God." Anybody remember that? I mean, it was one of the first real band songs from Calvary Chapel. I hadn't been in a band. I was trombone player, what do I know? But, John was really adamant and said, "I want you to go and do this," so I obeyed. There was another man I was bringing up, Terry Michaels, who's now Calvary Chapel in Austin or Forest Ridge Calvary Chapel there in Texas.

But the calling and the answer to that call and the obedience to that call is so important. I don't know where you are. You might be an assistant pastor learning here today. You need to be faithful to your pastor. I never knew how hard it was until John left and I was the senior, and all of those responsibilities of administration and finance; and praying that you'll have enough money to pay the electric bill. All of those things that weigh heavily, and you want to just teach the Word. So, Aaron and the other assistants here, John and all those that serve here in the church are so vitally important. You might be one of those people in the church. Your job is to support your pastor; and God, over time—that was my point here, over time—God's going to use you in a more public way.

But, how do you know if you're called to teach God's Word? Here's the next point: you love to read and study the Bible. You love to read and study the Bible. You love God's Word. You find yourself reading it at any time. You just love to open the Word. Maybe it's an app on your phone or the physical Word. You just love to read the Word of God. The appetite for the Word

of God came from a pastor that fed me as a hungry sheep, and the more Pastor John fed me, the more I wanted to know—not to one-upman him, I wanted to learn it myself. I wanted to know, to know, to understand. So, you love to read and to study the Word of God. You love it in your personal devotional time, your personal study time, as well as teaching it to others.

I brought some books. You've got so many books over here, John. One of the first books that I ever bought to assist me in Bible study was Halley's Bible Handbook, is the book I suggest that young believers in our church purchase. They even have a large print edition. Ask those of us that need that, and it's got one of the best chapters on how we got our Bible, most concise and wonderful chapters in that Halley's Bible Handbook. But, reading these different books like Moody's book or Ryrie's book on theology. I've got Schaeffer's theological four-volume set. I don't really look at that as much as I look at Enns' or Moody's or the other ones. But, like John said, using those study helps so that you can expound the Word of God, share the Word of God.

If you're called to pastor and teach the Bible, you're going to love to study it and you'll want to own copies of these books and commentaries. I am the recipient of a study that John built. He actually had a cabinet maker build a study. That's my study now, it's absolutely gorgeous—cherry wood, wall to wall, all the way around the study. I just didn't have as many books as Pastor John had in my study, although he took us book shopping. He took the staff book shopping, and John and I went book shopping. I brought this copy.

I remember John was looking for books. He was into Walking with the Giants, reading biographies of famous preachers, and he was sharing that with us as a staff. He kept saying, "I've gotta get this book by Jill Morgan, A Man Of The Word. I've gotta get this book." And, nobody had it. He would go down to Archives in Pasadena. We ran into Raul Ries there. We ran into Rosales there. We ran into all these different guys down there, but they never had this book. So, we went on a trip to Austria, to the Castle that Calvary Chapel owned. That's where I met Tim and John—I met Tim way back then at the Castle I led worship; John was teaching Ephesians that week.

We took a little excursion over to Pendleburys bookshop in London. We were going up the steps, and Pendleburys is just wall-to-wall books. There're just stacks and stacks. There was a whole section on Morgan. John goes through it and found two copies of this book. He was so excited. Do you remember that? He was so excited. And this book—John, I've just got to thank you for this one. This one is one of my treasured books. I love it because in here you write how you gave me this for my birthday way back in 1992. So, books. Books are very important. "Books are your friends," as Pastor John will say, and Pastor Terry. You're going to get a lot of that from Pastor Terry coming up.

How do we know we're called? A call to pastoral ministry involves internal desires—this is important—internal desires and external confirmations. We've already talked about a genuine call being confirmed by those people you're teaching. If it's confirmed, people come to you and ask you more questions and say, "Where did you learn that?" or "Would you pray for me regarding this issue," after you teach—your calling is confirmed through other people. A

genuine call, again, is a mark of a deep desire you have as a teacher to shepherd and lead and teach the people in your fellowship. It includes, here's my next underline here, affirmation. It includes the affirmation from church leaders in the congregation so that those people will confirm it. What a blessing.

Maybe you are the best custodian in the world, and that'll be confirmed, too. There's nothing wrong with that, but when it comes to teaching the Word, people will be touched. So, how do you know you're called? God uses the man who is willing, humble, faithful, and yielded to fulfill God's use—I love that—or His purpose. God uses you, if you're willing, humble, and faithful by allowing God to work through your life to touch others. I love what Art said, again, about gospel-centered. The preaching of the gospel must be centered on Christ and the cross. Men and women must be called to come to Christ, that call, that call. I'm learning that. As a young preacher, really, I've only been preaching on Sunday mornings for the past twelve, thirteen years now, since John left. Before, I did Wednesday nights and some Sunday nights, rarely Sunday morning. John was always in the pulpit. I've had to learn later on in my life how to preach, so I read a lot of these books, Haddon Robinson, John Stott, and these other books that John encouraged us to read.

So, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have in your notes there, 2 Timothy 4, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching." This is the endgame. This is what we stand behind the pulpit to do. Might I just add this. I think it's important when we stand before God's people that we're presentable—I mean I don't think we should be wearing our flip-flops and just regular clothes. I'm not saying you have to dress in a three-piece suit like John MacArthur. But this is a very hallowed spot. You're heralding the Word of God. I think it's very important to show respect to your congregation I'm serious about this moment, so I'm going to share. I'm dressed that way to show the serious position that I hold as a pastor, as I preach the Word of God.

Another important question John wanted me to discuss today was how I developed as a preacher. I think I've already shared a lot of that. I sat in the front row. Do you sit in the front row when your pastor teaches? Do you listen to every service. Are you there at every service? We had Sunday night services up until Covid. I was doing Sunday night service, so Wednesday, Sunday morning, Sunday night, and I wanted the young men that want to preach, the young men that wanted to serve, to be there every service. It's very important for you to support your pastor.

I took notes of every sermon. I learned from John because he used to use one of these. This is the Wide Margin Thompson edition, and this is my old edition. I don't use this as much, but it's filled with John Miller notes. In fact, when he was teaching recently, I opened it up and said, "Oh, there. I heard that. I have that note right here," and it's awesome. I love that. This is how I developed as a preacher. I began to take notes in my Wide Margin Bible, and I listened, and I took notes. I listened to the Bible Answer Man, Walter Martin when he was on. I listened to, To Every Man An Answer. I got to know Don Stewart. I got to know the people that were there.

We went down a couple times to Murrieta, and John was on the radio doing, To Every Man An Answer, and I was behind the glass. The questions were coming across on the screen, and I would look up a verse and give it to whoever. I don't know, you were with Bill Welsh, maybe you and Bill, and it was different pastors. John would go down there to be on the radio, and it was always a blessing to do that. The point being that I listened a lot, I invested time in reading all these books on theology. I just spent time doing all of those things. It's really, really important to read, read, read.

I think now, most of you, I don't know if this is true, but many of you are probably watching YouTube sermons, so books aren't as valuable to this generation, but I would say you really need to take a look at books. You can think deeper, you have time to look at that passage and not just listen to somebody just speak really fast. I mean, I have my favorite YouTubers, Mike Winger. If you've ever watched Mike, Mike's fantastic. He used to be a Calvary guy. He's now EV Free. There's Leighton Flowers. I really like Leighton and what he teaches on YouTube. YouTube is another source is all I'm saying. There are lot of different sources for you to get more information, but books are obviously my friend.

So, my calling, developing as a preacher through all those different means that I've just expressed, and then philosophy. I want to give you seven, real quick, guiding principles for me. These are seven principles that I've written down here. Some come out of Haddon's book, some of Stott's. These are things that I think are really important, guiding principles for preaching and teaching God's Word.

First, the church is the flock of God. The church belongs to God. All I am is a messenger boy; all I do is share the truth of God's Word. So, the church is the flock of God, and as a preacher I'm called to feed the sheep—to gently feed them, not to scare them, not to beat them, not to chase them around but to feed the sheep.

Secondly, philosophy of preaching. I believe that preaching God's Word is the primary method of building up the church and glorifying God. We've heard this word from Art through proclamation of His Word. The primary method and in the proclamation of His Word. I think Art covered that topic really, really well. He even used P's. Did you notice that? He used all the P's? Primary and proclamation. I'm fitting right with you there, Art.

Thirdly, biblical preaching emphasizes the authority of Scripture. It's all about the authority of Scripture. We have to always remember, always remember, the Scripture is the authority, not the preacher. It's the Scripture.

Fourth, the Bible is our ultimate source of truth and authority. It is preaching that is grounded. It's grounded in the text and accurately explained and applied that will change the life of the listener. It's God's Word, but you have to teach God's Word. You have to dig deep to understand it in order to explain the Word to your people accurately.

A lot of people explain the Word of God, a lot of pastors have a following, they don't teach the

Word of God, they just tell stories and illustrations. They're not feeding the sheep, and, in my opinion, that's a dangerous place to be.

In San Bernardino we have two very, very large health and wealth churches, and we get the fallout. The people that have real truly broken lives because they themselves gave all of their money. There's a guy in my church right now, a young man, Moses. He has three beautiful little girls, and I'll talk about how the health and wealth preachers pray to their wallet, they actually pray to their wallet, "Money, be." They claim by faith. That false doctrine is devastating to the sheep. If you're in a community that has that as the main, I mean, these are the big churches, five-thousand member churches, in San Bernardino. I don't mention their names. I know one of the pastors. I've actually had conversation with one of them, and it's just sad to me. They believe it. They are totally sold on it, and he's wearing Armani, driving a super, super nice Mercedes. I mean he is living high on the hog off of the people. They've come to our church, and they've been broken. So, you and I as biblical preachers, we need to understand that we have to accurately ground ourselves in God's Word. In other words, ground ourselves in the Word so that we can accurately explain it to others.

Fifth, our preaching must be gospel driven. Again, we've heard that today, and I think that's important. I hope you hear that over and over and over during this time of teaching. We're to preach Christ and Him crucified and resurrected over and over and over. God's provision, God's provision for all. God so loved the world. God does not determine someone to go to hell. God's love helps you and me to understand that He provided a way for every human soul to know Him and be forgiven. God does not determine the outcome of anyone to go to hell. That's not a loving God. That's not what the Bible teaches. The gospel is for all, and we need to preach that and teach that, and we all need to understand what it means—provision. God's made provision for all to come to Him.

Expository preaching is the most effective way to communicate God's Word by explaining the meaning and the context of the biblical passage. Again, these are just philosophies of ministry—how I think when I approach a text.

Sixth, the goal of preaching is not merely to inform but to transform. I think that's a very important point. The goal is to see men and women, young and old, transformed by the proclamation of the truth of the gospel; and when we do that and you see that change in people, that's an exciting thing for a pastor. It's so exciting. That's when you can go home... and even if you think you blew it, you know, you didn't communicate as well as you could, and you, like Pastor John said, go home and read the text again, was that you or who said that? You go home and read the text again. Did I do it right? Did I say it right? But still, it's God's Word and when you proclaim it in its truth, in its power, it'll transform lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Seventh, the passage governs the sermon. I think this is really important. When you approach your study, realize that the passage governs the sermon. In other words, every Bible expositor is bound to the text. You're going to hear that I think every day, and you should. We're bound to

teach what the text says. Our points have to come from the text—the meaning, we study grammar, we look at Greek and Hebrew words. Even though we're not scholars at all, we have great tools like Blue Letter Bible and others.

I have a tool, his name is Justin Alfred. I call Justin. He and I go shotgun shooting every once in a while. We'll go out and shoot clay pigeons together. And, with his Southern drawl he reads Greek. I'll call him and ask about a word, "I'm not really sure about this word, how it applies." It's just fun. We had the best conversation. I love that relationship that I have.

But we study and understand that it's the passage that governs the sermon. It's the thought of Paul that we're conveying within the historical context, not our thought, not what we apply it towards; but what was Paul saying, how was he saying it, because that's what determines our teaching about that particular text. So, we have to understand it. We have to understand the context, we have to understand the language, the grammar, we have to understand all that we can in order to exposit and explain that text to our congregation.

Some preachers twist the meaning of the text to support their own thoughts. It's been said, I love this quote, "Torture a text long enough and it will eventually confess." I've heard some pastors...I've been to a lot of pastor's conferences where John and I walk away and go, "What did that guy say? What was he even trying to say?" When you just torture a text enough, it'll eventually confess. That's not what we're to do as pastors. We are to study it and look at it contextually. We're to understand what was in the mind of Paul when he was writing, what was going on in that society so that we can communicate that text correctly, and then we can make our application. We can't make the Bible say whatever we want it to say.

Erwin Lutzer, pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, this is what he tells the young men in his preaching class. He says, "If you can't strike oil in thirty minutes, stop boring." I like that. You need to understand the text so that you can explain it, but don't drag it out and make your sermon longer to fulfill time. I think that's why I have to study 16-18 hours. I follow my pastor in that way. I study, study, study because I want what I have to say to be meaningful. I love it. I love to study. I hope you do.

Let me just talk one bit, I'm not sure if you're going to talk about AI. Now, you have to realize that I grew up...I'm a "techie guy." I just bought a drone. I was out there getting instruction on the drone. We're going to do some drone stuff at church, and so I love stuff like that. I probably won't fly it, but I love to learn that stuff. I'm a private pilot, so I love that kind of stuff. Just getting out there and doing things. But, AI these different platforms—Gemini, ChatGPT, Grok 4. Have you looked at that? That's spooky, that Grok 4.

Should a pastor use AI? Let me rephrase this. If you're studying God's Word in order to understand it, you're going to need help because your knowledge is very limited, my knowledge is limited. I want to know as much as I can about that text first, so I'm going to read the text, I'm going to look at that text after Sunday morning preaching. Before I go to bed Sunday night I read the text for next Sunday, so it's already in my mind; and I read it Monday. I read it every

day, that text. I'm reading it, reading it, reading it. What does it mean? Holy Spirit show me. How am I going to teach this.

Then I'm going to go to commentaries. I'm going to read commentaries. I read those for explanation and understanding because God has revealed His truth through these wonderful writers—that's the books. Are you going to let them go into your library? He's thinking about it, so if you're really nice, if you're really good, you'll be able to check John's...you've got his book list there.

And, by the way, I have his first book list. I remember leading worship, and the Calvary conference is the very next day on Monday. I'm leading worship Sunday morning, Sunday night, and I just got the rest of his list on Saturday night. This has to be published. We're going to make 800 copies of it for the pastor's conference down at Murrieta. John's counting on me to get this done, and the list gets longer and longer and longer, and we're typing. I mean, we're typing. I should've brought one just to show you—a lot of work, but well worth it. So, the book list is really important that you have. Your books are most important.

Let me just say this, reading the text, Deuteronomy 6:4, the great Shema, you're to know the Word to teach to your children. Remember what it says in there? When you go by the way, you're stewing on the Word of God. When you sit down, you're thinking about the Word of God. The Shema, you're thinking about God's Word. It's not AI. You're a spiritual being, you have the Holy Spirit in you. Should I use AI? Can it be a tool? I think it can be a tool, but if you use AI in any way, shape, or form, you better tell your congregation that this sermon was written by an autonomous bot, just like you should quote, if you're going to use a large portion of another sermon from a commentator, you should quote that, or "someone said." You should quote that. I don't think it's the best thing to do. I don't think there's anything wrong with using it as research. You have dictionaries, you have books, you have lexicons. You have all this study helps, and you should use those.

Should you use AI? I don't believe you should for sermons because AI isn't part of you. The Holy Spirit uses the man of God and the Word of God to preach and proclaim to the sheep to teach them. AI can never do that, besides AI...we all know the internet is perfect, right? It never makes mistakes. Be careful. It's just a warning. I just wanted to mention that. Your number one job as a pastor-teacher is to understand the text, apply the text, proclaim the text to the people of God, and that's a gift that AI cannot give to you. It's the gift that Jesus gives you.

Ephesians 4, "And He Himself gave some to be, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry." That gift isn't AI, that gift is something God has given you—teaching and equipping the saints for ministry. That's a gift of the Holy Spirit. Just a warning, Christians. Be careful, pastors. Be careful with AI because your hard work—spending hours wrestling with the text to understand it, to communicate it in a way that your congregation can understand—that's really your responsibility; and when you do that, the Lord will use you. God will speak through you.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, I have it here in my notes, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." That's our job is to rightly divide the word of truth.

So, you can use ChatGPT for information, articles, books, commentaries, just don't use it for composition. In my opinion, you shouldn't use it for composition when you come up with your final manuscript. I preach from a manuscript, and that's what we're going to be looking at right now, but those are the three practical things I wanted to cover with you—calling, developed as a preacher, and philosophy of preaching.

Let's look at...this is a sermon. I picked this one specifically in Hebrews 4. I titled it, "The Powerful Word Of God." As you can see, follow me through this manuscript. I might not say every word here but, "Open your Bibles to Hebrews 4, and this is a great portion of Scripture." This is my introduction. I talk about rest, "We all need rest, and the spiritual rest, assurance, and confidence in our salvation that we find throughout this particular chapter, Hebrews 4." And then who the writer is writing to there it is right there, "To the unsaved person to enter into the rest, or Christ's salvation, by believing in Jesus Christ." That's the introduction to the sermon, and then I have an example here: We enter salvation's rest by grace through faith in Christ, and we continue to live in salvation's rest every day by grace through faith, and these passages tell us to be diligent and faithfully embrace the rest God has given to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

My way of preaching is I put the bold print helps me so that I can scan a point and not just focus on it. If I was preaching this, I would've had this brewing in my brain for three days—Thursday, Friday, Saturday—so I know most of what I'm going to say and I'll look at my notes and my eyes are up most of the time. Today, I haven't done this in two years, this is two years old, so this is a little harder in that regard, but there's the introduction. Then, I have a question here: What will strengthen our faith and keep us at rest and what will reveal sin to the unsaved and bring them to salvation? My title, "The Powerful Word Of God," prayer, and then right into the text. I think John talked about how important it is to read the text.

Right now I'm having the congregation stand the last couple of years, "Stand with me, and let's read out loud," and I might read a verse, and I have it on the powerpoint screen in smaller print. I read out loud and then they'll have bold letters, and I say, "Now, it's your turn." We'll just read. I'll read, they'll read, but we're reading the text together. Then, we sit down, "Open your Bible." I always say that, "Open your Bible. If you need a large print Bible, it's right there in the pew in front of you. If you have your Bibles, and you should have your Bibles." I'm always encouraging the congregation to have their Bibles open. John was really adamant about that. I'm so glad. "Open your Bibles. Bring your Bible to church," and then we have the Bible in front of us.

Then, the context, see the little note there, "context;" and it's critical that you understand that this letter was written to believing and non-believing Jews who had left Judaism to embrace Christianity. And then some information about the context there. They fellowshiped together. The unbelieving Jews were at the point of renouncing their professed faith in Christ. They were right on the edge or in danger of going back into Judaism, that's why the writer says, "Don't do

what your forefathers did. Don't fall back as the generation did in Moses' time and die in the wilderness. Instead be diligent to enter into rest while it is available. Do it today."

The blue is the text. Everybody has their own color scheme. I know Pastor Brian Bell, if you look at some of his sermons, they're all colored. I don't get it, I don't understand it because they're not mine. I like to read them. But this is mine. Wherever it's red, it's going to show up on the screen. I don't do what Charlie Campbell does, I don't have my MacBook Pro and I run it with a clicker or whatever. We have someone in the sound room that runs it for me, and they have my manuscript. So, when I get there and say, "My first point is," and it pops up on the screen, and it would be the red print right here, "The priority of entering rest."

I want you to notice how the point comes from the text, look at verse 11, "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest." My point is the priority of entering the rest, but it comes from the text, verse 11. Then, you'll notice the word "diligent." I never spell the Greek because I can't pronounce the Greek. I don't know Greek. I tell the church, and they know that I don't know it. But I write it so I can pronounce it. Spoudáz is the Greek word, and this is what it means, labor or to exert oneself, diligent. It means you have to do something. You can't just sit around and listen to the Bible to be taught. You can't just go to church and take up space thinking you're okay, but labor or be diligent involves an effort on your part.

Then, proof-text. Where is another text of Scripture that uses that same word spoudáz? It's in 2 Peter 1:10. Again, it's in red, so it's going to pop up on the screen, "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble." Again, the word "diligent" is found right there. Peter says to make an even greater effort "... to make your call and election sure."

This is just an example. John wanted me to kind of give you an example. You can look through this. Again, the red letters are going to pop up. My second point, verse 12, the diagnostic Word of God. Look at verse 12. How did I get that point? I probably got it from one of the commentaries or maybe as I read it and read some commentaries I came up with that word for myself. I couldn't tell you at this point. But, notice what the text says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," the diagnostic Word of God. It makes sense, right? The point comes directly from the text, and then I give an example, and then I give context there. Go back to verse 11.

The context is salvation, being diligent to enter rest. Verse 11, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Then, verse 12, "For the word of God," it diagnoses us. It opens us up. It teaches us—the diagnostic Word of God. There are some examples there. I'm just moving through here.

The next point there is five truths about the Word of God. So, here's some subpoints. I'm sure you'll get into using subpoints. Real quick, I just have a minute here, but notice the first one

there, God's Word is alive. In other words, it's not dead, it's living. All these points come right from that verse, and then I give a prooftext in 1 Peter 1:23-25, and then I go on to the next point, God's Word is powerful, and then give a prooftext, Psalm 107.

There's an illustration by Spurgeon there, if you want to look at that, that's kind of interesting. C.H. Spurgeon was saved by one single word from the Bible. He tells a story when he was 16 and how he wandered into a small church on one Sunday morning. It was stormy outside. He came inside the church to get out of the rain. The storm was so great the pastor could not get across the stream to church, so in place of the pastor, one of the elders, a blacksmith, picked up his Bible and read from Isaiah 45:22, "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other." Spurgeon said the old man spoke ten minutes, and said, "Look to Me! Look to Me!" passionately calling for a response. Then, he pointed at Spurgeon and said, "Look," and Spurgeon looked that morning and was saved with God's wonderful Word.

So, just an illustration from a subpoint to explain or expound the Scriptures. I'm not going to go through all of them. Prooftexts, number 5; and on the next page, a summation, the five specific truths. They're in bold print, and all the five points are right there. Another Charles Spurgeon quote, "Bibles that are falling apart usually belong to people who aren't." That's a great one. You've probably heard that before. Then, just the points. If you go all the way to the end, you'll see the conclusion, all the way to the very end. Why is it that so many professing Christians have never really entered into God's rest of salvation? The answer is they don't read, study, and know God's amazing powerful Word. But the unbeliever doesn't read, so he never sees himself as an unworthy sinner in need of a Savior that the Bible declares him to be.

What must be done to escape God's certain judgment? You must believe. So there's the call. Conclusion, then the call, are you a true believer in Christ? Ephesians 2, the great, we're saved by faith, by grace and by faith alone, and then the call to come to Christ.

There's a real quick kind of philosophy of ministry. There's my sermon. I hope that's a blessing to you. Let's pray.