



THE
Art & Craft
OF
BIBLICAL
PREACHING

A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators

HADDON
ROBINSON

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GENERAL EDITORS

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN

The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching

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Chapter 75

APPLY WITHIN

A method for finding the practical response called for in a text

Dynamic Analogy Grid

	Humanity's need/problem	God's action/solution	Humanity's response/obedience
Then	1	2	3
Now	4	5	6
Me/us	7	8	9

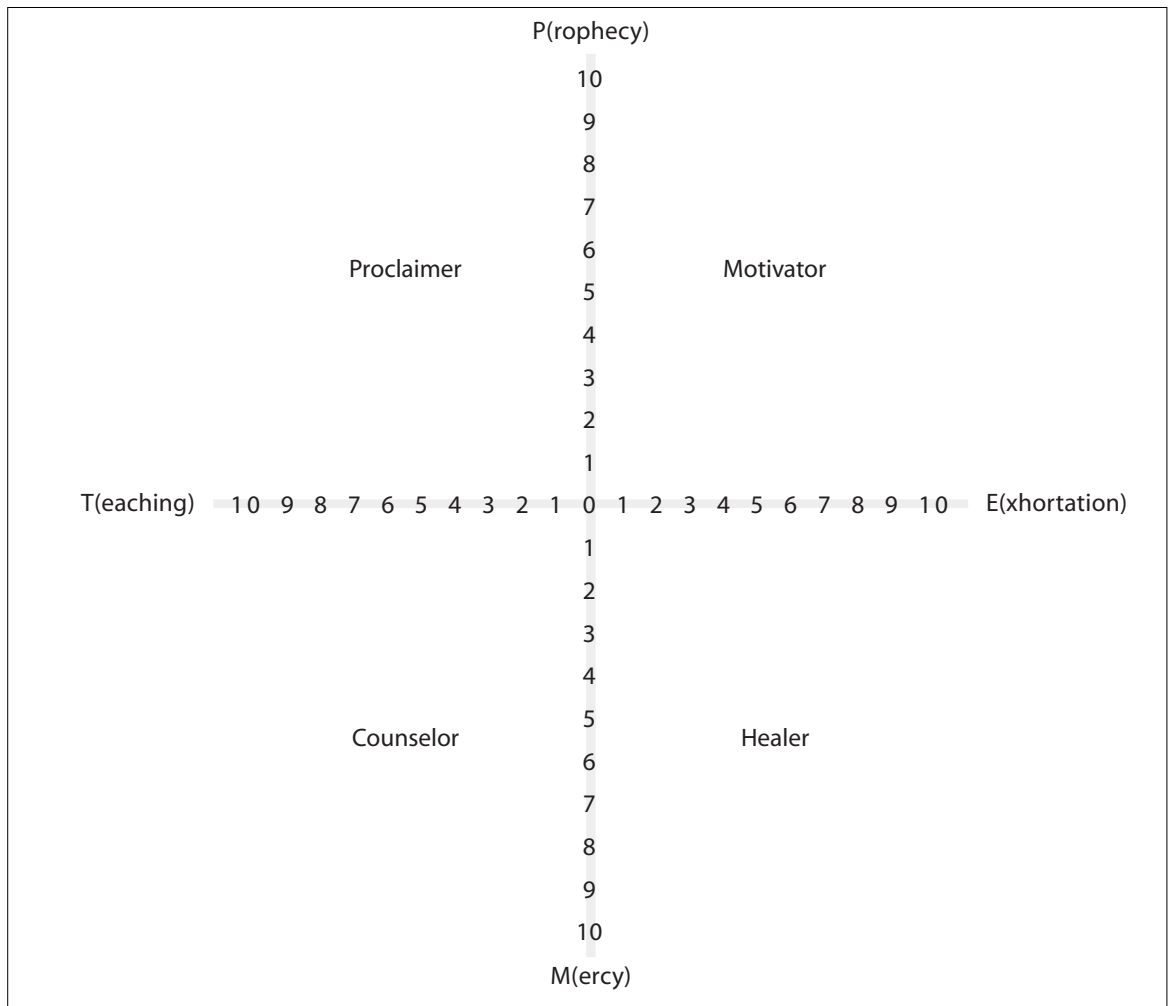
Chapter 103

DETERMINING YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This self-test can help you understand your gifting as a preacher

TEMP MATRIX

TEMP Matrix



WHAT MAKES TEXTUAL PREACHING UNIQUE?

And how do we use this sermon form, with its great rhetorical potential, biblically?

AN EXAMPLE FROM HEBREWS 12:1–2

Here is a more detailed example of a textual sermon outline that derives its main ideas from the text but takes its subpoints from other Scripture. The text is Hebrews 12:1–2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- I. God calls us to run the race in which he has entered us with endurance
 - A. The race in which God has entered us is the Christian life here on earth
 1. One church leader, Paul, likened his own Christian life and service to a race (Acts 20:24; Gal. 2:2; 2 Tim. 4:7)
 2. Paul also likened the lives of other Christians to a race (Gal. 5:7)
 - B. The race metaphor helps us understand why Christians need endurance
 1. Like a race, the Christian life requires stamina over a long period
 2. Like a race, the Christian life contains difficult challenges
 3. Like a race, the Christian life has a prize at stake (1 Cor. 9:24)

- II. We can run with endurance when we adopt Jesus' strategy of focusing on future joy!
 - A. Jesus serves as our model for how to run the race and win
 - 1. Qualification #1—He is the pioneer who finished the course
 - 2. Qualification #2—He finished the course as a winner
 - B. What we learn from Jesus is to endure misery by focusing on future joy!
 - 1. Future joy includes a life of beauty (Rev. 21:2, 4, 18; 22:1)
 - 2. Future joy includes a life of intimacy (Rev. 21:3, 7, 16)
 - 3. Future joy includes a life of adventure (Rev. 22:3, 5)

MAKING THE MOST OF BIBLICAL PARADOXES

They offer a refreshing and deeper alternative to “how to” sermons

Types of Paradox

	Reframing	Harmonious	Two-Handled
Visual symbol	Picture frame: “reframes” reality as we look at it	Tuning fork: both tines vibrating together create a new note	Auger: performs best when hands are far apart on opposite handles
Characteristic tension	Startles us, but ultimately dissolves	Pushes polarities together	Keeps polarities apart
Representative examples	Faith vs. works Judge vs. judge not (e.g., Matt. 13:24ff.) Great reversals (e.g., Matt. 20:1–16; 25:29; Mark 9:35)	Eternal life: present possession vs. future inheritance Predestination vs. free will	Jesus: God yet human God: transcendent yet immanent God: three yet one Humanity: sinful yet in God’s image
Opens the door to:	Mysteries of life in God’s kingdom	Mysteries of relationships: God’s actions and purposes	Mysteries of being: God’s and ours
Strategies for preaching	Narratives/stories Playfulness Let listeners connect the dots	Unravel “double binds” Back and forth vibration (“C. . .AR”)	Emphasize contrasts between opposite sides
Risks to avoid	Trying too hard to make listeners “get it”	Emphasizing one pole over the other upsets their delicate balance	Allowing black and white to coalesce into “dirty gray”

Chapter 195

GETTING THE FEEDBACK YOU NEED

How to invite a constructive critique

Sermon Reaction Questionnaire

Do not sign your name.

Supply the following information:

Sex: male _____; female _____

Age: under 20 _____; 20–29 _____; 30–39 _____; 40–49 _____; 50–59 _____; over 59 _____

Regarding the sermon you just heard, indicate whether you agree or disagree with these statements. Circle 1 if you strongly agree, 2 if you agree, 3 if you're uncertain, 4 if you disagree, 5 if you strongly disagree.

Your honesty and frankness will be appreciated.

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My interest was maintained. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. The sermon was integrated into the service of worship. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I was not inspired. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The preacher's personality came through. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The Scripture text was not used or illumined. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The preacher used contemporary language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The preacher did not evidence a personal faith. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. The sermon was too long. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I did not understand the sermon well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. The preacher referred to notes too often. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. The preacher sounded like he/she loved us. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. The sermon spoke to some of my personal needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. The sermon did not sufficiently emphasize the greatness of Christ. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. The preacher showed self-confidence. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. The sermon did not make me eager to serve God any more than I'm already serving him. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I identified with the preacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. The preacher spoke down to us. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. The sermon did not have a sufficiently forceful conclusion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. The sermon did not help me encounter God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I can remember most or all of the sermon points. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

THE SCIENCE OF SURVEYS

Formal procedures lead to more objective results

Sermon Survey

The pastor is seeking feedback from people within the congregation. Please take a minute or two right now to complete this survey. Thank you.

1. Overall, how would you rate today's sermon?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

2. How would you compare today's sermon to most of the pastor's sermons?

☐ Better ☐ About the same ☐ Poorer

If today's sermon seemed better or poorer than usual, why?

3. What are the *main points* you remember from today's sermon?

4. What, if anything, did you *gain* from the sermon?

5. What, if anything, did you think was *weak* about the sermon?

6. Do you think today's sermon will change your life in any concrete way? (For example, change an attitude, cause you to do anything differently, and so on)

☐ Definitely yes ☐ Probably yes ☐ Maybe ☐ Probably not

If yes, what do you think will change?

7. If you could tell the pastor one positive thing about his/her sermons, what would it be?

8. If you could give the pastor one suggestion about sermon content or delivery, what would it be?

9. Please add any other comments you may have about today's sermon or other sermons.

10. Are you: Male ☐ Female ☐

11. Your age: Under 30 ☐ 30–49 ☐ 50 or over ☐

12. How long have you attended this church?

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ More than 3 years

BOOKS THAT HAVE SHAPED THE PRACTICE OF PREACHING

An Annotated Bibliography

Kenton C. Anderson

The development of biblical preaching can be traced through a study of the books that have shaped its practice. In some of these cases the authors have set the pace, stimulating fresh thinking about the shape of preaching. In other cases the works were merely descriptive. In either case, contemporary readers gain insight into both the practice of preaching and the historical antecedents of the method under observation.

THE HISTORY OF PREACHING

Dargan, Edwin Charles. 1968. *A History of Preaching, Volumes I and II*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

Turnbull, Ralph G. 1974. *A History of Preaching, Volume III*. Grand Rapids: Baker. First published in 1905, Dargan offers the most comprehensive history of preaching detailing the life and practice of most of the preachers of significance up to the end of the nineteenth century. The third volume, edited by Ralph Turnbull covers the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. While many of the more interesting developments in the history of preaching have occurred in the last three decades, Dargan and Turnbull offer insight helping preachers understand where their models come from.

ANCIENT RHETORIC AND EARLY WRITINGS

Saint Augustine. 1958. *On Christian Doctrine, Book 4*. Trans. D. W. Robertson Jr. New York: Macmillan.

The first Christian author to write directly about preaching was St. Augustine. The fourth volume of *On Christian Doctrine* is devoted to the discussion of the shape and form of Christian preaching.

Augustine, steeped in the ancient rhetoric of Cicero and Aristotle, sought to describe how such influences might be most effectively appropriated. Why, he wondered, should the sophists be allowed to use their rhetorical skills while Christians were left ignorant of such persuasive techniques? Augustine, setting the stage for centuries to come, shows how ancient rhetoric under the authority of Scripture can birth persuasive preaching.

Alan of Lille. 1981. *The Art of Preaching*. Cistercian Fathers 23, trans. by Gilian R. Evans. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications. For almost one and a half millennia since Augustine, little was written on the subject of preaching. Dargan shows that much preaching took place during this period with many sermons available to be read today. However, little formal thought seems to have been given to the subject during this time. What writings there are seem to have followed Augustine. Alan of Lille (1128–1202) focuses on listener “formation.” “Preaching is an open and public instruction in faith and behavior whose purpose is the forming of men”; he writes, “it derives from the path of reason and from the fountainhead of the ‘authorities.’”

Robert of Basevorn. 1971. *The Form of Preaching*. Trans. by Leopold Krul O.S.B., in James J. Murphy, ed., *Three Medieval Arts*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press. We have Robert of Basevorn (1322) to thank for the three-point sermon. Again, following well-developed rhetorical patterns, Robert counsels three points because it is Trinitarian, and because it is the most convenient for the set time

of the sermon. "A preacher can only follow up just so many members," he writes, "without tiring his hearers."

William Perkins. 1979. *The Art of Prophesying*. Grand Rapids: Baker. The Puritan William Perkins (1592) counseled the plain style of rhetoric as best for biblical preaching. Straightforward, simple explanations of the truths of Scripture were understood to be the hallmarks of solid biblical preaching.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN HOMILETICS

Broadus, John Albert. 1979. *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*. Revised by Vernon L. Stanfield. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco. Broadus's *Treatise* (1870) was the first modern homiletics textbook. Professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Broadus followed the Augustinian lead, building his method from ancient rhetorical roots. From Broadus we derive the classic taxonomy of homiletical forms (textual, topical, expository). Here we also find the familiar threefold sermon structure common to so many contemporary sermons: explanation, illustration, and application.

Brooks, Phillips. 1964. *Lectures on Preaching*. New York: Seabury. Brooks (1877) defined preaching as "truth through personality." Few have been able to match this definition for simplicity. Brooks's approach effectively combined the human element of preaching with an objective sense of truth. His method was responsive to the listener even as it was respectful to God himself. It is this integrative element that continues to give Brooks's definition its relevance.

Dodd, C. H. 1964. *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development*. New York: Harper & Row, 1964. Dodd (1936) sought to understand the purpose of preaching through analysis of the preaching of the early church. It was his conviction that preaching (*kerygma*) ought to be distinguished from teaching (*didache*). Further, he suggested that much of what passes for preaching today would not have been recognized as such by the early Christians. Preaching,

he asserted, proclaimed the death, resurrection, and salvation made possible in Jesus Christ. Anything less is not kerygma. Dodd may not have settled the argument, but he certainly raised a question that has been pivotal: What is preaching?

Stewart, James S. 2001. *Heralds of God*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing. Stewart (1946) was rated by the *Preaching* magazine editorial board as the greatest preacher of the twentieth century, largely because of the pervasive influence of this book. Stewart urges his readers to ask of their listeners, "Did they hear from God today?" He constantly encourages his readers to preach expectantly as if God were present and active in the preaching process, to preach as if something crucial or decisive could happen for people as they gain a vision of Jesus this very day.

NEW HOMILETIC APPROACHES

Davis, H. Grady. 1958. *Design for Preaching*.

Philadelphia: Fortress. The first book to rethink the classic rhetorical roots of biblical preaching was Grady Davis's *Design for Preaching*. Davis brought life to preaching by suggesting a more organic way of thinking about the task. Preaching is something that grows, he said, rather than something that is constructed. The form of the sermon, then, could take various shapes. It could be "a subject discussed," "a thesis supported," "a message illumined," "a question propounded," or "a story told."

Fred B. Craddock. 1969, 2001 (rev. ed.). *As One Without Authority*. St. Louis: Chalice. The first to take full advantage of the gains made by Davis was Fred Craddock. Craddock counseled an inductive approach to preaching, welcoming the listener into the process of discovery along with the preacher. Why, Craddock wondered, should the listener be denied the same joy of discovery experienced by the preacher every week in his or her study. Craddock developed a variety of potential sermon forms all designed to encourage listener attentiveness and engagement through induction.

Lowry, Eugene L. 1980. *The Homiletical Plot*. Atlanta: John Knox. Lowry represents a variety of homiletics who, building out of Craddock's work,

have championed narrative preaching. While preaching narrative sermons from narrative texts only makes sense, Lowry described a way of treating every biblical text narratively. We live our lives in story, moment by moment, place by place. Through use of Lowry's five-part "loop," a sermon can serve as an "event in time." Instead of sermons serving as static propositional structures, Lowry's approach allows sermons to come alive.

Buttrick, David. 1987. *Homiletic*. Philadelphia: Fortress. David Buttrick's massive homiletic study describes how sermons can take shape in the listener's consciousness. Describing sermon building in terms of "moves" and "structures," Buttrick's method depends on ideas taken from phenomenology. Looking at point of view, imagery, and modes of consciousness, his method suggests a variety of possibilities for shaping the listener's thought through renovating the architecture of the sermon.

FRESH VISION FOR EXPOSITION

Stott, John R. W. 1982. *Between Two Worlds*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. While some were exploring new directions in preaching, others were renewing a vision for biblical exposition. John Stott, for one, reminded preachers that the task of the sermon is to build a bridge between the ancient text and the contemporary situation. Stott sought a new generation of preachers who would show determination to bridge the chasm between God's unchanging Word and the ever-changing world. He challenged preachers to be faithful to the Scriptures while remaining pertinent to today.

Robinson, Haddon. 1980, 2001 (rev. ed.). *Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Assigned as required reading in more than 160 colleges and seminaries, Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* has become the primary text for contemporary exposition. While maintaining faith with Broadus's concern for historical-grammatical exegesis, Robinson also borrows from Davis ("story to be told," "proposition to be proved") and others in the desire to find creative, genre-sensitive forms that remain faithful to the intent of Scripture. Perhaps Robinson's greatest contribution, however, is his insistence that every

sermon offers one "big idea." Sermons can take a variety of structures, but they ought to intend the proclamation of one big idea, which the Holy Spirit applies first to the preacher and then through him or her to the hearers.

Chapell, Bryan. 1994. *Christ-Centered Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker. The subtitle of Chapell's book declares his intention to "redeem the expository sermon." The choice of the word "redeem" is intentional as the author counsels a traditional rhetorical sermon structure for the presentation of a Christological redemptive theology. Every sermon must declare God's redemptive intention in Jesus Christ. C. H. Dodd would be pleased. So would John Broadus. Chapell's homiletic form is straight out of Broadus's work, detailing the threefold structure of explanation, illustration, and application. Perhaps the most important feature of Chapell's work is his emphasis on "The Fallen Condition Focus." "But God doesn't leave his children without hope?" Chapell asks. Preaching ought to offer that hope in Jesus Christ.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. 2000. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Goldsworthy would agree with Chapell's contention for the centrality of Jesus Christ. Representing a biblical theological approach to preaching, Goldsworthy argues that every sermon must point to Christ. He champions a brand of preaching that moves away from a bland moralism toward a healthy engagement with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as it is represented in different ways throughout the whole of the Bible.

READING LIST OF OTHER SIGNIFICANT BOOKS IN PREACHING

Just as the development of preaching can be traced through a study of the books written on the subject, searching a bibliography of current books on homiletics will show the diversity in approach and conviction that has ensued. The following sources represent some of that diversity.

Anderson, Kenton C. 2001. *Preaching with Conviction*. Grand Rapids: Kregel.

_____. 2003. *Preaching with Integrity*. Grand Rapids: Kregel. These two Anderson books utilize a narrative

- form to describe an integrative approach to preaching.
- Bartow, Charles L. 1997. *God's Human Speech*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Bartow seeks to describe the mysterious way in which divine and human speech are mingled in preaching.
- Eslinger, Richard L. 1987. *A New Hearing*. Nashville: Abingdon. Eslinger describes and critiques the emergence of a new homiletic in the preaching of David Buttrick, Fred Craddock, Eugene Lowry, and others.
- Galli, Mark, and Craig Brian Larson. 1994. *Preaching That Connects*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. The authors take a journalistic approach to developing compelling sermons.
- Greidanus, Sidney. 1988. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Greidanus offers a genre-sensitive, biblical/theological approach to expository preaching.
- Johnston, Graham. 2001. *Preaching to a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Johnston points to ways in which preaching might reach a new generation of listeners.
- Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. 1981. *Toward an Exegetical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Kaiser describes a helpful way of exegeting Scripture for preachers.
- Long, Thomas G. 1989. *The Witness of Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. Long reframes the task of preaching through the metaphor of "witness."
- MacLaren, Brian, and Leonard Sweet. 2003. *A Is for Abductive*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Inductive, deductive, and now *abductive*? MacLaren and Sweet seek to describe preaching in the emergent church.
- Mathewson, Steven D. 2002. *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Mathewson counsels creative preaching that is sensitive both to the message of the sermon and to its form.
- McClure, John S. 2001. *Other-Wise Preaching*. St. Louis: Chalice. Moving well beyond an evangelical view of Scripture, McClure takes the new homiletic to an extreme, offering "a postmodern ethic for homiletics."
- McDill, Wayne V. 1999. *The Moment of Truth*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman. McDill helps preachers to a more effective process of sermon delivery.
- Miller, Calvin. 1995. *Marketplace Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- _____. 2002. *The Sermon Maker*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Miller brings creativity and conviction in his descriptions of the transformations possible through biblical preaching.
- Pitt-Watson, Ian. 1986. *A Primer for Preachers*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Pitt-Watson counsels preaching not only from the "text of Scripture" but also from "the text of life."
- Wiersbe, Warren W. 1994. *Preaching and Teaching with Imagination*. Grand Rapids: Baker. Wiersbe counsels imaginative preaching on the basis of a rich array of biblical examples.