

Expositional Preaching

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What are the different kinds of preaching?

The Lay of the Land

The Definitions

- **Anecdotal** - a sermon in which the preacher primarily tells engaging stories with a moral lesson.
- **Biographical** - a sermon in which the preacher traces the life of a biblical character and draws contemporary moral implications.
- **Topical** - a sermon that has a topic in mind prior to consulting the text, and then searches for one or more biblical texts that address the topic chosen beforehand.
- **Textual** - a sermon that refers often to a particular Biblical text, but does not take the main point of the text as its own.
- **Expositional** - a sermon which takes the point of the text as the point of the sermon

The Details

- **The content of expositional preaching is the true word of God.**
 - An exposition of Scripture simply seeks to uncover, explain, and apply the divinely intended meaning of the text.
- **The context of expositional preaching is the pure church of God.**
 - The local church is God's primary receptacle for His preached Word.
 - This kind of preaching will prove itself relevant when the local community of believers backs it up with lifestyles marked by holiness, joy, and selfless service.
- **The goal of expositional preaching is for the people of God to hear and heed the Word of God.**
 - In this sense, expositional preachers are modern day prophets, serving merely as conduits through which the Word of God may flow into the people of God in order to do the work of God in them

The Dangers

- **Topical Preaching**
 - The preacher is never surprised or thereby challenged by the text, but simply ends up studying and preaching on his own favorite topics. *For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).*
 - Therefore, the congregation never grows past the knowledge or maturity level of the preacher. *The unfolding of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple (Ps 119:130).*
- **Anecdotal Preaching**
 - The congregation may go away entertained, but will they go away having been fed on the Word of God? *Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4).*
 - Large numbers may be attracted and entranced, but do the anecdotes have the sanctifying, transforming power that people need for growth in their personal discipleship? *Sanctify them by your truth; your Word is truth (John 17:17).*

The Dangers

The Difference

- Pastoral authority is directly related to Authorial intent. The preacher only has authority from God to speak as His ambassador as long as he remains faithful to convey the Divine Author's intentions.
- This means that the further the preacher strays from preaching the intention of the text, the further his divine blessing and God-given authority are eroded in the pulpit.
- Expository preaching is the only kind of preaching that, by definition, ensures that the agenda of the sermon is determined by the agenda of the text.
- Therefore, a long-term commitment to expository preaching is the most helpful way for a preacher to discipline himself to remain faithful to God's Word over a lifetime of ministry.

Does a commitment to expository preaching mean that I should never preach other kinds of sermons?

- No. Topical and biographical sermons still have value. It is sometimes helpful to address a certain topic by culling and presenting Biblical information. And it is

sometimes instructive to study the life of a Biblical character and draw practical implications for today.

- The point is that, as a consistent diet, expositional preaching is most healthy for both the preacher and the congregation

Misconceptions about Expositional Preaching

Misconception #1: Expositional preaching is any sermon in which the Bible is opened.

- Just because the Bible is open or even quoted does not mean that the preaching is expositional.
- Only if the point of the passage is used as the point of the message does a sermon qualify as expositional.

Misconception #2: Expositional preaching is always a slow, verse by verse progression through a text.

- There are more ways to preach expositionally than plodding through one phrase or sentence at a time. The length of the text is immaterial to the question of whether or not the sermon is an exposition.
- As long as the point of the passage is used as the point of the message, a sermon qualifies as expositional - length notwithstanding.

Misconception #3: Expositional preaching always feels like a dry lecture devoid of application and amounting to nothing more than a running commentary on the text.

- If you hear a sermon like this, it is a poor excuse for an exposition, if it is even an exposition at all.
- The point of any Biblical text is to accomplish God's purposes in the hearts and minds of God's people. So if the sermon amounts to no more than a wordy commentary devoid of application, it has missed the bull's eye at which true exposition always takes aim.