



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus” is.”

Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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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

Expositional Preaching

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The Biblical Background for Expositional Preaching

The Biblical Primacy of Exposition

God's Word gives clear primacy to exposition.

- Many preachers and pastors today question whether the Bible really gives us any reason to think that expositional preaching is the best way to preach.

But the prophetic nature of preaching and the performative nature of God's Word reveal exposition to be best suited to unleashing the power of the text.

Exposition is primary because preaching is prophetic.

- To say that preaching is prophetic is *not* to say that it is either predictive or ecstatic utterance - preachers are ambassadors, not prognosticators; and their source

of revelation is God's mediated *written* word, not His immediate verbal word. It is rather to say that preaching is about receiving God's word and communicating it to God's people in a way that is faithful to God's intention.

- Preaching is prophetic because it conveys God's Word to God's people. Exposition best handles the prophetic nature of preaching because the expositional sermon is unique for taking the point of the passage as the point of the message. It is therefore the best way to remain faithful to the content and intent of God's Word in any given text.

The Biblical Primacy of Exposition

A Positive Example: **Nehemiah 8:7-8**

- *...the Levites explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. They read from the book, from the Law of God,*

translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading (Nehemiah 8:7-8).

- The **content** of their preaching is God's revelation, not their own ideas. So their preaching is prophetic - they receive God's word and give it to the people.

- The **method** of their preaching is to explain the meaning and significance of a portion of God's Word to God's people. This is the heart of expositional preaching.

- The **effect** of their preaching is that the people understand and obey. This is the goal of expositional preaching - that the people hear and heed the Word of God.

The Biblical Primacy of Exposition

A Negative Example: **Jeremiah 23:16,18, 21-22**

- *Thus says the Lord of*

hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the Lord. But who has stood in the counsel of the Lord, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? I did not send these prophets, but they prophesied. But if they had stood in My council, then they would have announced My words to My people, and would have turned them back from their evil way and from the evil of their deeds" (Jer. 23:16, 18, 21-22).

- The **content** of their preaching is from their own imagination. Speaking primarily from our own anecdotes and illustrations displeases God. Expository preaching disciplines us to constrain our words to the parameters of God's Word.

- The **method** of their preaching involves a refusal to stand in God's council to hear and obey His word. An expositor's first task is to stand in God's counsel by bowing under God's Word.

- The **effect** of their preaching fails to turn God's people back to God's ways, but rather lead them into futility. An expositor's goal is to speak God's Word to God's people so that they will walk in God's ways.

The Biblical Primacy of Exposition

Exposition is primary because God's Word is performative.

- God's Word performs what it prescribes. It is its own power for

accomplishing itself. If this is so, then exposition is primary because it best unleashes the performative intention of God's Word on the lives and hearts of God's people.

- When God speaks, His very word actually creates the reality that it commands. Six times in **Genesis 1** we read: *God said and it was so* (**1:6, 9, 11, 14, 24, 29-30**).

- *As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my **word** that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will **accomplish** what I desire and **achieve** the purpose for which I sent it* (**Isa 55:10-12**).

Look up the following verses. What is God's Word doing, or able to do? **John 17:17; Acts 12:24; 19:20; 1Thess 2:13; Heb 4:12; James 1:18, 21; 1Peter 1:23-25.**

The Word at Work

The Two Primary Functions the Word Performs in the Church

- The Word of God is God's chosen instrument for **giving life to His people**.

- **Gen 1** - God creates the world and everything in it by His Word.

- **Gen 12:1-4** - God initiates the covenant with Abraham by His Word.

- **Ezek 37** - God gives life to His people's dead bones by His Word.

- **John 1** - God's incarnate Word, Jesus, brings life.

- **Rom 10:17** - "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word."

- The Word of God is God's chosen instrument for **giving holiness to His people**.

- **2 Chron 34** - the rediscovery of God's word brings national recovery.

- **John 17:17** - *Sanctify them by your truth; your word is truth.*

- **Eph 5:25-26** - Christ cleanses the Church by the Word.

Implications of the Performative Power of God's Word for the preacher

- God's Word is the conduit of God's power that accomplishes God's purpose. The power is not in the preacher himself, his stories, his illustrations, or his technique. The power is in God's Word - the message preached.

- This means that if the Christian preacher is to preach with real Spiritual power, he must discern what God has said in His Word, and then be faithful to say it. In other words, the point of the text should be the point of the sermon.

- This also means that as preachers, we are striving not to say something new, but rather to re-speak God's speech. We are to discover and then make His point, not our own.

So the Word of God accomplishes the purposes of God among the people of God. And if our preaching is to be used of God to effect sanctifying change in people's lives, the point of the text must be the point of our sermons.

See for Yourself

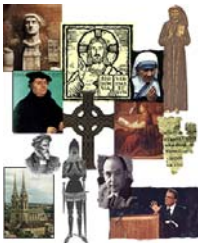
Read **Ezek 37:1-14**.

- How do the bones in Ezekiel's vision come to life (**vv7-8, 10**)?
- What do the bones represent (**v11**)?

What is Ezekiel's divinely commissioned role in the revitalization of God's people (**vv4, 9**)?

Read **Nehemiah 8**.

- What did Ezra read, and to whom did he read it (**vv2-3**)?
- What was the preaching method of the Levites (**v8**)?
- How is this method similar to the definition of expositional preaching given above?
- What were the reactions of the people to this preaching (**vv9, 12**)? Why did they react this way (**v12**)?



STUDIES IN EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

STUDY 2

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH

From the first—and Jewish—great centre of Christianity in Jerusalem to the second—and

Gentile—centre in Antioch there were a number of important steps (**Acts 8:1–12:25**). Time: About **35–46 A.D.**

The Scattering Abroad of the Members of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 8:1–4)—

This dispersion, which led to such great results, took place between five and six years (35 or 36 A.D.) after the descent of the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost and the formal organization of the Jerusalem church.

The immediate cause was the persecution which arose after the martyrdom of Stephen. This was an exclusively Jewish matter. Undoubtedly the leaders of the Jews took advantage of the unsettled state of the Roman empire at this time—and the summons, to Rome, of Pilate to meet the charges against him—to press their case against the Christians. The searching nature and merciless severity of this persecution are seen in the case of Saul who made **“havoc of the church, entering into every house and haling men and women committed them to prison” (Acts 8:3)**. “No man’s house was safe from the persecutor.” The Christian church was laid waste.

While the immediate effect of the activity of the enemies of the church seemed very bad, yet in reality it was a blessing and marked a new epoch in the extension of the gospel. The great effort put forth to stamp out the new religion caused it to be spread abroad and to increase with wonderful rapidity. **“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went**

everywhere preaching the gospel” (Acts 8:4) **“and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (Acts 8:1)**. The way for this new campaign had been prepared for by Jesus Christ, when, in bodily form He passed through this territory. It may seem strange that the apostles remained in Jerusalem while the deacons were compelled to flee, yet the deacons had lately come very largely and quickly into the public view by their intense earnestness and zeal in the new cause and they, after Stephen’s speech and martyrdom, were doubtless singled out as special subjects of persecution.

The men who had been selected by the church, like Stephen and Philip, to perform a social service for the new community (**Acts 6:2, 3, 5**) we now find in the forefront of the new preaching cause of Christ (**Acts 6:8–15; 8:5, 6, 26, 40**). This shows, for one thing, that the Spirit would not have men seek only the social welfare of their fellow men, but also the higher spiritual good. Social good to the individual or community always follows spiritual regeneration, but social elevation alone does not always bring in spiritual good.

The Organization of the Church in Samaria (Acts 8:5–25)—Possibly we should read in **Acts 8:5** that **“Philip went down to a—rather than the—city of Samaria”** in which case the city might be Sychar or Shechem, but the matter of the particular locality is unimportant as the gospel was preached at this time in many places in Samaria (**Acts 8:25**).

This region was the first district into which the word was carried beyond the immediate Jewish pale. It is interesting to note that while fleeing from persecution the disciples did not hide, but proclaimed everywhere their message.

The cause of the organization of the church in Samaria was the preaching of Christ. The effect was that the people gave heed to what they heard. There were numbers of manifestations of divine power in the casting out of unclean spirits and the healing of the sick.

The one spurious convert mentioned is Simon Magus (**Acts 8:9–13, 18–24**) and he has received large attention from writers, upon this period, as he is the type of a man who in all ages has sought to make gain out of the church by joining it as a member, and because he is also a typical representative of **“the traveling impostors who swarmed over Greece and Rome, at this time, pretending to magical powers derived from the spirit world; they were readers of the stars, interpreters of dreams, fortune-tellers, medicine men—in brief they exercised the same arts as the modern fortune-teller and by much the same methods.”** Philip in his preaching seems to have paid little or no attention to Simon but the falling away of the multitude from the latter led him to pretend a conversion and to seek to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost (**Acts 8:18, 19**).

The chief effort of Philip was to convince men of their sins, lead them to repentance, point them to their Saviour and reconcile them to

God He endeavoured to do good to men in their bodies and souls. Simon sought to do wonders that he might attach the people to himself and to get large money by working upon their credulity and “giving out that himself was some great one.” There is the same contrast between the false and the true today.

So great was the work in Samaria that when the apostles heard of it in Jerusalem they sent unto them Peter and John (**Acts 8:14**), **“Who when they were come down prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:15–17)** It is to be noted that now, as at the beginning, the Holy Ghost is unceasingly active in building up the church. The apostles taught that it was not only necessary to turn from sin to righteousness but it was also necessary to be born into the kingdom by a divine power, as Jesus had taught before them (**John 3:5–8**).

The Mission to Ethiopia (Acts 8:26–40)—This is the Greek and Roman word for the Hebrew name Cush. In its widest significance it included Nubia, Sennar, Kordofan and Northern Abyssinia, but in its more limited application it included only that portion of territory from the junction of the White and Blue branches of the Nile to the south border of Egypt and known as the kingdom of Meroe. The name Candace, mentioned as queen of the Ethiopians in the narrative, is a dynastic title.

In the establishment of this mission the course of events is plainly marked out. The divine element comes to the front in the speaking

to Philip by an angel of the Lord. He is told to go to the “South unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza.” Obeying the divine command he meets the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia who reading from the Old Testament, a prophecy concerning Christ, asks an explanation of it from Philip. This gives Philip an opportunity to present the crucified and risen Christ. The eunuch believes, is baptized and proceeds on his way carrying the gospel to his country. Here the curtain shuts down, but we know this much that ever since that time Abyssinia has been, and now is, a Christian kingdom.

In this brief narrative we get a glimpse of how the church was enlarging her borders in these early days of primitive Christianity.

Continued in next edition.....



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