

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Student Pastor Breakout

I. Our calling / our goal

- a. To make disciples of Jesus Christ. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Mt 28:18-20
 - i. Disciple: **maqhteu/wa**; **aÓkolouqe-wc**: to be a follower or a disciple of someone, in the sense of adhering to the teachings or instructions of a leader and in promoting the cause of such a leader — ‘to follow, to be a disciple of.’ An apprentice, to follow and learn from the master.
 - ii. The aim of our ministry should be that our students become **life long followers (disciples) of Christ Jesus**. Being taught all that Christ has commanded us.
 - iii. For them to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. **They must become life long students of the word of God.**
 - iv. We are to tether them to the Scriptures not to ourselves, a system, denomination, moral code...
- b. Don’t get caught up in success, numbers, pleasing man, job security, or human affirmation.

II. Learning how to study scripture is more caught than it is taught.

- a. Illustration: Karate Kid
- b. How we teach and submit or not submit to scripture will be caught by those under our care.
- c. **Emphasis of Pastoral Epistles: Personal devotion/holiness and the teaching of sound doctrine. Right belief and right conduct go hand in hand.**

- III. **2 Timothy 2:15** “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth”. **ESV**. “Be diligent to present yourself before God as one tried and true, an unashamed worker, correctly handling the word of truth.”
- a. Timothy has been told to avoid the heretics (denying the resurrection) because of their belief and behavior. It is unfruitful because they just play word games without substance.
 - b. “Timothy must take pains to conduct himself properly. This involves being tested and found to be a true worker, unashamed of his work, correctly teaching and living the message of the gospel. It involves striving to be an honorable vessel for the master, fleeing youthful passions and pursuing those qualities not found in the opponents, qualities such as righteousness, faith, love, and peace.” - Mounce (pg. 538)
 - c. **“To handle correctly”** While its specific nuance is debated, its general thrust is clear. Timothy is to deal correctly with the gospel message both its teaching and the manner of life to which it calls.
 - d. The emphasis is on the adjective “straight” (right, or correct).
 - e. Two basic interpretations of straight: 1) “Right interpretation of the gospel”. The main point being in contrast to the false teaching. Also “expressing oneself with exactness.” 2) “Right behavior in line with the gospel.”
 - f. **“Be diligent”, “work”**: Describes a zeal or eagerness to do something. “The language may remind Timothy of Paul’s earlier words about the hard-working soldier, athlete, and farmer (2:3-7). Paul will use similar language to encourage Timothy to work hard as an evangelist (4:5).
 - g. Timothy is to passionately train, cultivate, and work diligently in interpreting the word of God so he is not ashamed before God being tested by trials. He is to skillfully teach it.

IV. What is the best, most Biblical method to do this? How do we tether our students to the Bible and its doctrine?

First some Definitions:

- a. Hermeneutics: Working out of rules and methods for interpreting scriptural text.
- b. Exegesis: Determining the meaning of the text in context. Drawing out the meaning from the text. Not reading into it. Seeks to just know what God said.
- c. Interpretation: Determining the text meaning and the implication of it for today.

V. Methods

- a. Anecdotal: Preacher tells stories with moral lessons. Ex: David and Goliath = what giants our in your life? Depression, stress, your mortgage? Maybe doesn't really use a text just moral tales.
- b. Biographical: Traces the life of a biblical character and draws contemporary moral implications. Ex. Joseph = hard work, forgiveness.
- c. Topical: A sermon that has a topic in mind prior to consulting the text, and then searches for some text, but does not take the main point of the text as its own.
 - i. Dangers: 1) You may compromise the text to make/support your point. This perversion of the text will lead to a distortion of doctrine and a misrepresentation of God. 2) Your students become dependent on you and your personality. They are tethered to you and your theology. 3) Your students can only grow to know as much bible as you do. 4) Students approach the bible with "what does this mean to me attitude". 5) Students come to the scriptures to fix problems rather than to be transformed by the scripture into the image of Christ.
 - ii. They become depended on someone to tell them what to believe.
 - iii. They become disillusioned when they do go to the Bible and don't know how you came up with what you taught. People will just make it mean what they want it to mean.

- iv. The preacher is never surprised or thereby challenged by the text, but simply ends up studying and preaching on his own favorite topics. *For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole counsel of God* (Acts 20:27).
 - v. Therefore, the congregation never grows past the knowledge or maturity level of the preacher. *The unfolding of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple* (Ps 119:130).
 - vi. Warning: “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” James 3:1
- d. Expository: Preaching that makes the main point of the text the main point of the sermon. This is setting God's agenda to rule the church not the preachers. I believe that this is how the bible teaches us to teach both explicitly and implicitly.
 - e. Disclaimer: You can go through a passage verse by verse and still infuse your meaning into and you can teach topically using multiple scriptures from all over the bible and use them correctly from their context.

VI. **I Timothy 4:13** “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” ESV.

- a. Paul gives Timothy imperatives to follow. This is the seventh.
- b. **“the focus of his (Timothy) attention as he ministers to the Ephesians church should be Scripture, its public reading, the exhortation for the people to follow its teaching, and the doctrinal exposition of its meaning. The definite article before each of the three words shows that all were recognized items in the congregational meeting for worship...Even the order of the three is significant. Timothy is to immerse himself in the biblical text, to encourage people to follow the text, and to teach its doctrines. The difference is not so much in terms of content as it is an issue of purpose: read, exhort, and understand.”**
Mounce pg. 260
- c. Justin Martyr speaks of these three elements in his famous description of early Christian worship: “And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs,

and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray.”

- d. **You have three things: 1) what does the Bible say? That's textual criticism, that's involved in what is the right text, what are the right terms. You've got to look at your apparatus once in a while to find that out. But you want to find out what the text says. 2) What it means by what it says, and that is often the missing ingredient...what does it mean? Paul said to Timothy, "Till I come, give attention to reading...that's what it says...to doctrine...that's what it means by what it says. 3) Exhortation: that's how it applies." What does it say, what does it mean by what it says and what does it apply, or how does it apply to me? But you must have the interpretation step and that involves bibliography as well as textual familiarity**
- e. Timothy is instructed to be immersed in the text and then to read it to the congregation, giving exhortation and doctrinal instruction.
- f. **“The agenda Paul spells out for Timothy emphasizes the centrality of the text for theological correctness and includes no just a basic reading but a fuller awareness of the text’s meaning that is gained through study, reflection, and devotion.”** Mounce 261.
- g. “Do not neglect the gift you have...” Paul is encouraging Tim to make use of the gifts he possesses, gifts made evident at his commissioning into ministry, a commissioning that was accompanied by prophecy and by the ritual of laying on of hands.

VII. How to approach Expository Preaching

“Attempting to understand or apply a particular biblical phrase or verse without reference to the literary context is virtually guaranteed to result in distortion...Once we understand Paul’s (The authors), original meaning in context, it is easier to faithfully apply the text to our current situation...The power of a sermon or Bible lesson lies in its faithfulness to the inspired text.” - Plummer (Pg. 104-105)

- 1. Devotional
 - a) Come to the Word in Prayer (see Psalm 119, seeking and asking for wisdom)
 - b) It is all about knowing Jesus more (the OT promises, anticipates, foreshadows and prepares) (see Matt. 11:13, question 18)
 - c) Read large portions for-saturation, familiarization, and the big picture
 - d) Meditation (allow the Spirit to work truth into your heart and mind)
 - e) Memorization

- f) Approach in submission desiring to be mastered by the Word and made like Christ.
- g) You must allow the Word to work in you first so study through one book slowly

2. Technical aspect of Bible Study

- a) Bible Genre (Proverbs or wisdom sayings, Historical narrative, Prophecy, Apocalyptic, Hyperbolic or Exaggerated, Figures of speech, Poetry, Parables, Epistles)
- b) Historical and Background issues (language, location, Arthur, audience, time, situation)
- c) Context is King! (context of word, sentence, paragraph, thought, theme, book/letter, testament, whole of special revelation)
- d) Use scripture to understand scripture (the clear for the unclear, systematic theology tethers us to orthodoxy while allowing us to question, explore and wrestle with passages)
- e) Theological reflection. How does the main point of the passage support or drive towards the main point of the Bible. What is this passage teaching us about Jesus? How does this play into the story of redemption through Christ? (Jn. 5:39, Luke 24:27)
- f) Contextualization. Simply teaching the passage and truth therein in a communicable way to the current culture without changing the texts meaning. This does not drive exposition!! We are already in culture, so this is not as big a deal as we may think.
- g) Application. How do we submit to this passage? How do we live out this truth? What does this look like for our church? What does this mean for our families? Etc.

3. Tools of Bible Study

- a) Literal translation of the Bible
- b) Study Bible (ESV, Nelson, Macarthur, NIV)
- c) Commentaries (Expositor's Bible Commentary, Boice, NIV commentary, NICNT, Macarthur, Word Biblical Commentary) (FF Bruce, W. Lane, other names latter)
- d) Bible Dictionaries (Vines, Ungers, Strong's, Eerdmans, Zondervan)
- e) Bible Encyclopedias (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (NOT ORR), others later)
- f) *Systematic Theology* (Wayne Grudem, Millard Erickson)
- g) Concordance and web sites (Strong's, Vines) (blueletterbible.org, biblegateway.com, bible-history.com, esword)
 - i. Warning: in using a concordance, those with a limited knowledge of linguistics can make wrong assumptions about how to apply their recognition of repeated words. Fore example, a basic principle of linguistics is that words have a range of meaning and that the immediate context is the most important determiner of meaning. With a concordance, a beginning

interpreter could illegitimately force the contextual nuances of a word in one occurrence onto other passages.

- h) *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* by Robert L. Plummer
- i) *Exegetical Fallacies* by D.A. Carson
- j) *9 Marks* by Mark Dever
<http://marks.9marks.org/Mark1/LessonA/Slide1of1>

VIII. Personal Holiness

- a. “Your people’s greatest need from you is your personal holiness.”
- b. Don’t fall away!! Pursue Christ faithfully to the end!