Preaching: Principles and Practice
In Preparing Relevant Biblical Sermons
PR 601
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Jacksonville
Rev. Eric B. Watkins
A.A., B.S., M.Div., ThM., PhD. (cand.)

I. Course Description

*From the catalogue:* “An introduction to the principles of preparing relevant biblical sermons. Lectures and exercises cover a stage-by-stage explanation of how preachers think as they prepare to preach. Recitation sessions provide opportunity for students to preach with critique by the professor.”

II. Course Relationship to the Curriculum

This course is an introduction to the principles of preparing Christ-centered, relevant, expository sermons. Employing the science of sound hermeneutics, biblical, systematic, and pastoral theology, the student will also apply the art of homiletic theory in the delivery of sample sermons. Pre-requisites: a year of biblical language and either NT 502 or OT 511. Both are preferred.

III. Course Goal and Objectives

Goal: To enable students to move from the study and exegesis of the biblical text to the construction and delivery of a sermon in a clear, effective manner.

Objectives: As a result of this course, students should:

A. Have a working understanding of expository, Christ-centered preaching.
B. Understand the exegetical process involved in sermon construction.
C. Understand the role of prayer and meditation in sermon construction.
D. Demonstrate ability in discerning a text’s basic thrust (Big Idea) and how to construct a homiletic outline, complete with introduction, declarative statements, transitions, illustrations and conclusion.
E. Demonstrate competence in writing full sermon manuscripts without being dependent upon them.
F. Discern and develop confidence in one’s own preaching style.
G. Read several books related to various aspects of preaching.
H. Listen to 5 sermons during the semester to be discussed in groups.
I. Preach two sermons.
J. Memorize several Scripture passages related to preaching.
IV. Course Textbooks

Required:
- Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

V. Course Requirements

A. Complete all required reading.
B. Submit two sermon manuscripts (due one week before you preach the sermon)
   a. I will e-mail feedback to you on the manuscript *before* you preach.
C. Preach two 20-30 minute sermons.
D. Listen to and discuss 5 pre-approved sermons with discussion group. Each group will give a 20 minute presentation on the sermons they listened to. See below for sermon evaluation criteria.
E. Memorize assigned Scripture passages.
F. Submit a 2-3 page paper describing and reflecting the sermon preparation practices of two pastors.
G. *Attendance is mandatory.* To miss a weekend is to miss a third of the class and a student may be asked to drop the course. According to seminary policy, a student may not miss more than 3 hours of class with an excused absence. If a student misses more than 3 hours or has an unexcused absence, there will be grade penalties and extra work assigned.
H. Late work will not be accepted without sufficient excuse. Please refer to page 38 of the student handbook for the grading index.

VI. Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Punctuality:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Reading/Listening:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon discussion group presentations:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture memorization:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection paper on sermon preparation:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon 1:</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon 2:</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
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VII. Course Calendar

A. Friday, September 11th, 2015, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
   a. Introduction to the course
   b. A Biblical Theology of preaching
   c. The servant and the word of the king
   d. Scripture memorization: 1 Corinthians 2:2

B. Saturday, September 12th, 2015, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
   b. Definitions of preaching
   c. What is expository preaching?
   d. Various models of preaching
   e. The Big Idea of preaching
   f. Steps in sermon preparation
      i. The science of preaching
      ii. The art of preaching

C. Friday, October 2nd, 2015, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: Isaiah 40:6-8
   b. Preaching Christ from all of Scripture
   c. Preaching application from all of Scripture
   d. The use and abuse of illustrations

D. Saturday, October 3rd, 2015, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: Hebrews 4:12-13
   b. Revised sermon manuscripts due for those preaching
   c. Trial sermons with evaluation (per schedule)
   d. Reports by two sermon discussion groups

E. Friday, November 6th, 2015, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: Romans 10:14-15
   b. Distinguishing evangelistic and ecclesiastical sermons
   c. Relationship between Word and sacrament
   d. Discussion of specimen sermons/preachers

F. Saturday, November 7th, 2015, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: 2 Timothy 4:5
   b. Revised sermon manuscripts due for those preaching
   c. Trial sermons with evaluation (per schedule)
   d. Reports by two sermon discussion groups
   e. Tying up loose ends

***I am available for appointments each Friday we have class in the afternoon, and am willing to make phone appointments during the week, as needed. Please contact me to schedule a meeting at ewatkins@gordonconwell.edu or 904-803-2287.
VIII. Format for Trial Sermons

A. Each preacher will submit a full manuscript of the sermon they are about to preach. The sermon should be between 20 to 30 minutes long. Following the sermon, the course instructor will give pointed feedback to the student preacher. Following that, the class will be invited to do the same.

B. Place your name, box number, date, and text at the top right corner of the first page.

C. Indent and separate each paragraph.

D. Make sure the structure of the sermon is clear from the manuscript.

E. Remember the following:
   a. **Subject**: What is the biblical author talking about? Use interrogative statements (who, what, why, where, which, how?).
   b. **Complement**: What is the author saying about what he is talking about?
   c. **Big Idea**: Subject + complement = main exegetical idea.
   d. **Homiletic Idea**: Pithy statement of main idea in homiletic form.
   e. **Purpose Statement**: (Why you are preaching the sermon?).
   f. **Homiletic Structure**: (Based on text).
   g. **Illustrations**: (Appropriate to text and sermon).
   h. **Gospel**: With sensitivity to believers and unbelievers.
   i. **Application**: Derived from the text; anchored in the gospel.
   j. **Conclusion**: Corresponds to introduction.

IX. Sermon Evaluation Form

A. Content
   a. Was the sermon exegetically based?
   b. Did the sermon ‘prove’ the text?
   c. Was the **Big Idea** of the text clear?
   d. Was the gospel clearly applied to both believers and unbelievers?
   e. Was the application clearly anchored in the text and gospel?

B. Delivery
   a. Did the sermon flow smoothly?
   b. Was the outline/structure clear and helpful?
   c. Was the introduction effective? Capturing?
   d. Were transitions smooth?
   e. Were illustrations appropriate to the text?
   f. Did the introduction and conclusion reflect communicative symmetry?
   g. Were listeners able to understand the preacher?
   h. Was the sermon convicting? Edifying? Comforting?
   i. Was there a clear sense of urgency, sincerity and passion?
   j. Was there demonstrable eye contact?

C. Summary: What could be done to improve the sermon?
X. Sermon Passages For PR 601

A. First sermon (from Exodus)
   1. Exodus 20:3
   2. Exodus 20:4-6
   3. Exodus 20:7
   4. Exodus 20:8-11
   5. Exodus 20:12
   6. Exodus 20:13
   7. Exodus 20:14
   8. Exodus 20:15
   9. Exodus 20:16
  10. Exodus 20:17
  11. Exodus 20:18-21
  12. Exodus 20:22-26
  13. Exodus 32 (Golden Calf Incident)
  14. Exodus 33 (The Intercession of Moses)
  15. Exodus 34 (The Name of the LORD)

B. Second sermon (from Hebrews 11)
   1. Hebrews 11:3
   2. Hebrews 11:4
   3. Hebrews 11:5-6
   4. Hebrews 11:7
   5. Hebrews 11:8-10
   6. Hebrews 11:11-12
   7. Hebrews 11:13-16
   8. Hebrews 11:17-19
   9. Hebrews 11:20
  10. Hebrews 11:21
  11. Hebrews 11:22
  12. Hebrews 11:23-26
  14. Hebrews 11:29
  15. Hebrews 11:30-31

*The preaching rotation will be determined according to the number of students in the class. If you have family or friends who wish to come when you deliver your sermon, please feel free to invite them. Remember: preach as though preaching to the church and not to the class!

XI. Classroom Decorum

Please be punctual and refrain from texting, e-mailing, or surfing the web during class sessions. Students will be respectful of others during classroom discussions. Student preaching is an important, instructive part of the course.
XII. Sermon Discussion Groups

Format: Each group will listen to and discuss 5 sermons from the Master Preacher Series (collection of sermons, available through the Gordon Conwell website at http://www.gordonconwellstore.com/product-p/233233.htm). Other specimen sermons may be used with pre-approval from the professor. Each group will give a 20 minute presentation to the rest of the class, reflecting on the following questions:

1. What was the main/Big Idea of the text that the preacher was trying to communicate?
2. Was the sermon clearly exegetical? Did it exposit the text or impose upon it? What were some key exegetical insights?
3. How did the introduction grab your attention? Did it make you want the preacher to continue?
4. Were illustrations appropriate to the text and topic? Overdone? Distracting? Which was the most memorable and why?
5. Was the gospel preached from the text, sufficient for the unbeliever to be converted and the believer to be comforted?
6. Was the application derived from the text? Anchored in the gospel? How so?
7. What did the sermon make you want to change about your life?
8. What audience do you think the sermon was aimed toward?
9. Did the conclusion complete what the introduction began?
10. What might you have done differently if preaching from the same text?

XIII. Recommended Reading

A. Preaching in General


### B. Preaching from the Ten Commandments


### C. Preaching from Hebrews 11


