Preaching For Modern Listeners
PR 602
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Jacksonville
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I. Course Description

From the catalogue: “Building on PR601, students will interact with the biblical material to prepare sermons that relate to a modern audience. Students will preach with critique by the professor.”

II. Course Relationship to the Curriculum

This course will build upon the hermeneutical, theological, and pastoral foundations of PR 601. Particular attention will be given two areas: (1) preaching to a postmodern audience; (2) preaching topical or occasional sermons in the life of the church. Pre-requisites: PR601.

III. Course Goal and Objectives

Goal: To enable students to preach biblically faithful, Christ-centered sermons to contemporary listeners in a clear, effective manner.

Objectives: As a result of this course, students should be able to:

I. Demonstrate an ability to preach relevant, Christ-centered sermons in a postmodern context through the following:
   a. Having a matured understanding of expository, Christ-centered preaching.
   b. Understanding the varying challenges of preaching in a postmodern context.
   c. Understanding the importance of history, authority, and morality in preaching.
   d. Employing the rhetorical benefits of ‘story’ and ‘drama’ as they relate to homiletic theory.
   e. Understanding the interplay between the Bible, the preacher, and the world.

II. Demonstrate ability in preaching topical/occasional sermons in the life of the church through the following:
   a. Understanding the various pastoral occasions that most often confront preachers.
   b. Understanding the process of selecting proper sermon texts for such occasions.
   c. Understanding the relationship between preaching and shepherding.
   d. Creating a list of potential sermons texts for 10 pastoral occasions.
   e. Discussing some of the difficult sermon occasions in your own church.
III. Demonstrate competence in writing full sermon manuscripts without being dependent upon them.
IV. Discern and develop confidence in one’s own preaching style, including the possibility of preaching without notes.
V. Preach two sermons.
VI. Read several required books related to various aspects of preaching.
VII. Memorize several Scripture passages related to preaching.

IV. Course Textbooks

Required:
- Acts (yes, the biblical book!). Please read this before the first class.
- R. Albert Mohler, He is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World (Chicago: Moody Press, 2008).
- Dave McClellan, Preaching By Ear: Speaking God’s Truth From the Inside Out (Wooster: Weaver, 2014).

V. Course Requirements

A. Complete all required reading and assignments.
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 20-25 minute sermons.
   a. One on a topic related to postmodernism.
   b. One on a pastoral occasion (i.e., wedding, funeral, baptism, etc.).
D. Memorize assigned Scripture passages.
E. Submit a 2-3 page paper describing and reflecting on 3 pastoral occasions that required your pastor to preach a difficult sermon, and how that was handled. NB: if you are pastoring yourself, you will need to interview someone else.
   a. Topics to be covered in the paper are:
      i. Describe the pastoral occasion.
      ii. Describe the process of selecting the sermon text.
      iii. Describe how the sermon went, and attending pastoral circumstances.
F. 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.
G. Late work will not be accepted without sufficient excuse. Please refer to page 38 of the student handbook for the grading index.
VI. Grading

Attendance/Punctuality: 10%
Required Reading/Listening: 10%
Outlines for occasional sermons: 10%
Scripture memorization: 10%
Reflection paper on sermon preparation: 10%
Sermon 1: 25%
Sermon 2: 25%

VII. Course Calendar

A. Friday, February 19th, 2016, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
   a. Introduction to the course
   b. Challenges to Preaching in a Postmodern Context
   c. How Postmodernism Has Influenced Contemporary Preaching
   d. Homiletic Models in a Postmodern Context
   e. Scripture memorization: John 8:32

B. Saturday, February 20th, 2016, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: John 14:6
   b. Three Aspects of Postmodernism and How They Relate to Preaching:
      i. The Challenge of History
      ii. The Challenge of Authority
      iii. The Challenge of Morality
   c. Biblical Responses to These Challenges:
      i. Preaching Redemption in History
      ii. Preaching That Word Above All Earthly Powers
      iii. Preaching and Union with Christ
   d. Summary and Conclusion

C. Friday, March 11th, 2016, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: Romans 1:16-17
   b. Introduction to Occasional Preaching
   c. The Use and Abuse of Occasional Preaching
   d. Selecting Preaching Texts for Pastoral Occasions

D. Saturday, March 12th, 2016, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
   b. Revised sermon manuscripts due for those preaching
   c. Trial sermons with evaluation (per schedule)

E. Friday, April 15th, 2016, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: Galatians 2:20-21
   b. Preaching and Family Worship
   c. Catechetical and Liturgical Preaching
   d. Open Discussion about Preaching
F. Saturday, April 16\textsuperscript{th}, 2016, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
   a. Scripture memorization: John 21:17
   b. Revised sermon manuscripts due for those preaching
   c. Trial sermons with evaluation (per schedule)
   d. 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. 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.

IX. 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 25 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. \textit{Subject}: What is the biblical author talking about? Use interrogative statements (who, what, why, where, which, how?).
   b. \textit{Complement}: What is the author saying about what he is talking about?
   c. \textit{Big Idea}: Subject + complement = main exegetical idea.
   d. \textit{Homiletic Idea}: Pithy statement of main idea in homiletic form.
   e. \textit{Purpose Statement}: (Why you are preaching the sermon?).
   f. \textit{Homiletic Structure}: (Based on text).
   g. \textit{Illustrations}: (Appropriate to text and sermon).
   h. \textit{Gospel}: With sensitivity to believers and unbelievers.
   i. \textit{Application}: Derived from the text; anchored in the gospel.
   j. \textit{Conclusion}: Corresponds to introduction.
X. Sermon Evaluation Form (I will use the same evaluation form from last semester)

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?

XI. Sermon Passages For PR 602

NB: 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!

A. First sermon (in Postmodern context)
   1. Ruth 1
   2. Ruth 2
   3. Ruth 3
   4. Ruth 4
   5. 2 Samuel 6:1-15 (David brings up the ark)
   6. 2 Samuel 11 (David and Bathsheba)
   7. 2 Samuel 13 (The Rape of Tamar)
   8. Job 1
   9. Psalm 1
   10. Psalm 2
   13. Acts 13
   15. Romans 1:18-32
B. Second sermon (Pastoral Occasions)
   1. Wedding: 2 Christians
   2. Wedding: 2 non-Christians
   3. Funeral: elderly believer
   4. Funeral: death of an infant
   5. Suicide
   6. Infant Baptism
   7. Adult Baptism
   8. Christmas sermon
   9. Easter sermon
  10. Ordination sermon
  11. Sermon on occasion of excommunicating a member
  12. Building dedication
  13. National tragedy (ie., 9-11, San Bernadino)
  14. Something not listed_________
  15. Something not listed_________

XII. Recommended Reading

A. Preaching in A Postmodern Context

B. General Books on Postmodernism
C. Occasional Preaching