

Preaching & Teaching Jesus from Scripture

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Acts 29 Regional [NW]

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Preach the Word . . .

2 Timothy 4:2

Part 1 - Current Perspectives on Preaching

- *Dialogue over monologue* — removing the preacher in favor of a discussion leader of sorts who hosts a dialogue instead of presenting a monologue. This is simply the result of a low view of the Bible, church leadership, the gift of preaching/teaching and the postmodern addiction to complete egalitarianism in the home and church because of a disdain for authority. Practically, it is impossible to grow a church beyond maybe one hundred people in a room at one time with this format and encourages false teachers to rise up and lead many astray.
- *Expository preaching* — going through a book of the Bible verse by verse. While the Bible never commands or really even illustrates this method, some practical reasons make it popular:
 1. Because all Scripture is God-breathed and for our benefit, there is not a page of Scripture that is not helpful to our faith, so we should examine it all (2 Timothy 3:16–17).
 2. From church history we do know that influential preachers such as Justin Martyr preached expository sermons that went through books of the Bible line by line.
 3. It allows non-Christians and new Christians to follow along more easily than if the preaching jumps around the Bible.
 4. It doesn't allow the preacher to avoid difficult texts and issues.
 5. It helps teach the congregation to study the Bible for themselves.
 6. It helps show the importance of context in Scripture.
 7. It helps people to read and study along with the sermons each week.
 8. It makes it easier for people to refer back to what they have learned in Scripture.
 9. It forces the authority to reside in the text and not the teacher.
- *Textual preaching* — preaching on one section of Scripture without preaching it in the middle of the entire book as is done with expository preaching. Examples include a series on the “I AM” statements of Jesus from John’s gospel, a series on songs of the incarnation sung in Luke’s gospel at the birth of Jesus, or a series on elder qualifications from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Some practical reasons also make this method popular:
 1. It shows the consistency of Scripture by linking sections together.
 2. It allows the preacher with a revolving church to hit the highlights of central truths every year.

3. It allows the preacher to work in smaller chunks of four to eight weeks, providing flexibility to deal with issues as they arise.
 4. It allows the preacher to work around the Christian calendar with mini-series on the incarnation around Christmas, crucifixion in the dark winter months, and resurrection around Easter.
- *Topical preaching* — using several texts from one or more books of the Bible or biblical authors to speak on an issue from many places in the Bible. Examples include a series I did on the atonement and one I am working on answering twelve common questions about Jesus. Scriptures are pulled from multiple places in the Bible for each sermon. As an aside, when this is done it is good to have the verses on a handout and/or on PowerPoint so that people do not get lost trying to keep up. While we do not have the full transcripts of the sermons preached in the Bible, the portions we do have tend to show that topical teaching was common. Some practical reasons this method are favorable include:
 1. The ability to trace a theme through multiple books of the Bible, showing the consistency of Scripture.
 2. The ability to preach with multiple perspectives and avoid the common error of reductionism
 3. The ability to address most thoroughly questions and controversies that arise.
 4. The ability to select the most appropriate verses from Scripture on a given topic.
 - *Seeker vs. believer* — there is an ongoing debate as to the purpose of the sermon and whether or not it should focus on converting the lost or maturing the saved. The apparent conflict is resolved by simply noting that both need to repent of sin and trust in Jesus to live a new life empowered by the Spirit and so a sermon can and should effectively communicate to both if the preacher is able to explain Christian jargon and such in order to speak the “tongue” of the hearer.
 - *Long sermons* — it is becoming more common with younger and more theologically reformed preachers to have longer sermons (e.g., forty-five minutes to one hour) than is common in most seeker and purpose-type evangelical churches (twenty to thirty minutes). The Bible does not speak to this issue directly. Upon occasion, though, we do see Jesus and Paul preaching very long sermons (Matthew 15:29–31; Acts 20:7–11). We do not have the transcripts of their sermons to see exactly what was said or how their arguments were arranged.