



The Cultural Need for Expository Preaching

"Gone Missing" is the Biblical Gospel! This is a disturbing statement to contemplate but sadly, it is a reality for many churches in our culture. "Gone Missing" is the teaching on sin, self-denial, sacrifice, suffering, judgment, repentance, and hell. Many evangelical preachers in our society have drifted away from expounding on the Biblical truth as found in the Word of God. They have traded the exposition of the Word of God for political correctness and ego-stroking, while tip-toeing around people's need for repentance in their lives. Many preachers appear more concerned about how many people fill the pews each Sunday rather than how many of those souls will enter into eternity. Warren Wiersbe and Walter Kaiser sum up the condition of our culture in this manner,

"I don't think the average church member realizes the extent of the theological erosion that's taken place on the American exegetical scene since World War II... In so much of today's ministry 'feeling good' has replaced being good, and 'happiness' has replaced holiness."¹
"One of the most depressing spectacles in the church today is her lack of power... At the heart of this problem is an impotent pulpit."²

The condition of our culture is characteristic of a culture that redefines, maligns, or ignores the truth of God's Word. This same trend was found in the days of Amos as the Lord gave this indictment,

Amos 8:11 (ESV) – "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land – not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

We are facing a famine of epic proportions regarding the proclamation of the Word of God within the pulpits of our churches and there is only one hope for restoration. Walter Kaiser writes in his book, *Revive Us Again*, the following observation about famine of the Word of God within our current culture:

Too often the Bible is little more than a book of epigrammatic sayings or springboards that give us a rallying point around which to base our editorials. But where did we get the audacious idea that God would bless our opinions or judgments? Who wants to hear another point of view as an excuse for Bible study or a message from the Word of God? Who said God would bless our...ramblings...? Surely this is a major reason why the famine of the Word continues in massive proportions in most places in North America. Surely this is why the hunger for the teaching and proclamation of God's Word continues to grow year after

¹ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Myself*, 301.

² Walter Kaiser Jr., *Revive Us Again* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 235-236.

year. Men and women cannot live by ideas alone, no matter how eloquently they are stated or argued, but solely by patient reading and explanation of all the Scripture, line after line, paragraph after paragraph, chapter after chapter, book after book. Where are such interpreters to be found, and where are their teachers?³

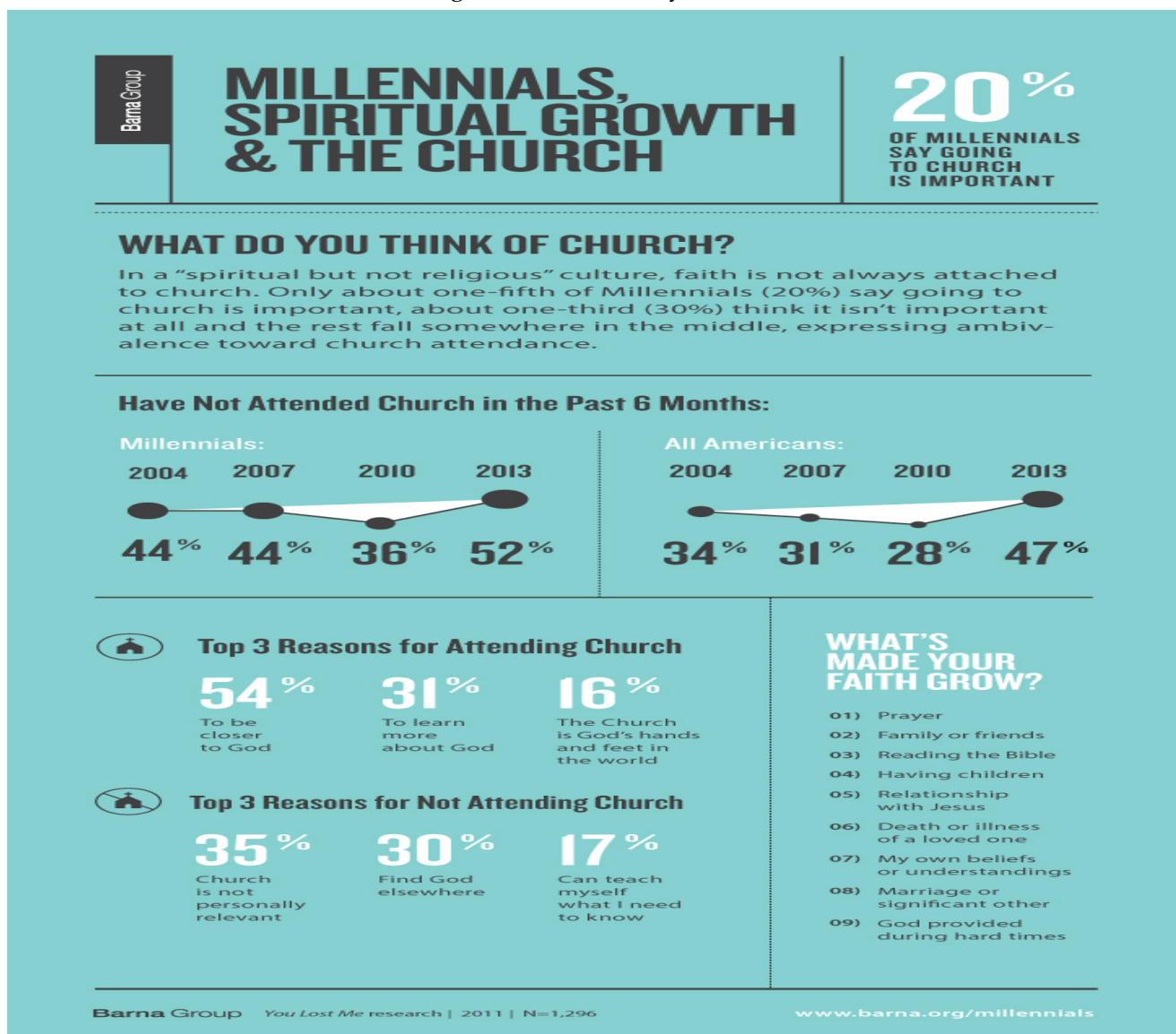
We are facing a famine of the Word of God and we must return to God through the exposition of His Word within our churches. Mark Dever sums it up in this manner as he states,

“The first mark of a healthy church is expository preaching. It is not only the first mark; it is far and away the most important of them all, because if you get this one right, all of the others should follow.”⁴

It is of utmost urgency that expository preaching is reclaimed in our pulpits today. This is necessary to rekindle a desire among God’s people to seek His presence but also to present eternal saving truth to those who are seeking answers in our culture as found among Millennials⁵ today.

QUESTIONS

Are we facing a famine of Biblical preaching in our country today?
How does a lack of Biblical preaching effect a nation and its people?



³ Walter Kaiser Jr., *Revive Us Again* (Nashville:Broadman & Holman, 1999), 166-67.

⁴ Mark Dever, 9 Marks of a Healthy Church, p 39.

⁵ Barna Group, 5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to Church, Sept. 17, 2013. Downloaded from <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/635-5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church#.VFg5bS-QyE>

God's "A.P.P." for Reclaiming Surrendered Ground

Thankfully God has given a solution to this epidemic as found in His Word. He has provided us His A.P.P. to utilize at all times and in all circumstances to reclaim the surrendered ground of expository preaching in our culture.

Authority of God and His Word is Reclaimed in Your Life

The first part of downloading God's "A.P.P." for your life regarding the proper interpretation of the Word of God and gaining spiritual stability is found in **Philippians 4:7**.

Philippians 4:7 – And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Today, we have Biblically anemic individuals that are filling the pews every Sunday. People believe they are at peace with God because they are told that they are from pulpits that preach health and wealth false gospels and much more.

Yet many lack the peace of God in their life because they are spiritually hallow and empty and they are spiritually empty because they sit under pulpits that say a lot of words but that are spiritually empty. Haddon Robinson declares that the reason for this is due to the preaching found in the pulpit as he states,

"When a preacher fails to preach the Scriptures, he abandons his authority. He confronts his hearers no longer with a word from God but only with another word from men."⁶

Q U E S T I O N S

How does the Word of God provide peace to a hurting heart?
What happens to that peace if God's Word is not taught?

The point made by Robinson and others is that in order for individuals to experience life changing truth and live a life marked by God's peace and security then they need to be taught God's truth instead of empty philosophy or theology. Once the sinner has made "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1), that is, in salvation having ceased to be God's enemy and become His child, he can enjoy the peace of God but this peace is only found through the understanding and application of God's Word.

- Isaiah wrote of this supernatural peace: "The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You" (Isa. 26:3).
- Paul prayed for the Romans that "the God of hope [would] fill [them] with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13).
- In his high priestly blessing on Israel Aaron said, "The Lord lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace" (Num. 6:26).
- In Psalm 29:11 David wrote, "The Lord will bless His people with peace."
- Shortly before His death Jesus promised, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful" (John 14:27). God's peace is not for everyone, however; " 'There is no peace for the wicked,' says the Lord" (Isa. 48:22), neither *with* God, nor *from* God.

Paul further defines this supernatural peace as that **which surpasses all comprehension**. It transcends human intellectual powers, human analysis, human insights, and human understanding. God's peace **will also guard** Christians from anxiety, doubt, and worry.

⁶ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*

- **Will guard** is a military term used of soldiers on guard duty. The picture would have been familiar to the Philippians, since the Romans stationed troops in Philippi to protect their interests in that part of the world. Just as soldiers guard and protect a city, so God's peace guards and protects believers who confidently trust in Him.
- Paul's use of the phrase **hearts** and **minds** was not intended to imply a distinction between the two; he was merely making a comprehensive reference to the believer's inner person. Once again, Paul reminds his readers that true peace is not available through any human source, but only **in Christ Jesus**.

This is why it is critical to regain the surrendered ground of "Expository Preaching" today. Ultimately, this Biblical approach to reaching arms you with "God's Truth" which guards your heart and mind. There are more advantages as well,

Advantages to Expository Preaching

Expository preaching—expressing exactly the will of the glorious Sovereign—allows God to speak, not man.
 Expository preaching—retaining the thoughts of the Spirit—brings the preacher into direct and continual contact with the mind of the Holy Spirit who authored Scripture.
 Expository preaching frees the preacher to proclaim all the revelation of God, producing a ministry of wholeness and integrity.
 Expository preaching promotes biblical literacy, yielding rich knowledge of redemptive truths.
 Expository preaching carries ultimate divine authority, rendering the very voice of God.
 Expository preaching transforms the preacher, leading to transformed congregations.⁷

What is Expository Preaching?

It is at this point that we need to take time to identify the definition of "Expository Preaching" in order to recognize the value of this approach to preaching.

Expository preaching refers to drawing out the meaning of a Biblical text. Webster's Dictionary defines the term exposition as, "(1) a setting forth of the meaning or purpose through a discourse, or (2) an example designed to convey information which is difficult to understand."⁸ Consider some of these other definitions given by other expository preachers today. There are many good definitions of "expository preaching."

QUESTION

What is expository preaching?

Expository preaching is that method of proclaiming the Scriptures that takes as a minimum one paragraph of Biblical text (in prose narrative or its equivalent in other literary genre) and derives from that text both the shape (i.e., the main points and subpoints of the sermon) and the content (i.e., the substance, ideas, and principles) of the message itself.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.¹⁰

⁷ Richard L. Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas, "Preface," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), xv.

⁸ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1988), 438.

⁹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. "The Crisis in Expository Preaching Today," *Preaching*, September-October 1995, 4.

¹⁰ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), 19.

By expositively, I mean preaching in such a way that the meaning of the Bible passage is presented *entirely* and *exactly* as it was intended by God. Expository preaching is the proclamation of the truth of God as mediated through the preacher.¹¹

Expository preaching is the Spirit-empowered explanation and proclamation of the text of God's Word with due regard to the historical, contextual, grammatical, and doctrinal significance of the given passage, with the specific object of invoking a Christ-transforming response.¹²

Expository preaching is the Spirit illumined interpretation of a passage(s) of Scripture, regardless of length, where the preacher discovers and proclaims the original meaning of the passage(s) through careful exegesis resulting in the explication of the text(s) for the modern-day audience.¹³

I have provided a list of important terms and definitions in Appendix A for further understanding of the aspects of expository preaching. All of these definitions provide clarity as to the nature of expository preaching. Each of these definitions brings out the importance of discovering the original intention of the author and expounding on it for clarity of understanding of the modern day audience.

Expository preaching is Bible-based preaching of a passage of Scripture that discovers, presents, and applies God's intended meaning of the text. This style of preaching presents the original outline of the text while explaining the message in a contemporary way. The Biblical understanding of exposition has three major objectives: (1) Deduction, (2) Explanation, and (3) Application. These objectives help the expositor bridge the gap between the original meaning and application of the text.

THE NATURE OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING

"It is emphatically not preaching about the Bible, but preaching the Bible."

Preaching the Word of God Provides the Framework for Biblical Living

The second part of downloading God's "**A.P.P.**" for your life regarding the proper interpretation of the Word of God and gaining spiritual stability is found in **Philippians 4:8**.

Philippians 4:8 – Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

As we begin looking into this text then we examine the importance of what you read and why you read it. There are many leaders out there that claim to be Biblical preachers and teachers and say all kinds of spiritual things but that does not mean that they are Biblical.

Today, it is critical that you find a Biblical preaching and teaching church to grow in your faith and stand against false teachings.

"A text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or his or her readers."¹⁴ Show me a church where there is strong Bible teaching over an enduring period of time, and I will show you a congregation who are studying the Word of God on their own, applying the healthy principles of Biblical interpretation. On the other hand, show me a church where the Word of God is not taught in the pulpit, and I'll show you a congregation in which biblical illiteracy, doctrinal confusion, and spiritual apathy at the personal level are rampant.¹⁵

¹¹ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 222.

¹² Stephen F. Olford and David L. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 69.

¹³ Dr. Timothy Lueking, "Expository Leadership", 2014.

¹⁴ Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, 64.

¹⁵ Quote by John MacArthur

The phrase “ **dwell on these things**” in Philippians 4:8 introduces an important truth: spiritual stability is a result of how a person thinks. “**Dwell on**” is a command which means that proper thinking is not optional in the Christian life.

- This word means more than just entertaining thoughts; it means “to evaluate,” “to consider,” or “to calculate.” Believers are to consider the qualities Paul lists in this verse and meditate on their implications. The verb form calls for habitual discipline of the mind to set all thoughts on these spiritual virtues.

The Bible leaves no doubt that people’s lives are the product of their thoughts. Believers must discipline their spiritually sensitive minds to think about right spiritual realities.

Proverbs 23:7 – For as he thinks within himself, so he is.

In this brief list, Paul catalogues eight godly virtues to concentrate on.

- The Word of God is the repository of what is **true**. In His High Priestly Prayer Jesus said to the Father, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). In Psalm 19:9 David wrote, “The judgments of the Lord are true,” while Psalm 119:151 adds, “All Your commandments are truth.” Thinking on **whatever is true** means reading, analyzing, and meditating on the Word of God. The remaining seven virtuous categories of thought are all based on the truth of God’s Word. All of them are ways to view the truths of Scripture.
- Second, believers are to think on **whatever is honorable**, whatever is noble, dignified, and worthy of respect. **Honorable** comes from a word meaning “to revere,” or “to worship.” Believers must not think on what is trivial, temporal, mundane, common, and earthly, but rather on what is heavenly, and so worthy of awe, adoration, and praise. All that is true in God’s Word is **honorable**.
- Third, believers are to think on **whatever is right**. *Dikaïos* (**right**) is an adjective, and should be translated “righteous.” It describes whatever is in perfect harmony with God’s eternal, unchanging standards, again as revealed in Scripture. Believers are to think on matters that are consistent with the law of God.
- Fourth, believers are to think on **whatever is pure**. *Hagnos* (**pure**) describes what God in Scripture defines as holy, morally clean, and undefiled. In 1 Timothy 5:22 it is translated “free from sin.” Believers are to purify themselves because Jesus Christ is pure (1 John 3:3).
- Fifth, believers are to think on **whatever is lovely**. *Prosphilēs* (**lovely**) appears only here in the New Testament. It could be translated “sweet,” “gracious,” “generous,” or “patient.” Believers must focus their thoughts on what the Bible says is pleasing, attractive, and amiable before God.
- Sixth, believers are to think on **whatever is of good repute**. *Euphēmos* also appears only here in the New Testament. It describes what is highly regarded or well thought of. Believers’ thoughts are elevated by Scripture to fix on the loftiest themes.
- In summary, Paul exhorts, **if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things**. The key to godly living is godly thinking, as Solomon wisely observed,

Q U E S T I O N

Why is expository preaching needed in order to live out the eight virtues discussed by Paul?

Proverbs 4:23 – Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

The list presented to us in Philippians 4:8 is only discovered through the careful study of God’s Word. This type of approach is found through “Expository Preaching” due to the fact that “Expository Preaching” is mandated to preachers in the Word of God.

Biblical Mandate for Expository Preaching

Expository preaching is primarily known as Biblical preaching. As we examine the Scriptures, we observe that the clear proclamation and exposition of the Word of God is not only needed within the lives of all mankind but it is also mandated by God for preachers to carry out this task. The Biblical mandate for expository preaching is observed in 2 Timothy 4 as the Apostle Paul gives this expository mandate to Timothy and all the preachers who would follow in his footsteps for all generations.

2 Timothy 4:1-4 – ¹I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

The Apostle Paul charges Timothy with the mandate of expository preaching within this text.

- The phrase “**solemnly charge**” is one word in the Greek, which carries the understanding of a direct, earnest, or forceful order.

Additionally, this is not just a command from the Apostle Paul, but it carries the authority of our Father God and Christ Jesus as noted by Paul in the words that follow this charge, “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus.”

- The Greek word the Apostle Paul utilizes for “preach” is an imperative verb that means “to herald or proclaim publicly.” Within the context of the passage we understand that this is the public proclamation of the Word of God. Preachers are to be heralds of the Word of God.

It has been observed that there are more than thirty-three different verbs utilized within the New Testament to describe the mandate of preaching. Some of these examples are: to preach, testify, bear witness, entrust, commit, announce, exhort, discuss, speak, and utter. With this understanding in mind, other Biblical mandates to preach the Word of God include:

Biblical Mandates to Preach the Word

Matthew 28:19-20 – ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

1 Timothy 4:13 – Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

2 Timothy 2:2 – The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Titus 2:1 – But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.

“The early church understood the mandate of preaching to be the proclamation that the kingdom was at hand, but this proclamation also implied a call to repentance and an invitation to faith. It was a proclamation of the whole gospel not just an initial announcement.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 123.

This mandate still applies to preachers today as our churches are in great need for pulpits to be filled with expositors of the Word of God.

Identification of Biblical Expository Preachers

What does a Biblical preacher look like? What does a Biblical preacher sound like? These are questions people may wrestle with as they sit in a pew on a Sunday morning seeking to encounter God through His Word. It may be true that preachers come in different sizes, have different styles, and even preach with different voices but there are characteristics that are synonymous within the lives and faith of every Biblical preacher. Consider some of the marks of spiritual identification as listed in the next section.

Identifying Marks of a Biblical Expository Preacher

The following lists significant identifying marks of Biblical preachers. Each mark helps to identify a preacher's devotion to the Lord and his desire to bring glory to God.

- A man who is fully devoted to the Lord over all things (Matthew 6:24)
- A man who pursues righteousness (1 Timothy 3:2)
- A man who is obedient to the Word of God (1 Timothy 6:13-14)
- A man who believes and proclaims the inerrancy of the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)
- A man who studies and is transformed by the Word of God (Romans 12:2)
- A man who embodies godliness (Hebrews 12:28)
- A man marked by humility before the Lord (Luke 17:10)
- A man who is led and fed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:22-24)
- A man who is full of love for the Lord and has a burden for the lost (Matthew 22:37-39)
- A man who is devoted to prayer above all things (Acts 6:4)
- A man who has an unwavering faith in the Lord (Philippians 4:11-13)
- A man who boldly proclaims the truth no matter what the costs (1 Thessalonians 2:9)
- A man who is an example of a devoted Christian to those around him (1 Timothy 4:12)
- A man who is focused on the eternal reward (Colossians 3:12)

QUESTIONS

How would you identify an Expository preacher today?
Why do you think Expository Preaching has received a bad reputation in the past decade?

Charles Swindoll also identifies four key marks of expository preaching in his book, *The Church Awakening*. These marks bring greater clarity to understanding the definition of expository preaching and why it is essential to hear from pulpits today.

Expository preaching is the proclamation of Holy Scripture delivered for the purpose of enabling others to understand what God has written, why that is important, and how it relates to one's personal life.

Understanding what God has written requires the expositor to be accurate in both preparation and delivery of the Scriptures, so that the Bible is allowed to speak for itself.

Understanding why God's Word is important calls for the expositor to be passionate in communicating the truth, so that the one receiving the message is compelled to listen and eager to respond.

Understanding how the message relates to life means that the expositor uses terms that are clear, delivers the message in ways that connect with needs, and applies it so specifically the hearer realizes the relevance of God's Word and the necessity of aligning his or her life to it.¹⁷

¹⁷ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Church Awakening* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2010), 259.

Practicing the Word of God Takes Precedence Over Mere Good Intentions

The final part of downloading God's "A.P.P." for your life regarding the proper interpretation of the Word of God and gaining spiritual stability is found in **Philippians 4:9**.

Philippians 4:9 – What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

It is within this verse that Paul drives home the importance of becoming believers that also apply God's Word in your life. James states the same principle in these words,

James 1:22 – But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

QUESTIONS

How can Christians guard themselves against deception?

What role does preaching play in helping a Christian guard his/her heart and mind?

- A "doer of the Word" is one who keeps or obeys the Word of God according to the Greek language while "deceiving yourselves" refers to being deceived by false arguments or reasons.

The point James and Paul are both making is that you cannot defend yourself or others against false doctrine without (1) knowing God's Truth which means you must be (2) Taught God's Truth which means (3) you will be armed with all the tools to stand against corrupt teachings in the culture. **This is the importance of Expository Preaching.**

"Expository preaching consists in the explanation and application of a passage of Scripture. Without explanation it is not expository; without application it is not preaching." – **T. H. L. Parker**

People in whom the Word of God richly dwells ultimately live obediently and stand firm when difficult times, temptation, and temptation to compromise comes to life. Paul uses the term "**Practice**" which refers to "repetition or continuous action."

- We speak of a lawyer or a doctor as having a practice, because their profession maintains a normal routine. Christians are to make it their practice to lead godly, obedient lives.

Paul emphasizes that **Holy living** is "(1) learned, (2) received, and (3) taught by example." Early in Philippians Paul emphasized this principle to his fellow Christian by saying,

Philippians 3:17 – Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

Paul repeats that exhortation here, urging the Philippians to put into practice **the things** they had **learned and received and heard and seen in him**. The terms **learned, received, heard, and seen** each focus on an important aspect of Paul's ministry to the Philippians.

- **Learned** is related to the noun for (disciple). It refers to teaching, learning, instructing, and discipling. Paul is referring here to his personal instruction and discipling of the Philippians. His practice wherever he ministered was not only to teach "publicly," but also "from house to house" (Acts 20:20). This is critical today for a healthy walk!
- **Received** is sometimes used in the New Testament as a technical term for God's revelation (Gal. 1:9, 12; 1 Tim. 6:20). Paul called upon the Philippians to practice in their lives the truths of God's Word delivered to them. They were not only to receive those truths, but also to pass them on. Paul taught Timothy the same principle,

2 Timothy 2:2 – “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

- **Heard and Seen** refer to Paul’s visible character of credibility and righteousness that was lived out in public and private. Because he modeled the standards he preached, Paul could exhort the Philippians to pattern their lives after his.

The promise attached to such obedience is that **the God of peace will be with you**. The title **God of peace** is one of Paul’s favorites. It is a reminder that those who have godly attitudes, thoughts, and deeds will be guarded both by the peace of God and by the **God of peace**. His presence is essential for the strength, tranquility, and contentment necessary for spiritual stability which ultimately is taught and caught from the pulpit as has been done for many years even as found in the pages of the Word of God.

Biblical Examples of Expository Preaching

Preachers have the mandate from the Word of God to clearly proclaim the truth as found in the Word of God. We have already established that our culture is in great need of God’s absolute truth to be proclaimed once again. An expository preacher’s desire is to carry out this task with great diligence, clarity, passion, and with a Biblical approach. The Biblical approach of preaching and teaching can be observed by reflecting on two examples found in the Scriptures. These two examples will point the preacher to the great importance and need for expository preaching.

Example #1 – Ezra Proclaims the Word of God

The first example is found within the pages of the Old Testament. Nehemiah chapter eight records the event where Ezra, who was both a priest and a scribe, took on the role as one of the original expositors of Scripture. According to the words of Moses, the law of God was to be read in the presence of the people so that they might hear, learn, and observe the Word of God and develop a deeper respect, love, and fear for the Lord (Deut. 31:12). Observe the characteristics of an expositor by reading the account of Ezra as he reads the law of God to the people.

QUESTIONS

What important highlights do you see in Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-8?

Why do the people stand while the Word of God is read?

Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-8 – ¹And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. ²So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. ³And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. ⁶And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. ⁸They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

We make the following observations about the exposition of the Word of God within this text. We observe that exposition of the Word of God differs from merely reading the Word of God. The exposition of the Word of God as witnessed in this text requires:

- (1) Reading from the Word of God
- (2) Explanation of the Word of God
- (3) Translation of the Word of God
- (4) Application of the Word of God resulting in both understanding and worship.

The exposition of the Word of God was given to people who were attentive and ready to receive the Word of God, which produced great fruit within their lives and the nation.

Example #2 – Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

The second example of expository preaching found in Scripture is in the Acts 8 account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. In this passage Philip expounds upon the Word of God in order for the eunuch to clearly understand the Word of God and God's will. Notice once again that a distinction is made between merely reading the Word of God and expounding on the Word.

Acts 8:29-35 – ²⁹And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." ³⁴And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

We make the following observations about the exposition of the Word of God in this text. The exposition of the Word as witnessed in this text requires:

- (1) Reading from the Word of God
- (2) Explanation of the Word of God
- (3) Translation or explanation of the Word of God
- (4) Application of the Word of God which results in others coming to believe upon the Lord as Savior.

The eunuch desired to hear and understand the Word of God, when combined with Peter's clear exposition of the Scriptures, brought about the fruit of salvation.

Principles of Biblical Exposition

As we examine the need for expository preaching in our culture, we must consider the basic principles of Biblical exposition. These principles will help determine if a sermon is truly an expository proclamation of the Word of God.

QUESTION

How can you determine if a preaching style is "expository" in nature?

Principle #1 – Preaching based on a Biblical passage

The first principle of Biblical exposition occurs when the preacher seeks the leading of the Lord in order to determine which passage of Scripture he is called to examine and expound. This principle is where the proper foundation is established – to discover a deeper understanding of God's truth as found only through His inspired Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is also in this stage that

we come to realize the great importance of prayer within the preacher's devotional life as well as the exposition of the Word of God.

Principle #2 – Preaching that seeks the original intended meaning of a Biblical passage

The second principle of Biblical exposition occurs when the preacher discovers and understands the original meaning of a specific passage of Scripture. This principle involves systematic exegesis, grammatical analysis, study on the historical, cultural, and literary context, as well as the illumination of the Holy Spirit through prayer. It is crucial that each preacher understands that a Biblical text cannot be clearly preached until it is thoroughly studied.

Principle #3 – Preaching that seeks to expound on God's truth as found in a Biblical passage

The third principle of Biblical exposition occurs as the preacher transitions from discovering the truth of the passage to delivering the truth to the audience. When applying this principle the preacher will utilize elements of explanation, argument, and illustrations to expound on God's truth. The preacher will not deviate from the original meaning or outline of the author but will explain and illustrate the discovered truth as found through careful exegesis.

Principle #4 – Preaching that proclaims and applies the exposition of a Biblical passage

The final principle of Biblical exposition is the clear and effective proclamation of the Word of God. The delivery of the message must be clear, concise, and provide practical application. The preacher must bridge the gap of the original intention of the author to the practical application for today. This principle carries the mandate for believers to apply James 1:22 in their lives and to become "...doers of the Word, and not merely hearers..."

Effects of Biblical Expository Preaching

The case for expository preaching has been presented by reflecting upon the mandate as well as the witness of Biblical examples of this style of preaching. It is time to examine the fruit of expository preaching as illustrated through the Scriptures.

The Fruit of Expository Preaching

Example #1 – Expository preaching allows for training up in righteousness.

Christians are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Discipleship comes through the surrender of our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and committing ourselves to the hearing, teaching, and obeying of God's Word.

1 Timothy 4:7 – But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness...

We must be trained up in godliness to become true disciples of Jesus Christ. Our training comes through the understanding and application of the Scriptures which cannot take place apart from the exposition of Scripture.

Example #2 – Expository preaching allows us to receive Godly wisdom.

James 1:5 – But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Q U E S T I O N

What is the fruit of Biblical expository preaching?

Christians need godly wisdom in order to bring glory to God with their lives and to influence the world for His kingdom. Expository preaching enables us to understand the will of God and to know how to seek His wisdom in our lives.

Example #3 – Expository preaching retains the inspiration of God.

2 Peter 1:16,20-21 – ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty...²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The Word of God is God-breathed and expository preaching retains the inspiration of the Word of God through careful study and exegesis. As the preacher seeks to expound on the Word of God, retaining the original intent of the author, then two objectives are accomplished. First, it allows God to provide illumination through the Holy Spirit and His Word to His people. Second, it allows the preacher to be in direct contact with the Holy Spirit who authored the text.

Example #4 – Expository preaching promotes transformation and renewal through Biblical literacy.

Romans 12:2 – And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Christians are called to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. The Greek word that the Apostle Paul utilizes for “*transformed*” within this text has the same root as the English word “*metamorphosis*.” The word means “to change into another form or transfigure.” As Christians our heart, mind, and life is radically changed by the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God to accomplish this transformation. Expository preaching enables us to clearly understand the Word of God bringing about obedience to the Lord and His commands as well as the transformation of our lives.

Theological Significance of Biblical Preaching

The final section of the examination of expository preaching discusses three areas of theological significance. Expository preaching proclaims the whole Word of God giving the Holy Spirit the vehicle to transform and illuminate the lives of the people. Observe the importance of this preaching style in three areas.

Proclamation of the Sovereignty of God

Expository preaching proclaims the Word of God in the clearest way possible. As the preacher discovers the original meaning of a text and proclaims it to the people, he is speaking the very Word of God that the Lord spoke to the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. The Word of God establishes the sovereignty of God and expository preaching proclaims this truth leading us to a deeper relationship with our Creator.

Q U E S T I O N

What is the significance of expository preaching for your life and faith?

Hebrews 1:1-2 – ¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

Proclamation of the Inspiration of Scripture

Expository preaching is also grounded in and proclaims the inspiration of Scripture. The Word of God is “God-breathed” and sufficient for all the things in this life and for eternity. Scripture is God’s Word in written form, which communicates His divine truth. The style of preaching that will best communicate the inerrancy of the Word of God is expository preaching.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Proclamation of the Preacher

Expository preaching proclaims the mandate for the Word of God to be preached throughout the world. The clear proclamation of the Word of God can only be accomplished through the preacher that has a desire to feed the flock. The preacher must both expound upon the Word of God and refute any false doctrine that might be presented before him. The preacher is a soldier of Christ who is faithful to the living God and seeks to bring Him glory with the both the proclamation of the Word of God and by being the living example of obedience to God.

1 Timothy 6:11-14 – ¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, ¹⁴ to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

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‘The only response to inerrant Scripture, then, is to preach it expositionally.’

Conclusion

We have shown the evidence that our country is at a “Crossroads” when it comes to morality, leadership, and social justice. Now is the time for the country to turn back to the Lord in order to experience His blessings once again. Be a voice of truth to a dying culture and choose this day to honor Him with the life you live.

Appendix A – Important Definitions in Expository Preaching

Expository preaching addresses the specific details found in the Word of God. If we desire to gain the deepest understanding of the nature of expository preaching then we must develop a proper working vocabulary of the basic elements regarding expository preaching. Consider the following terms and definitions in preparation for studying the Biblical basis, theological significance, and cultural relevance of expository preaching.

- **Expository Preaching** – The proclamation of the truth of the Word of God, exactly and entirely as intended by God, as delivered by the preacher. Expository preaching’s sole source is the inspired Word of God and it extracts the original meaning of the text through careful exegesis.

- **Revelatory Preaching** – This is the first of two forms of preaching found in the Scriptures. Revelatory preaching is the proclamation of God’s Word or His initial revelation to man. It is only found in the Scriptures and it was delivered by priests, prophets, apostles, and Jesus who spoke the divine Word from the Lord.
- **Explanatory Preaching** – Explanatory preaching is the second of two forms of preaching found in the Scriptures. It is the explanation of God’s Word delivered to the people in order for them to understand the truth. It follows revelatory preaching because once God’s revelation was given then it needed to be explained.
- **Revelation** – “This is sometimes known as “special revelation” and it refers to the act by which God makes known what is otherwise unknowable.”¹⁸ Special revelation is revealed by the Holy Spirit alone who reveals God’s truth and it was given to the Biblical writers alone so that God might reveal Himself to mankind.
- **Inspiration** – “Inspiration differs from God’s “revelation” in the manner in which it refers to the vehicle by which God’s special revelation came to man.”¹⁹ It is the process by which men moved by the Holy Spirit delivered God’s Word to the people. Inspiration comes from the Greek word which means “God-breathed” as recorded in 2 Timothy 3:16 and it can either be verbal or written.
- **Illumination** – “Illumination is the process by which God enables us to comprehend His truth.”²⁰ We receive illumination today when the Holy Spirit makes the Word of God become alive in our faith which ultimately leads us to the point of practical application of the Word of God. We cannot understand Scripture without illumination.
- **Inerrancy** – The understanding that all Scripture is God breathed, being delivered as absolute truth by the Holy Spirit to holy men of God who received it exactly as God intended. (1 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- **Exegesis** – “The skillful application of sound hermeneutical principles to the Biblical text in the original language with a view to understanding and declaring the author’s intended meaning both to the immediate and subsequent audiences.”²¹ The Greek word used for exegesis as found in Luke 24:35 means “to lead out of or unfold a teaching.” Exegesis is essential for discovering God’s truth in His Word.

D . M A R T I N
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“To expound is not simply to give correct grammatical sense of a verse or passage, it is rather to convey. True expository preaching is doctrinal preaching, it is preaching that addresses specific truths from God to man.”

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¹⁸ John MacArthur, *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 79-80.

¹⁹ MacArthur, *Preaching*, 80.

²⁰ MacArthur, *Preaching*, 81.

²¹ MacArthur, *Preaching*, 22.