



ALL RIGHTS RESERVED © THE RESOLVED CHURCH | Permissions: you are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided you NOT alter the wording in any way and you do not charge a fee. For web posting a link to this document is preferred.

A Précis on Preaching by Pastor Duane Smets

I. Traditional models:

- A. Topical - The preacher picks a topic and then selects relevant Biblical text to support his chosen subject matter.
 - 1. Positives - Good for systematic theology sermons, biographies, and special occasions. Allows a lot of freedom for the preacher to explore various issues.
 - 2. Negatives - Danger of only paying attention to texts which support the preacher's predisposed agenda. Can end up placing the preacher over the Bible rather than under it by treating it as a prooftexting source.
- B. Textual - The preacher selects a text, determines the main subjects mentioned, then selects other Biblical texts to support those subjects.
 - 1. Positives - Attempts to get the subject matter from the text. Is a mix of expository and topical.
 - 2. Negatives - Danger of ignoring the immediate context and subject matter of the primary text.
- C. Expository - The preacher selects a book of Bible works from through the book beginning to end, dealing with every chapter, verse and word.
 - 1. Positives - More than any other form of sermons this model is set up to best discern the authorial intent of a given text.
 - 2. Negatives - Due to time, culture, and language gap with Biblical literature it can take years to work through a book of the Bible.

II. Non-Traditional Models

- A. Dialogical - There is no preacher but rather a facilitator who merely asks questions and attempts to stimulate conversation.
 - 1. Positives - Gets people to think about the text.
 - 2. Negatives - Low view of the Bible, anti-authority, the text means what the group determines, and it encourages false teachers.
- B. Seeker - The goal of the preacher is to present a sermon attempting to remove any potentially negative reactions so that any "seekers" will not be offended.
 - 1. Positives - Is aware of the need to connect with unbelievers who may be present.
 - 2. Negatives - Ignores demographic of all non-seeker believers who need solid food, tends not to deal with the text, and breeds a self-help moral gospel.
- C. Narrative - The goal of the preacher is to primarily tell a captivating story.
 - 1. Positives - Is aware that stories can be powerful tools and that the Bible is essential one big story.
 - 2. Negatives - Emphasis becomes on the story itself or the preacher rather than the Bible, the objective meaning of a text is made purely subjective to one's story(ies), and any persuasion violates the principle of everyone having a story being all that matters.

III. Exegetical Expository Sermons

- A. Are the only true sermon
 - 1. Topical sermons wholly depend on the idea of the individual preacher and not the text.
 - 2. Textual sermons primarily depend on the idea of the individual preacher and not the text.
 - 3. Dialogical sermons consider the people the text and thus they have no real text or preacher.
 - 4. Seeker sermons wholly depend on a particular audience rather than the text.
 - 5. Narrative sermons wholly depend on the story(ies) of the preacher and not the text.
 - 6. The example of all preachers in the Bible is consistently exegetical and expository: Ezra, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles. They consistently made it their primary goal to care about the intent of the words in the Bible.
 - 7. There are things to be learned from other preaching models which can be applied in an exegetical expository sermon (see Roman Numeral "V" below)
- B. Are the command of Scripture
 - 1. 2 Timothy 4:2 "Preach the Word."

2. 2 Timothy 2:6 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness."
 3. Acts 20:27 "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."
- C. Implicitly teach hermeneutics (how to read and interpret the Bible) by example
1. Emphasis on authorial intent
 2. Emphasis on context
 3. Emphasis on historical and cultural background
- D. Uphold the doctrine of Inerrancy
1. Topical, textual and narrative sermons imply an existential view of the Bible (the Bible means whatever it means to the preacher)
 2. Dialogical and Seeker sermons imply a socialistic view of the Bible means whatever a given group determines it to mean)
- E. Practically teach the Bible
1. Easier to follow
 2. Easier to remember
 3. Easier to refer back to
- F. Protect the Preacher
1. The preacher cannot only preach on pet doctrines, subjects or texts.
 2. The preacher is given the opportunity to address difficult subjects and texts as they come up.
 3. Replaces emphasis from being on the charisma or inspiration of the preacher onto the charisma and inspiration of Scripture.
 4. Takes seriously confidence that God's Word is what does God's work.
- G. Miscellaneous Aids
1. Preparation
 - a. Do your homework: Observation, Interpretation, Correlation, Application & Christotelic Spiral (*see "An Inductive Method for Bible Study" and "The Christotelic Spiral" articles)
 - b. Break pericope's (inherent paragraphs/sections/chapters) into a "series."
 - c. Make photocopies of commentaries/books for a big chunk of text so that you can be mobile.
 - d. Write a manuscript as early as possible
 - 1) All the great preachers of history wrote manuscripts
 - 2) Manuscripts give you a lasting imprint (essentially your own commentary)
 - 3) Manuscripts help develop your thoughts and material so that it comes out much clearer.
 - e. Read manuscript at least three times, underline key words, phrases, and add delivery notes in the margin.
 - f. Listen to other preachers in order to learn.
 - g. Do not listen to other preachers in order to develop your own voice.
 2. Delivery
 - a. Put your finger down on your manuscript when you look away from it.
 - b. Use voice inflexion for emphasis.
 - c. Do not be afraid to depart from your manuscript if you sense the Holy Spirit's leading.
 - d. Be sensitive to time/body language of hearers and adjust appropriately.
 - e. Make as much eye contact as possible.
 - f. Say the name of Jesus as much as possible
 - e. End every sermon with a connection to the gospel and find a way to challenge everyone.
 - g. "Do not preach what you do not live (C.H. Spurgeon)."
- IV. Lessons from Other Preachers
- A. Dead Ones
1. Martin Luther - For the example of how to use the law to show that we are sinner who need Jesus.
 2. John Calvin - For having a big vision, honoring the text, and constantly keep the providence of God in perspective.
 3. Jonathan Edwards - For emphasizing the affections and anticipating knee-jerk reactions you're your hearers.
 4. John Owen - For how to talk about your own personal depravity with a realness that does not also communicate hopelessness.
 5. Charles H. Spurgeon - For how to use stories and powerful imagery to illustrate the meaning and message of a text.
- B. Living Ones
1. John Piper - For passion, commitment to the text, Christian hedonism, and mission.
 2. Tim Keller - For cultural awareness, gospel connecting, and applying a text to issues of the heart.
 3. Sinclair Ferguson - For the christotelic connections and the magnitude of Christ.

4. Mark Driscoll - For comic relief not at the expense of honoring the text or sound theology.

V. Lessons from other Preaching Models

- A. Topical - Sometimes certain topics need to be preached on. Select a text which through an exegetical expository sermon will treat the issue need to be addressed.
- B. Textual - Sometimes another passage of the Bible is the best illustration or interpretive help in the exegetical presentation of a text.
- C. Dialogical - Having a place for people to discuss the text and the message is important. Small, mid-week community groups are ideal for this.
- D. Seeker - Being aware of all one's audience demographic is essential. Always pressing for conversions is to be part of every sermon (2 Tim 4:5)
- E. Narrative - Stories can be powerful tools to highlight a text if they don't overtake the whole sermon. Connecting people's individual lives/story to the grand story of God is the goal of the gospel.

VI. Dangers

- A. Pride
 - 1. Thinking you have a place of power because you preach.
 - 2. Thinking your sermon was clever, creative, smart, masterful.
 - 3. Replaying your sermon in your head and enjoying your voice in it.
 - 4. Taking credit when people compliment you.
- B. Approval
 - 1. Only being satisfied with your sermon when people appear to like it or be effected by it.
 - 2. Being bummed on your sermon if people did not appear to like it or be effected by it.
- C. Performance
 - 1. Thinking of preaching purely as an art, a skill, or entertainment.
 - 2. Not taking preaching seriously and thinking of it as an art, a skill, caring about people's attention.
- D. Church Growth
 - 1. Thinking that church growth wholly depends on how well you preach.
 - 2. Not recognizing that you are the main mouthpiece for the church, which will help people grow up into Jesus and grow the church through their missional lives.
- E. Preaching is Not Pastoring
 - 1. Preaching cannot be the only duty of a pastor. People need discipling. The preacher needs to be connected to the lives of people (Christian and non).
 - 2. Preaching is a primary duty of a lead pastor which requires a lot of weekly time and devotion.
- F. Mimicking other Preacher's Style or Content
 - 1. Plagerism is lying and tempting when faced of the hard work of sermon preparation.
 - 2. Reading and listening to other preachers can be a great aid to sermon preparation.
- G. Developing the Preacher
 - 1. A preacher can become numb to the Bible because he is around it and in it so much.
 - 2. A preacher needs to be fed by other preachers.
 - 3. Studying for a sermon does not count as personal devotional time.
 - 4. Approaching sermon preparation purely academically without personal self-evaluation will cripple the spirituality of the preacher and the benefit for his hearers.
 - 5. The goal of the preacher is to get full so that God's word burns within him like a fire (Jer 20:7) he is weary of holding in so that when he does preach it is the overflow.

VII. Recommended Books

- A. "The Supremacy of God in Preaching" by John Piper
- B. "Christ-Centered Preaching" by Bryan Chapel
- C. "Preaching the Gospel in a Postmodern World" by Tim Keller
- D. "Apologetic Preaching" by Craig Loscalzo
- E. "What is Biblical Preaching" by Eric J. Alexander
- F. "Unfolding the Mystery" by Edmund Clowney
- H. "Puritan Evangelism" by Joel R. Beeke
- I. "Evangelistic Preaching and the Old Testament" by Faris Whitesell