

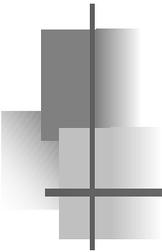
Biblical Preaching: *A Pastor's Look at Homiletics*

ITS Learning Guide

John R. W. Stott, D.D.
*Rector Emeritus of All Souls Church
London, England*

INSTITUTE OF
THEOLOGICAL
STUDIES





Introduction

Understanding the Context: A Background of the Course

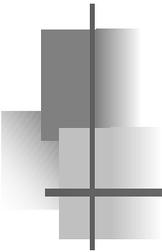
Dr. John Stott delivered these lectures in 1974 to students at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. Within that context, there are some references to current events that will remind listeners that the teaching is decades old. However, we believe that in these lectures Dr. Stott presents truths and principles that are still relevant for today's churches. He provides a historical perspective that was in many ways ahead of his time allowing church leaders in the twenty-first century to stand on his shoulders.

During these years, Dr. Stott lectured extensively on the topic of biblical preaching at seminaries, conferences, seminars, and workshops in all six continents.² The material covered in these teachings, somewhat expanded, was put into book form and published in 1982 under the title *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Eerdmans, 1982). It remains a popular and inspirational resource for students and pastors alike through these many years.

Key Historical Figures

To ensure that twenty-first century listeners understand and appreciate the context into which Dr. Stott presents this material, a few comments will be helpful on two key historical figures: Marshall McLuhan and Charles Simeon. The lectures discuss the background and influence of these men as they take students into the world of preaching seen through the eye of Scripture and through the mind and thought of John R. W. Stott in 1974.

² Stott, John R. W. *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 12.



Introduction

1. *Marshall McLuhan* (Lessons 1 and 2)

Dr. Stott spends a great deal of the first two lectures discussing the cultural influence of Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), a Canadian educator, who was known as a communication theorist. McLuhan wrote several major works on the subject of media and communication and has become known for coining expressions such as “the medium is the message,” the “global village,” and “hot” vs. “cool” media. He was named the “patron saint” of *Wired* magazine in the 1990’s, attesting to his continuing influence.

McLuhan’s work is relevant to this course because he strongly criticized the effect of both print and verbal communication (e.g., preaching), which he thought was to blame for many of society’s evils including nationalism, individualism, and social fragmentation. Dr. Stott cites McLuhan’s research and assesses his influence on cultural direction not only for that era but well beyond. He notes that McLuhan’s work presents “a great challenge to all preachers today” because it has created a new context, a new mindset, into which preaching must speak.

Some of the concepts presented in these lectures may be new to twenty-first century listeners who have never heard of McLuhan, but they are important for today’s preachers to grapple with because their influence on Western culture and thinking has been significant.

2. *Charles Simeon* (Lesson 13)

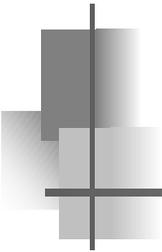
In a later lecture, Dr. Stott spends a considerable amount of time discussing the influence of Charles Simeon (1759-1836), an English clergyman and scholar, who had much to say about the evangelical movement in the Church of England. Stott argues that Simeon was in some ways the founder of the modern movement of expository preaching, and although he died in 1836, his influence on evangelical thinking continues through the twentieth century.

There are other examples of secular and Christian thinkers throughout the course, but McLuhan and Simeon are two who receive special attention—McLuhan as a major opponent of preaching, and Simeon as a chief advocate and practitioner of it.

Key Cultural Issues

In the course of these twenty lectures, Dr. Stott cites several cultural issues that are different than many of those of the twenty-first century. However, the principles of interpretation and application remain valid because as Dr. Stott puts it, we have the same Word of God, the same human beings, and the same fallible preacher called to stand between the two and speak the truth and love of God.

Here are a few of items that listeners will recognize have changed culturally since the 1970’s (if you are from a non-Western culture, you may identify many other differences as well):



Introduction

1. *Technological Advances*

You will find, as you listen, that Dr. Stott focuses in one lecture on television and its cultural influence, and, of course, does not refer to technological advances that are common today. He mentions computers but certainly does not envision the internet and its influence around the world thirty years later. The task for twenty-first century listeners is to take the principles and applications he makes and translate them to current technology. This ongoing thoughtful evaluation of technology and its influence is critical for the Church in all ages to engage, and Dr. Stott models an approach that is both humble and committed to the Word of God.

2. *Gender Issues*

Listeners will also find that Dr. Stott addresses the men in his classroom. This teaching was given at a time when there were few women in seminaries, especially in conservative evangelical seminaries, so it can be assumed that he is, in fact, addressing an all-male audience. However, as he mentions in lesson 11 and in his course on the Pastoral Epistles,³ Dr. Stott taught even in 1974 that women could serve in many teaching roles in the Church. In this way, Dr. Stott's words anticipate the complementarian/egalitarian debates of the 1980s, 90s, and later.⁴

3. *Socio-Political Issues*

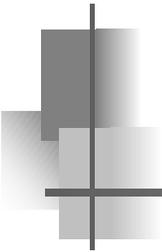
Naturally, the worldwide socio-political scene has changed considerably since the 1970's. Dr. Stott references Communism when he discusses the cultural battle of ideas, and he does not mention Islam—a much more significant focus for twenty-first century thinking and discussion. He refers in a later lecture to British politics and to the Munich massacre. Listeners will again want to translate the principles of the lectures and Dr. Stott's insight to their own society, culture, and time.

Culture does matter. When we preach or teach the Bible, our style of presentation, our illustrations, and our most pressing concerns are rightly guided by the situations and cultural dynamics around us. However, in all biblical preaching the goal is to bring God's Word to bear on our pressing cultural questions in order to speak God's truth clearly and compassionately to the people God wants to reach. Perhaps we can best learn from Dr. Stott's own words on this subject:

“The ideals I have unfolded I believe to be universally true, although of course they need to be adapted to each particular reality. Whether the preacher is addressing a large congregation in a modern town church, or occupies an ancient pulpit in an ancient European village church, or is huddled with a tiny remnant in the draughty corner of a dilapidated old edifice which has long since

³ See *The Pastoral Epistles* (NT502). CD/MP3. Grand Rapids: Institute of Theological Studies, 1974.

⁴ Those who are not familiar with the complementarian/egalitarian debate are referred to two Christian organizations who hold opposite views: The Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (www.cbmw.org) represents a complementarian view; Christians for Biblical Equality (www.cbeinternational.org) represent an egalitarian view. Resources are available at both sites to help interested learners consider the related questions and issues.



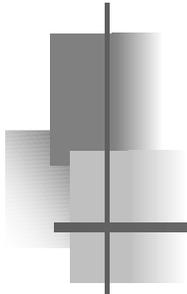
Introduction

outgrown its usefulness, or is talking to a crowd of peasants in a hut in Latin America or under some trees in Africa, or is sitting informally in a western home with a small group gathered round him – yet, with all these diversities, very much remains the same. We have the same Word of God, and the same human beings, and the same fallible preacher called by the same living God to study both the Word and the world in order to relate the one to the other with honesty, conviction, courage and meekness.” (from *Between Two Worlds*, p. 11).

In conclusion, we also want to recognize that depending on your own background and culture, you may identify many other comments or insights that will need translating for your context. We encourage you to see Dr. Stott’s approach as a model that is both committed to the authority of God’s Word and dedicated to truly reaching contemporary culture with the truth of Jesus Christ. In that way, may you also bridge the gap between God’s Word and the people in your context.

As you listen to these lectures, we pray that Dr. Stott’s thoughts, passion, and humor will bless, encourage, and inspire you to engage your culture in a fresh way and as Paul told Timothy, “*Preach the Word, be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.*” (2 Timothy 4:2)

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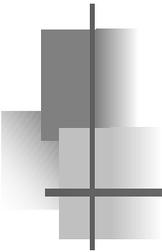


Lesson One

PART ONE: The Argument About Preaching

The Argument Against Preaching I:

The Cybernetic Revolution



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Is preaching still important today, or is it a dying art? Over the past several decades an increasing number of people (including pastors) have questioned the value of preaching for the Christian life. In this lesson, Dr. Stott begins with a three-part examination of the argument about preaching. An “unrepentant believer” in preaching, Dr. Stott offers his introductory thoughts on the topic and introduces listeners to perhaps the most significant challenge to preaching—represented by Marshall McLuhan. According to McLuhan, preaching, lecturing, and writing are forms of communication that are inherently flawed. They detach the speaker/writer from the listener/reader and promote individualism—accusations of great concern to preachers.

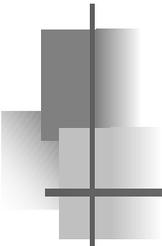
“I seldom descend from the pulpit without feeling at least a partial failure, and getting on my knees, praying and longing that I may do better in years to come. Nevertheless, having said that...I go on to declare myself an unrepentant believer in the indispensable importance of preaching in the Church.”

John R. W. Stott, D.D.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Present a introductory arguments for the importance of preaching.
- Summarize Marshall McLuhan’s view of the Cybernetic Revolution and why it presents significant objection to preaching.
- Explore Marshall McLuhan’s influence over present-day thinking about methods of communication in today’s culture.
- Give a biblically based response to the first of McLuhan’s arguments.
- Value preaching as indispensable for the Church.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST PREACHING I: The Cybernetic Revolution

“I speak to you not so much as an academic, as just a pastor who’s been trying to do this for some 20-25 years.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

Course Introduction

A. Course Analysis¹

1. The Argument About Preaching (3 lectures)
2. The Nature and Purpose of Preaching (3 lectures)
3. Biblical Authority and Interpretation (4 lectures)
4. Ideals of Ministry (2 lectures)
5. Characteristics of Biblical Preaching (2 lectures)
6. The Practice of Preaching (2 lectures)
7. Illustrations of Biblical Preaching (2 lectures)
8. Prerequisites of Biblical Preaching (2 lecture)

B. Preaching about preaching to preachers

1. The difficulties of preaching
2. The necessity of preaching
 - a. Relationship of the Church and the Word
 - b. Historical advocates

Recommended reading:

The Reformed Pastor by Richard Baxter

Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind
by P. T. Forsyth

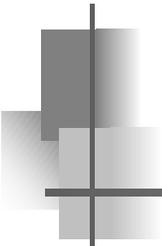
Lectures on Preaching by Bishop Phillip
Brooks

Preaching and Preachers by Martin Lloyd-
Jones

“If God creates, rules, and judges his Church by his Word—as I believe he does—then we cannot neglect it. Indeed, insofar as the Church ceases to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches through the Word, in that measure the Church is failing in its divine vocation. I’m convinced that the measure of the Church’s deadness is commensurate with the degree of its deafness to God’s Word.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

¹ As discussed in the lecture, this course analysis was Dr. Stott’s original plan, but as he delivered the lectures he spent extra time on Biblical Authority and Interpretation (Total: 5 lectures) and less time on the Prerequisites of Biblical Preaching (Total: 1 lecture).



Plan to Listen

I. Argument #1: Marshall McLuhan and the Cybernetic Revolution

A. Definition of “cybernetics” and the “Cybernetic Revolution”

The Cybernetic Revolution refers to radical changes in communication caused by the development of electronic equipment.

B. Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980)

1. Background: A Roman Catholic professor in the University of Toronto²

2. McLuhan on human history

a. The beginning and ideal: tribal existence

b. Two (diabolical) inventions

1) Phonetic alphabet

2) Movable type or print

3) Their disastrous effects

c. An electronic, cybernetic revolution

1) A new invention: the telegraph (1844)

2) The re-tribalization of humanity

C. McLuhan’s critique of print media (and all merely verbal communication vs. television)

1. Detached

2. Uni-sensual

3. Linear and logical

4. Inflexible

Cybernetics: “the science of communication an control theory that is concerned especially with the comparative study of automatic control systems (as the nervous system and brain and mechanical-electrical communication systems)”

“cybernetics.” (2008). *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved September 24, 2008, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cybernetics>

Books by Marshall McLuhan:

*The Gutenberg Galaxy: Understanding Media
The Medium is the Massage*

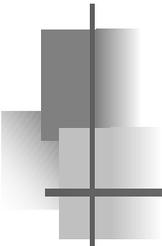
“If the phonetic alphabet fell like a bombshell on tribal man, the printing press hit him like a 100 megaton H-bomb.”

– **Marshall McLuhan**

“...this totally new society which is going to come will include the forthcoming demise of spoken language and its replacement by global consciousness.”

– **Marshall McLuhan**

² For more background information on Marshall McLuhan, see the introduction to this Learning Guide, or go to www.marshallmcluhan.com.



Plan to Listen

D. “Hot” and “Cool” Communication

1. “Hot and cool” media
 - a. “Hot media”: High information, uni-sensory (e.g., sermons, lectures, books)
 - b. “Cool media”: Low information, multisensory (e.g., television)
2. Implications for preaching
 - a. Preachers look foolish.
 - b. A dehumanizing effect

E. The Christian response

1. Two extremes
 - a. Embrace the revolution (e.g., Gavin Reid, *The Gagging of God*).
 - b. Ignore the revolution (e.g., Dr. Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching Preachers*).
2. A midway position
 - a. Preaching is an eternally valid medium because God has appointed it.
 - b. Preaching needs to be adapted to the modern age and supplemented with other media of communication.
 - c. We should be willing to learn from modern educational ideas (e.g., “child-centered education”).

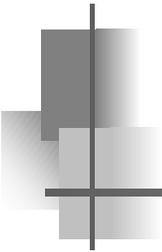
(Continued in the next lesson)

“Hot media are therefore low in participation. Cool media are high in participation, or completion by the audience.”

– **Marshall McLuhan**

“I believe men and women are rational creatures, and God has made them rational creatures, and that it's one of the preacher's tasks to get human beings to be human beings, and to think about the great issues of life.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

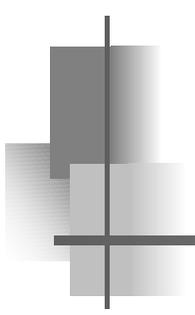
Understanding the Content:

1. What are the primary reasons Dr. Stott gives in his defense of preaching as an important means for communication of biblical truth in the Church today?
2. Summarize the first argument against preaching in your own words (be sure to distinguish between “hot” and “cool” media). What parts of McLuhan’s perspective do you agree with? What parts do you disagree with? Why?

Application for Life:

3. Consider your own beliefs and the practices of your church. Do you and/or your church consider preaching significant in the way that Dr. Stott believes? Why or why not?
4. How significant has preaching been for your own spiritual journey? If possible, identify specific preachers or sermons that have impacted you, and explore reasons why they were so effective. If preaching has not been significant in your life, can you explain why?

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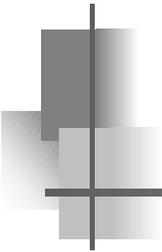


Lesson Two

PART ONE: The Argument About Preaching

The Argument Against Preaching II:

Four More Contrary Arguments



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Continuing in his study, Dr. Stott completes his discussion of the Cybernetic Revolution by discussing how we learn and its implications for preaching. He then moves on to address four other challenges that preachers face. Dr. Stott reminds us that in modern, Western cultures that are saturated with entertainment, preachers cannot afford to be dull. However, they also cannot turn to gimmicks and pure entertainment in an attempt to compete. Instead, they must look for ways to adapt without giving up their confidence in the Gospel, which for many has been undermined by higher criticism and cultural shifts.

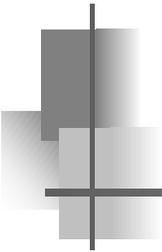
“One of the hallmarks of authentic Christian preaching is spontaneity, the message evidently coming from the heart. It is the man who makes the preacher, and every preacher’s got to be able to say with Paul, ‘Our Gospel came not to you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.’ Therefore, our most important preparation is not our script, but our heart.”

John R. W. Stott, D.D.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Identify four learning modes and explore ways they can be addressed in a local church setting.
- Explain how the Christian sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper offer opportunities for participatory learning in the Church context.
- Cite five arguments given against the validity and value of preaching and provide biblical responses.
- Delineate specific causes for the decline of preaching in today’s churches.
- Brainstorm ways to make your preaching style interesting to modern listeners.
- Recognize the effects of higher criticism and comparative religious studies on preachers’ confidence.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST PREACHING II: Four More Contrary Arguments

(Continued from previous lesson)

3. How do we learn?
 - a. Listening
 - i. Concern with disdain for verbal communication
 - ii. Concern with disdain for linear/logical thought
 - b. Conversation
 - i. Open ended?
 - ii. Based on the Word
 - c. Observation
 - i. The minister as a “visual aid” (Tit. 2:7; 1 Tim. 4:12).
 - ii. The congregation as a “visual aid” (1 John 4:12)

“A loving Christian community – a Christian community in which the love of God is made manifest – is making visible the invisible God. Here is a visual aid to the world.”
– **John R. W. Stott**

 - d. Participation
 - i. The Sacraments as *verba visibilia* (“visible words”)
 - ii. Christian fellowship

II. Argument #2: Fatigue and Boredom

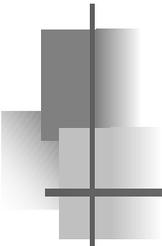
- A. We live in a “rat-race” society—in constant motion.
- B. People are like children at the circus—spectators with little patience for listening to sustained reasoning.
- C. No need to panic: Fight for their attention. Don’t be dull.

Four Main Modes of Learning:

- Listening
- Discussing
- Observing
- Discovering

“God verbalized His revelation in scripture, and this Word, we believe, has complete finality. Therefore, it can never be supplanted, or even supplemented. It can only be communicated, and you and I are in this communications business. We are called to make it known to others. And moreover, we’ve got to communicate it to others in the way in which it has been communicated to us. That is verbally.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Plan to Listen

III. Argument #3: Modern Disdain for Dogmatism

- A. Negative connotations of “preaching”
- B. Authority is biblical.
- C. The preacher is also “under” the Word.

IV. Argument #4: The General Decline of Preaching

- A. Many seminaries neglect homiletics.
- B. The liturgical movement’s tendency to emphasize worship over preaching
 - 1. A false antithesis: Preaching and worship belong together.
 - 2. Poor knowledge = poor worship

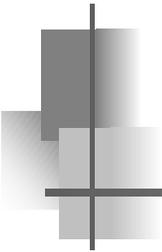
V. Argument #5: Loss of Confidence in the Gospel

- A. Effect of biblical criticism
- B. Effect of comparative religious studies
- C. The need for personal experience/conviction (1 Thess. 1:5)

“Sermonettes breed Christianettes”
– **Anglican clergyman**

“For what is preaching? Preaching is the proclamation of the name of the Lord, making known his name, his character, and his work. And what is worship? It’s praising the name of the Lord, thus made known. So if preaching makes known his name and worship is the adoration of the name made known, preaching and worship belong inescapably together.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Pause to Reflect

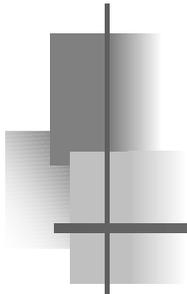
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. Summarize in your own words the four ways that humans learn and describe how each one should impact Christian preaching and teaching.
2. Explain Dr. Stott's view of the relationship between preaching and worship. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Application for Life:

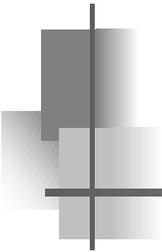
3. Dr. Stott describes modern, Western society as television-saturated and in constant motion—a particular challenge to preachers not to be dull. Does this accurately describe your community? What similarities/differences do you see, and what do you need to do to keep people's attention?
4. Having heard Dr. Stott describe and respond to the four main arguments against preaching, reflect on which ones (if any) have affected you. What has undermined your confidence in the Gospel and/or the preacher's role in communicating God's Word? How have these lectures helped?



Lesson Three

PART ONE: The Argument About Preaching

A Defense of Preaching



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Preaching is not only still relevant and necessary; it is crucial. Having spent the last two lectures on the arguments against preaching, Dr. Stott turns here to the positive—a passionate defense of preaching with four major reasons why it is vital for the Church and for the world. This powerful defense of preaching reinforces the power and primacy of God’s Word, the awesome responsibility of the preacher, and the great need for the Gospel in our world.

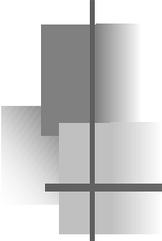
“The preaching of God’s Word is a vital, permanent feature of the Church. It’s of that, that I long for us to be deeply persuaded so that nothing can shake us in our preaching ministry. It is the medium that God has himself chosen for the salvation of sinners and for the edification of his people. God has promised to own it and to bless it.”

John R. W. Stott, D.D.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Use key biblical passages to defend the power of God’s Word to effect change in people’s lives.
- Defend preaching as vital for the Church, the pastor, and the world.
- Support the view that preaching is the main duty of a minister.
- Explain how preaching is designed to meet the needs of a congregation.
- Show how God uses preaching to call people around the world to faith in Jesus Christ.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

A DEFENSE OF PREACHING

Introduction

A. Review of arguments against preaching (lessons 1-2)

1. Cybernetic Revolution
2. Fatigue and boredom
3. Modern disdain for dogmatism
4. General decline of preaching
5. Loss of confidence in the Gospel

“Secular and radical theology is spreading its tentacles into every section of the Christian Church today and, as a result of this, many parts of the Christian Church have become unsure of themselves, adolescently insecure and shy of proclaiming anything.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

B. Thomas Carlyle on Preaching

“That a man should stand there and speak of spiritual things to me is beautiful, even in its obscurity and decadence. It is among the beautifullest and most touching objects that one sees on the earth. This speaking man has indeed, in these times, wandered terribly far from the point. Has our narcissistic world totally lost sight of the point? Yet at bottom, what have we to compare with him? Of all such functionaries boarded and lodged on the industry of modern Europe, is there one on earth worthier of the board he has? The speaking function, with all our writing and printing functions, has a perennial place, could the speaking man but find the point again.”

– **Thomas Carlyle**

REASONS WHY GOD’S WORD MUST BE PREACHED:

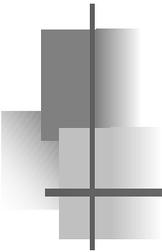
I. Preaching is the Chief Weapon of God.

A. Battle of ideas

1. Impotence of force and legislation
2. Example of Sir Leslie Monroe on the oppression of Hungary by the USSR

“Opinions are stronger than armies. Opinions, if they are founded in truth and justice will in the end prevail against the bayonets of infantry, the fire of artillery and the charges of cavalry.”

– **Lord Palmerston**



Plan to Listen

B. Paul's confidence in the power of Truth

1. Because of humanity's ignorance (Rom. 10:14-17)
2. Because of humanity's fallenness (Psalm 27:1; Rom. 1:16)
3. Because of humanity's blindness (2 Cor. 4:4-6)
 - a. Unbelievers are blinded by Satan (v. 4).
 - b. Paul, once blind, was made to see by God (v. 6).

NOTE: Analogy between creation ("Let there be light") and regeneration (internal illumination).

- c. The conclusion: preaching Christ Jesus (v. 5)
 - d. The Actors:
 - i. The Devil blinds.
 - ii. God shines.
 - iii. We preach.
- ## C. The power of God's Word
1. Metaphors: fire, hammer, sword, lamp, mirror, food, seed
 2. Power derived from God
 3. The Gospel is the instrument of salvation.

II. Preaching is the Chief Responsibility of the Presbyter.

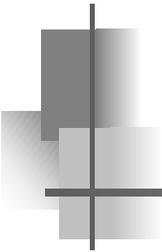
A. What is "the ministry"?

1. Ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4)
2. Other ministries

B. Called to teach the doctrine of the Apostles (*paraklesis* and *didaskalia* in 1 Tim. 4:13)

Paraklesis (Gr. παράκλησις): "exhortation" or "encouragement"

Didaskalia (Gr. διδασκαλία): "teaching" or "doctrine"



Plan to Listen

C. Two essential qualifications

1. Loyalty to the *didache* (Titus 1:9)
2. Able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2)

III. Preaching is the Chief Need of the Congregation (Col. 1:27-29).

- A. The goal: maturity in Christ (v. 29)
- B. The means: We proclaim Christ.
 - a. Who is this Christ?
 - b. Poor view of Jesus = poor experience
2. The recipients: all Christians
 - a. Gnostics on *pistis* and *gnosis*
 - b. “Every man”

IV. Preaching is the Chief Lack of the World.

- A. A famine in Christendom (Amos 8:11)
- B. The local church as Gospel “propaganda” center

Didache (Gr. διδαχή): “the teaching” of the apostles

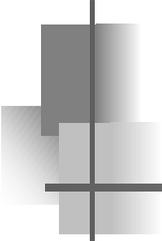
“When we preach Jesus Christ in the fullness of his person and his work in creation and redemption, not only do people’s minds grow, but the whole personality grows as they grow into maturity in Christ.”

– John R. W. Stott

Pistis (Gr. πίστις): “faith”

Gnosis (Gr. γνώσις): “knowledge”

Amos 8:11: “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.”



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

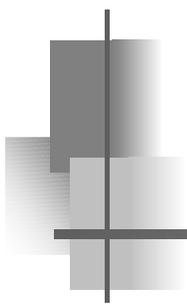
Understanding the Content:

1. List and explain Paul's reasons for having confidence in the power of Truth. Do you share this confidence or do you have doubts? Spend time in prayer exploring where your confidence and/or doubts come from and asking the Holy Spirit for guidance.
2. Summarize Dr. Stott's teaching that preaching is the "chief responsibility of the presbyter." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Application for Life:

3. Dr. Stott mentioned that the church today is experiencing a famine. What is this famine? Do you see any effects of it in your life and in the lives of others around you? If so, what do you see as a solution?
4. Reflect on these three lectures on "The Argument About Preaching." How has your view of preaching been challenged or strengthened? In what ways (if any) should this impact your approach to preaching (if you have that role) or the way you listen to sermons?

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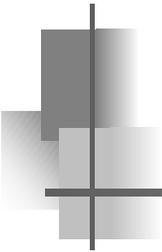


Lesson Four

PART TWO: The Nature & Purpose of Preaching

Preachers as Middlemen I:

Stewards & Bridge-Builders



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

John Stott asks, “*What is Christian preaching, that some should take such pains to decry it, and that others should want so passionately to defend it?*” In the next three lessons, Dr. Stott addresses this question and describes the nature and purpose of preaching. He uses as his primary image that of a middleman—one who stands on behalf of Christ and speaks to the people. In order to explain this image and describe its implications for preachers, Dr. Stott offers four illustrating metaphors and considers the first two here: stewards and bridge-builders. Stewards care for the Master’s family and work on His behalf; bridge-builders reach across the gulf between the world of the Bible and that of contemporary culture in order to speak Truth clearly and relevantly.

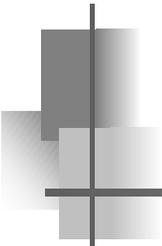
“I am not suggesting ever that we should sacrifice truth to relevance, or that we should sacrifice relevance to truth, but that we should succeed in communicating the truth relevantly.”

John R. W. Stott, D.D.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Discuss the role of the preacher as a “middleman” who communicates a message from God to people.
- Define the two metaphors of “steward” and “bridge-builder” and explore their implications for preachers.
- Describe the nature and responsibilities of a steward of God’s Word.
- Identify the gulf that a preacher must “bridge” and explain the two foundations that must be in place for effective communication of God’s Word.
- Distinguish between “preachers,” “apostles” and “prophets.”
- Value the preacher’s need to intentionally build both knowledge of the Word of God and understanding of contemporary culture.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

PREACHERS AS MIDDLEMEN I: Stewards & Bridge-Builders

Introduction

- A. Differences between sermon and lecture
- B. The preacher as a “middleman”
- C. Preaching as a “transaction”

I. Metaphor #1: The Preacher is a Steward.

- A. Paul as a steward of the Gospel
 1. Christ’s underling (1 Cor. 4)
 2. Entrusted with *mysterion* (1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:11; Tit. 1:3)
- B. Secondary stewards
 1. Gospel is a *paratheke* (1 Tim. 6:20).
 2. Succession of apostolic doctrine (2 Tim. 2:2)
 - a. Preachers are not prophets.
 - b. Preachers are not apostles.
 - c. Preachers are not speculators (*spermologos*).
- C. Duties of a steward
 1. The steward gives only what he receives.
 2. Preachers ought to give the whole Bible.
- D. Example of John the Baptist
 1. Not a reed blown in the wind

1 Corinthians 4:1: “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

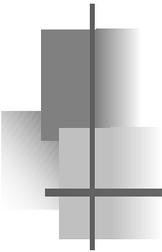
Mysterion (Gr. μυστήριον): “secret” or “mystery”

Paratheke (Gr. παραθήκη): “deposit” or “what is entrusted”

Spermologos (Gr. σπερμολόγος): “seed picker” or “idle babler” (Acts 17:18)

“God in a progressive and now completed revelation in Christ, and the apostolic witness to Christ has revealed to mankind a total, harmonious truth. We want our congregations to get excited about these grand biblical themes that you can trace right through Scripture not just the little cross references...but introducing them to the themes of Scripture so that their minds are stretched.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

2. Not a man in soft raiment (clothing)
3. A prophet

II. Metaphor #2: The Preacher is a Bridge-Builder.

- A. What gulf does the preacher bridge?
- B. The importance of solid foundations
 1. Evangelical Christians
 2. Radical/Secular Christians
 3. Radical Conservatives
 - a. Need for discernment
 - b. Willingness to change
- C. Bridge-building as translation
 1. Importance of fluency
 2. Importance of studying our own culture

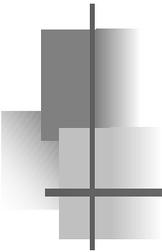
Question Period

- “You said the steward stands between the householder [God] and the household [church]. Does this tend to make a distinction between the laity and the clergy that is unfortunate?”
- “Could you clarify, please, your definition of verbal communication in light of two things: your earlier comment that we are radical in the way we consider pastoral method, and then last week's lecture in defense of preaching, in which each of the four defenses seem to require, not necessarily a man speaking, but an idea communicated?”
- “Is our definition of preaching from a pulpit to a congregation what was meant by the *kerussein* of the early Church in which it seemed to be more a man before an audience gathered wherever they may be?”

“The preaching bridge must be grounded with equal firmness in God’s Word, on the one hand, and in man’s world on the other.”

– John R. W. Stott

Kerussein (Gr. κηρυσσειν): The infinitive form of the Greek verb *kerusso* (Gr. κηρύσσω), meaning “to preach”.



Pause to Reflect

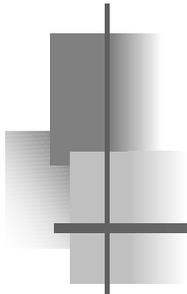
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. What does Dr. Stott mean when he refers to preachers as “stewards”? How does this image challenge or affirm your view of preachers and preaching?
2. What does Dr. Stott mean when he refers to preachers as “bridge-builders”? What gap needs to be spanned? How does this image challenge or affirm your view of preachers and preaching?

Application for Life:

3. Dr. Stott contrasts the role of a preacher with those of prophets, apostles, and speculators. Does his description of the preaching role seem like a higher or lower calling than you previously thought? As a pastor/teacher or one in training, are you comfortable with this role? Explain.
4. Reflect on your own life in light of Dr. Stott’s bridge-builder analogy and the importance of foundations. What can you begin doing this week to shore up the foundations on *both* sides of the gulf to be bridged? Are you ready to begin that work? Why or why not?

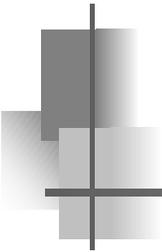


Lesson Five

PART TWO: The Nature & Purpose of Preaching

Preachers as Middlemen II:

Ambassadors & Freedom Fighters



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Ambassadors and freedom fighters; these exiting roles are actually part of the pastoral job description. In this lesson, Dr. Stott explains these second two metaphors for preachers as middlemen. Preachers bring the Word of God and His authority with them in their ministries, and they act as freedom fighters, living between D-Day and V-Day. The war is won, and preachers have the privilege and responsibility to proclaim the liberty of the Gospel with the confidence of an assured victory. What an awesome calling it is to be a pastor! Here, Dr. Stott shares with listeners his experience in these roles in order to help them faithfully serve as the ambassadors and freedom fighters they are called to be.

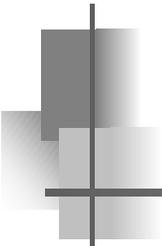
“I can forgive the preacher almost anything if he gives me a sense of God, if he gives me something for my soul, if he gives me the sense that although he’s inadequate himself, he’s handling something which is very great and very glorious, and if he gives me some dim glimpse of the majesty and the glory of God, the love of Christ my Savior, and the magnificence of the Gospel. If he does this, I am his debtor, and I am profoundly grateful to him.”

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Explain with understanding the concept of God speaking through His messenger, the preacher.
- Recognize the implications of living between the beginning of the last days and the final culmination of time.
- Identify the Gospel’s source of power.
- Describe the role of a preacher with four biblically based metaphors and explore their implications for your ministry.
- Give historical examples of great preachers who exemplified various biblical characteristics of messengers of God.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

PREACHERS AS MIDDLEMEN II: Ambassadors & Freedom Fighters

I. Metaphor #3: The Preacher is an Ambassador (2 Cor. 5:20).

- A. *Huper Christou*
- B. Who does the appealing?
- C. Existential preaching
 - 1. God confronts His people with Himself.
 - 2. The chief end of preaching (cf. Dr. Lloyd-Jones)
- D. The ambassador “gets out of the way” (cf. Dr. Billy Graham).

II. Metaphor #4: The Preacher is a Soldier or Freedom Fighter.

- A. Proclamation and liberation
 - 1. Jesus expounds Isaiah 61 (Luke 4:18-19).
 - 2. John 8:31-32
 - 3. P. T. Forsythe and Gustaf Wingren
 - a. “Feet and mouth”
 - b. God’s Word is active (Isa. 55:10-11).
 - c. Preaching is a liberating deed.
 - 4. Between victory and consummation—A time for preaching
 - a. Analogy of D-Day and V-Day
 - b. Bultmann on “betweenness”

Huper Christou (Gr. ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ): “on behalf of Christ”

“I have never felt such levity and power in preaching in all my ministry as I have here. I’ve often felt like a spectator, standing on the side watching God at work. I felt a certain detachment from it. I wanted to get out of the way as much as I could and let the Holy Spirit take over.”

– **Dr. Billy Graham**
(London Crusade, 1954)

“The only preaching that is up to date for every time is the preaching of this eternity, which is opened up to us in the Bible alone.”

– **P. T. Forsythe**

Recommended Reading:

The Living Word by Gustaf Wingren

Plan to Listen

- B. The office of preaching and the battle
1. The error of exalting preaching too high
 - a. God's Word is completed.
 - b. God's work is also completed.
 2. Preaching makes the completed contemporary.
 - a. Galatians 3:1
 - b. Preaching as a "documentary film"

III. Summary of Analogies

- A. Steward: receiving and dispensing (Key Word: *Exposition*)
- B. Bridge-Builder: connecting, relating ancient to modern (Key Word: *Application*)
- C. Ambassador: bringing the King's presence and Word (Key Word: *Encounter*)
- D. Freedom Fighter: proclaiming a message that actually liberates (Key Word: *Liberty*)

Four Metaphors for Preachers as Middlemen

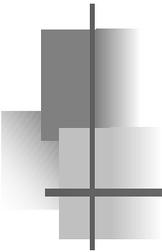
<u>Role</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Result</u>
Steward	Dispenses	Exposition of Word
Bridge-builder	Connects	Application to life/culture
Ambassador	Represents	Encounter with God
Freedom Fighter	Liberates	Living in freedom

Question Period

- "Almost every Sunday, we have preaching on the doctrines of the church, preaching on life situations and problems. Can we classify this as preaching according to the New Testament usage of the word 'preaching'?"
- "Do you feel that a clear message of salvation and the way of salvation should be in every sermon?"

"One of the great problems of modern preaching is the atomization: that we can take a little subject and detach it from the wide perspective and sweep of the biblical revelation. But it's one thing that the biblical writers won't do. The New Testament writers won't...Jesus wouldn't do it. Doctrine and ethics belong to each other."

— John R. W. Stott



Pause to Reflect

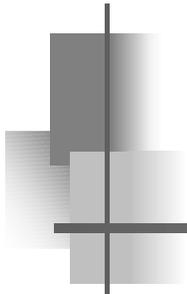
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. What does Dr. Stott mean when he refers to preachers as “ambassadors”? How does this image challenge or affirm your view of preachers and preaching?
2. What does Dr. Stott mean when he refers to preachers as “freedom fighters”? How does this image challenge or affirm your view of preachers and preaching?

Application for Life:

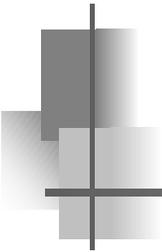
3. Do you believe that a clear presentation of the Gospel is necessary in every sermon? Explain your answer.
4. Dr. Stott explained that the preacher brings God’s presence, Word, and power. What are your thoughts as you reflect on this awe-inspiring concept?



Lesson Six

PART TWO: The Nature & Purpose of Preaching

A Plea for Expository Preaching



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

What is the best method or style of preaching? Are there multiple valid options or just one? In this lesson, Dr. Stott answers these questions and more as he makes a case for expository preaching. Interestingly, he takes issue with certain popular definitions of expository preaching common in the U.S. and makes the case for an alternative, more expansive perspective. Dr. Stott begins with the basic assumption that the Bible is the Word of God and preachers are called to expound it. From there, he provides four insightful implications for those who choose to use expository preaching and explains why such an approach is valuable for both the congregation and the preacher.

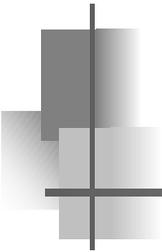
“Expository preaching is, therefore, a preaching of Scripture in which the preacher is eclipsed by the Scripture that he is preaching. It’s a preaching of Scripture in which the words of men are strictly subordinated to the Word of God. It’s preaching in which God’s Word dominates and, I would say, even drowns man’s word.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Define “expository preaching” and distinguish Dr. Stott’s view from other more limited ones.
- List the limitations that expository preaching places on a preacher and describe why those limits are good.
- Defend the concept that ministers today should focus primarily on expository preaching.
- Identify the advantages to both the congregation and the pastor of preaching consecutively through a passage of Scripture.
- Explain how expository preaching responds to cultural desires for existential theology.
- Apply at least two possible methods for selecting topics for preaching.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

A PLEA FOR EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Introduction: Review of previous lessons

I. Expository Preaching

A. Introductory statements

1. All Christian preaching is biblical preaching.
2. All biblical preaching is to some extent expository preaching.
3. We should not set expository preaching against topical preaching, which can also be expository.

B. Defining “Expository Preaching”

“My endeavor is to bring out of Scripture what is there, and not to thrust in what I think might be there. I have a great jealousy on this head; never to speak more or less than I believe to be the mind of the Spirit in the passage I am expounding.”

— Charles Simeon¹

1. Exposition vs. imposition
2. The mind of the Spirit

C. Basic Assumptions

1. The Bible is the Word of God.
2. The preacher is entrusted with it.
3. He must be faithful in expounding it.

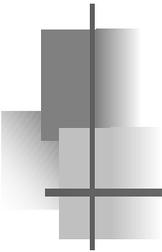
D. Application of biblical images

1. Sower (cf. Matt. 13:1-23)
2. Builder (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11)
3. Steward (cf. 1 Thess. 2:4)

“Whether our text is a single word, or a sentence, or a verse, or a paragraph, or a chapter, or a book, our task is to expound it. Whether you’re taking a biblical theme, or a biblical passage, or a biblical topic, still, our responsibility is to expound what is there in Scripture. So personally, and I can only talk to you personally, the phrase expository preaching is one that I don’t want to allow to become just one form of preaching among many, but to say that all preaching is biblical preaching and all biblical preaching is expository preaching. Our task is to expound what is there in Scripture.”

— John R. W. Stott

¹ For more on Charles Simeon, see lesson 13 where Dr. Stott spends a full lecture discussing his life and influence.



Plan to Listen

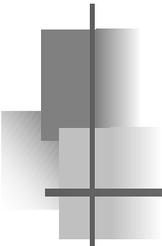
II. Implications of Expository Preaching

- A. Expository preaching limits your field.
 - 1. Tyranny or “bibliocracy”?
 - 2. Freedom in bondage
 - 3. The worst kind of expository preaching
- B. Expository preaching tethers us to the past.
 - 1. Today, everything old is suspect.
 - 2. Christianity is both historical and contemporary.
 - 3. The Apostles’ Christ (John 15:26-27)
 - 4. Novelty vs. freshness
- C. Expository preaching concentrates on the objective.
 - 1. Existentialism
 - 2. God’s way
- D. Expository preaching alienates popular support.
 - 1. The false prophet (Ezekiel 13)
 - 2. Jesus’ warning (Luke 6:26)
 - 3. Chad Walsh on preaching

III. Conclusion: The Value of Consecutive Preaching

- A. For the people
 - 1. It brings the people (i.e. regular attendance).
 - 2. It builds confidence in God’s Word.
- B. For the preacher
 - 1. It saves time.
 - 2. It avoids speculation over choice of text.

“It is a great thing to come under the magnificent tyranny of the Gospel.”
– P. T. Forsythe



Plan to Listen

3. It compels the preacher to expound hard passages.
 4. It directs and disciplines the preacher's study.
- C. The need for consecutive, lifelong study of Scripture

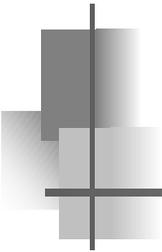
Question Period

- “You made the statement that anything new in theology should be anathema. Do you think things like black theology, just to take an example, would it fall into that category, or do you think they are attempts to be a helpful emphasis on something that has been neglected?”

- “When you go into your study, which determines what? Do you see the need for the problem, and then look for something to answer that, or do you begin with scripture and then see what it speaks to, and how it relates to contemporary situations? In other words, do we begin with the text or with the problem?”

- “You mentioned that the Bible anchors us to objectivity, and that we should learn from experience, I'm just wondering if there isn't a danger of being very objective, what seemed to me to be the interpretation of a passage does not really relate to the actual fact, depending on the existential experience.”

“...the deeper I get into Scripture, the more astonished I am with its relevance.”
– **John R. W. Stott**



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

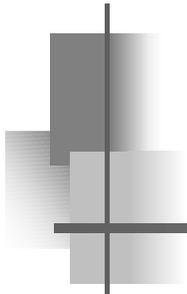
Understanding the Content:

1. In a short paragraph, describe what Dr. Stott means by the phrase, “expository preaching.” In what ways is this definition consistent with or different from what you had in mind when you began this lecture?
2. In your view, what are the two most significant advantages of expository, consecutive preaching both for the preacher and the congregation? Why did you select these? Do you see any disadvantages? Explain.

Application for Life:

3. What is the preaching style in your church, and what are the concrete results of this approach in your congregation? How is this approach similar or different than expository preaching? What changes (if any) do you think should take place?
4. Reflect on Stott’s description of and plea for expository preaching. What is your response? Try to identify any *resistance* you have to or *relief* you get from this approach. Why do you respond in this way?

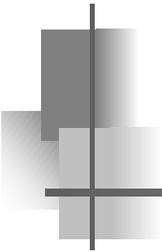
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Lesson Seven

PART THREE: Biblical Authority & Interpretation

The Authority of the Bible



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Biblical preaching, as described by John Stott, assumes something about the Bible—that it is authoritative and we should submit our lives to it. However, many people, including Christians, view “authority” as a negative word because it implies coercion and a lack of freedom. And we transfer that resistance over to the Bible and question whether or not it is actually the authoritative Word of God. Preachers struggle to preach with a real sense of authority because in many ways biblical authority has been lost. In this lecture, Dr. Stott breaks with typical homiletics courses and begins a five-lesson discussion on biblical authority and interpretation. It is vital that preachers understand why the Bible is inspired and authoritative and allow that authority to embolden their preaching.

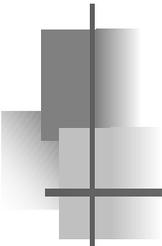
“[When you come to Scripture as a reader], you find not only their remarkable unity and coherence...but especially the power of Scripture in human lives to disturb, to comfort, to abase, to heal, to bring hope to the bereaved, and to bring direction to the lonely who have lost their way.”

John R. W. Stott, D.D.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Understand four ways we tend to resist established authorities.
- Defend the authority and inspiration of Scripture.
- Explain the doctrine of inspiration and what it means (and does not mean) from an evangelical point of view.
- Describe Jesus’ view of Scripture and its authority by looking at how He used it in his life and ministry.
- Respond to the criticism that citing Jesus’ view of Scripture to authenticate its authority is, in fact, circular reasoning.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

Introduction

- A. The cultural revolt against authority
 - 1. Political
 - 2. Economic
 - 3. Intellectual
 - 4. Social
- B. The Response of the Church
 - 1. Sensitivity to the contemporary mood with willingness to stand against it when necessary
 - 2. Authority and freedom are Christian concepts.

I. Three Words About the Bible

- A. Revelation
- B. Inspiration
 - 1. *Theopneustos* (2 Tim. 3:16)
 - 2. Verbal inspiration (1 Cor. 2:13)
- C. Authority (cf. example of Peter and Jesus, Luke 5)

II. Three Disclaimers

- A. Inspiration was not mechanical.
 - 1. Luke the historian
 - 2. Differing styles and vocabulary
 - 3. Differing themes
 - 4. Scripture is equally God's Word and the words of men.

"Some of our freedom can only be found in the rejection of authority, and some can only be found in submitting to authority."
– John R. W. Stott

Theopneustos (Gr. θεόπνευστος): "God-breathed"

God's Word or Man's Word?

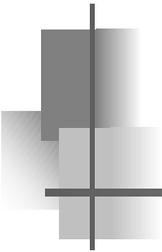
Isaiah 1:20: "For the mouth of the **LORD** has spoken it"

Acts 3:21: "**God** spoke by the mouth of his holy **prophets** long ago"

2 Peter 1:21: "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but **men** spoke from **God** as they were carried along by the **Holy Spirit**."

Hebrews 1:1: "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, **God** spoke to our fathers by the **prophets**"

Luke 2:22-23: "according to the **Law of Moses**, they brought him up...as it is written in the **Law of the Lord**"



Plan to Listen

- B. We do not hold a literalistic view of Scripture.
 - 1. Every word is true only *in its context*.
 - a. The Book of Job
 - b. Recorded to be contradicted not endorsed
 - 2. Much of Scripture is deliberately figurative.
 - a. Anthropomorphisms (e.g., 2 Chron. 6:9)
 - b. Poetic and figurative expressions (e.g., Psalm 19)
 - 3. The inspired text is the original Hebrew and Greek.

III. Arguments for the Authority of Scripture

- A. The historic Christian churches
- B. The writers of Scripture
- C. The readers of Scripture (*testimonium internum Spiritu Sancti*)
- D. The endorsement of Jesus Christ

Testimonium internum Spiritu Sancti: Latin for “the internal witness of the Holy Spirit”

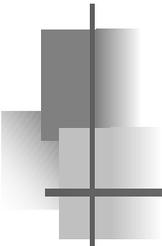
Question: “How do we get out of the circular argument?”

Problem: *How do you know Scripture is inspired?...* because Christ says so... *How do you know that Christ says so?...* because of Scripture, which is inspired.

This is considered “begging the question” or a circular argument by critics of Inspiration.

Answer: The argument is misstated.

- 1. We first approach the Bible simply as historical documents (no assumptions of inspiration).
 - 2. The Bible convinces us that Jesus is divine and authoritative (still no doctrine of inspiration).
 - 3. Jesus sends us back to Scripture with a new understanding (now we see inspiration).
 - 4. Thus it is not a circular argument.
-



Plan to Listen

IV. How did Christ endorse the Old Testament?

- A. Submission in personal conduct
 - 1. Example: his temptations in the wilderness
 - 2. He quotes Scripture “at himself.”
 - 3. Significance of *gegraptai*
- B. Submission in the fulfillment of his mission
 - 1. He was a self-aware suffering Servant.
 - 2. He submitted to Scripture’s role for him (Mark 8:31, Matt. 26:54).
- C. Submission to Scripture in controversies
 - 1. Scripture as the only Court of Appeals (Mark 12:10; Luke 10:26)
 - 2. Chief criticisms of religious leaders (Mark 7:9, 13, 12:24)

V. Two “Alternatives” to the Christian Accepting Jesus’ View of Scripture:

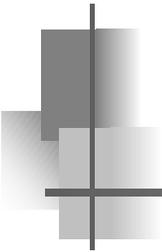
- A. Christ was mistaken.
 - 1. Based on the doctrine of *Kenosis*
 - 2. But Jesus taught only what the Father gave him, so he was inerrant in his teachings.
- B. Christ knew Scripture was not reliable but accommodated himself to his contemporaries’ ideas.
 - 1. Based on a doctrine of “accommodation”
 - 2. Jesus boldly disagreed with his contemporaries.
 - 3. Jesus detested religious pretense.

“It is beyond question that Jesus Himself was personally submissive to Scripture, in His ethical standards, in the understanding of His mission, and in His debates with the religious leaders of His day.”

– John R. W. Stott

Gegraptai (Gr. *γεγραπται*): “it is written” or “it stands written”

Kenosis: From the Greek word, *kenow* (Gr. *κενόω*), meaning “to make empty” (see Phil. 2:7)—this refers to the doctrine of Christ’s self-emptying involved in the Incarnation



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

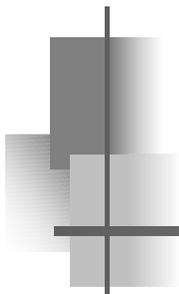
Understanding the Content:

1. What does Dr. Stott mean when he says that evangelicals do not believe in “mechanical” inspiration of Scripture? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. What can we learn about Jesus’ view of the authority of Scripture by His responses to Satan’s temptation in the wilderness? What seems most significant to you here?

Application for Life:

3. Do you agree or disagree with Dr. Stott’s view of the Bible’s authority? Explain why, and see if you can identify decisions or tendencies in your life that manifest your view.
4. Imagine you are in a discussion with a friend who questions the authority and relevance of the Bible. How would you respond?

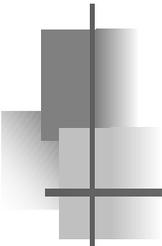
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Lesson Eight

PART THREE: Biblical Authority & Interpretation

The Authority of the New Testament



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

In lesson seven, Dr. Stott argued for the authority of the Bible and commented specifically on that of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). But what about the New Testament? Are these books authoritative in the same way? This lesson continues Dr. Stott's teaching on the authority of the Bible by turning specifically to these books and the questions they raise. He describes the unique role and office of the twelve apostles and their work in creating the New Testament. In addition, listeners are reminded that freedom is found in the truth, which is embodied in Jesus Christ and witnessed to in the infallible, authoritative Scriptures.

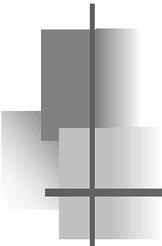
“The Christian is called not to give free rein to his appetites and to his passions, but to deny himself and to follow Christ. And the Christian is assured that in the very act of losing himself by submission to the authority of Christ, he finds himself. In other words, the true freedom, finding yourself and your own identity, comes through losing yourself in submission to the authority of Christ.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Defend the authority of the New Testament.
- Understand four ways in which the calling of the apostles was unique for a particular purpose and for a specific time in history.
- Recognize the implications of apostolic authority for the establishment of the New Testament canon of Scripture.
- Evaluate the role of miracles throughout Scripture and redemption history.
- Explain how submission to the authority of the Bible brings freedom in areas of personality and intellect.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. The Apostles

- A. *Apostolos* equivalent to *seliah* in Rabbinic Judaism
- B. Christians as “apostles” in a general sense (John 13:16)
- C. The apostles of the churches (2 Cor. 8:23)

II. Four-fold uniqueness of the Apostles of Christ

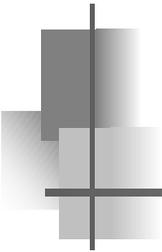
- A. Personal appointment/authorization by Christ
 - 1. Choosing the Twelve (Luke 6:12-13)
 - 2. Commissioning of Paul (Acts 26:17)
 - Paul defends his appointment by Christ (Gal. 1:1)
- B. Eye-witness experience with Christ
 - 1. In the company of Christ (Mark 3:13; John 15:27)
 - 2. This was a condition for eligibility (Acts 1:21, 22).
 - 3. How did Paul qualify?
 - a. He learned from Christ in Arabia.
 - b. He saw the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:8, 9:1).
- C. Extraordinary inspiration by the Holy Spirit (John 14, 16)
 - 1. Improperly applied by Roman Catholic Church
 - 2. Improperly applied by liberal Protestants
 - 3. A proper understanding
 - a. Who is the “you” in John 14:25-26?
 - b. Who is the “you” in John 16:12-13?

Recommended reading:

Supreme Authority by Norval Goldenhuys

Apostolos (Gr. ἀπόστολος): “sent one” or “apostle”

Seliah (Aram. שלח): Within Rabbinic Judaism, a representative of the Sanhedrin to the Jewish dispersion



Plan to Listen

- c. The Holy Spirit comes to complete Jesus' ministry to the apostles.
- D. Supernatural power to work miracles
1. The main function of miracles
 2. The Bible is not a book of miracles.
 - a. Striking example of John the Baptist
 - b. Miracles cluster around certain people/events for authentication.
 - i. Moses
 - ii. The Prophets
 - iii. Christ
 - iv. The Apostles
 3. Signs of a true apostle (Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 12:12)

III. Four-Fold Recognition of Unique Apostolic Authority

- A. By Christ (Matt. 10:40)
- B. By the apostles themselves
 1. 2 Thessalonians 2:15
 2. 1 Thessalonians 5:27
 3. Colossians 4:16
 4. 2 Thessalonians 3
 5. 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 6. Galatians 4:14
 7. 1 John 4:6
 8. 3 John:9-10
- C. By the Early Church
 1. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch

“Jesus recognized that His teaching ministry to the apostles was incomplete and He added that He would send the Holy Spirit to complete it.”

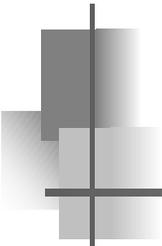
– John R. W. Stott

“The main function of miracles throughout Scripture is to authenticate a fresh stage of revelation.”

– John R. W. Stott

“The first apostolic church had a far clearer understanding of the uniqueness of the authority of the apostles than the modern church.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

2. Clement
3. Polycarp
4. Tertullian
5. Apostolic authority and the New Testament Canon

D. By the Reformers (e.g., Martin Luther)

IV. Deductions and Conclusions Concerning Biblical Authority

- A. It is the way of freedom.
 1. Authority and freedom are *not* opposites.
 - a. In morality
 - b. In doctrine
 2. True intellectual freedom is found in believing and living the truth.
 3. Christ's yoke of instruction

(Continued in the next lesson)

"The apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was sent forth from God, so then Christ is from God, and the apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came at the will of God in the appointed order."

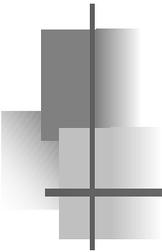
- Clement

"You are the light of the world' as a ministry entrusted primarily by Jesus to his dear apostles. They are to instruct souls and guide them to eternal life."

- Martin Luther

"To believe nothing is to be in bondage to meaninglessness. To believe lies is to be in bondage to falsehood. True intellectual freedom is to be found in believing the truth and living it."

- John R. W. Stott



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

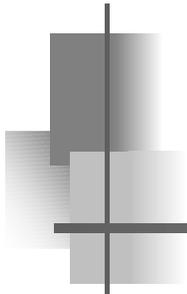
Understanding the Content:

1. Describe in your own words how the authority of the apostles differs from the authority of preachers today. How should this affect preaching?
2. What does apostolic authority mean for the authority of the New Testament? How does this challenge or affirm your view of the New Testament?

Application for Life:

3. Are you satisfied with the basis for the authority of the New Testament presented in this lesson? What questions remain for you?
4. In your own life, do you see the authority of Scripture as tyranny or freedom? How has Dr. Stott's teaching challenged or encouraged you?

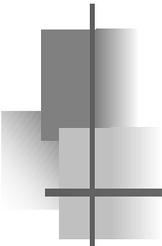
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Lesson Nine

PART THREE: Biblical Authority & Interpretation

*Authority (cont.) &
Introduction to Interpretation*



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

In this lecture, Dr. Stott concludes his discussion of the authority of the Bible offering some conclusions and observations about how it applies to our personal lives, the Church, mission, and discipleship. Indeed, submitting to the authority of Scripture is no small matter. However, you may be wondering how to actually do this. How can we come to interpret and understand what the Bible is teaching? Here, Dr. Stott introduces and begins to tackle the subject of interpretation by identifying three teachers that help us understand Scripture.

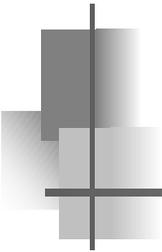
“The understanding that God gives us is not intended for our private enjoyment alone. He does not reveal truth to us in order that we should monopolize the truth that we have received, but in order that we should communicate it to others.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- List specific spiritual and relational benefits that result from submission to the authority of the Bible.
- Describe and respond to the dual role of the Holy Spirit in understanding and interpreting Scriptures.
- Understand the importance of personal exegesis of a text to discover its intended message.
- Recognize the value of historical interpretations and past scholarship throughout the history of the Church and the wisdom they give to fresh study today.
- Value reading extensively, but critically, the writings and teachings of people who have different views of Scripture, drawing from them whatever truth they offer.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

AUTHORITY (CONT.) & INTRODUCTION TO INTERPRETATION

(Continued from previous lesson)

- B. It is the way of integrity.
1. Total submission to Christ
 2. Dealing with problems
 3. Not obscurantism but humble trust

“When my Lord Christ became a living and unutterably necessary reality to me, I remember that one of my first sensations of profound relief was that He absolutely trusted the Bible. And though there are in it things inexplicable and intricate that have puzzled me so much, I am going, not in a blind sense but reverently, to trust the book because of Him.”

– Bishop Handley Moule

4. “What is the place of reason?”

Analogy of Scientific Research

- C. It is the way of Church union.
- D. It is the way of evangelism.

1. The need for a clear *evangel*
2. Dialogue and evangelism

- E. It is the way of discipleship.

What is Discipleship?

1. A life of faith
2. A life of obedience
3. A life of worship

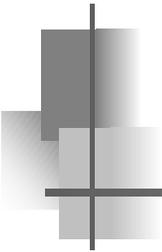
“Christian truth is foundational to Christian unity.”

– John R. W. Stott

Evangel (Gr. εὐαγγέλι-): The root of the Greek word for “Gospel” or “good news,” *euaggelion* (Gr. εὐαγγέλιον), cf. *evangelism*.

“I don’t believe that any man has ever made a truly great Christian preacher who hasn’t believed deeply in his mind, heart, and conscience in the unique authority of Scripture.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

INTRODUCTION TO INTERPRETATION: Three Teachers

Introduction: the uniquely Evangelical high view of Scripture

I. The Holy Spirit (Revelation and Illumination)

“Without **revelation** we have no truth to perceive, and without **illumination** no faculty with which to perceive it.”

– John R. W. Stott

Conditions on Enlightenment or Illumination:

- A. Rebirth: The Holy Spirit enlightens the regenerate.
- B. Humility: He illumines the humble.
- C. Obedience: He enlightens the obedient.
- D. Communication: He enlightens the communicative.

II. Ourselves

- A. The need for disciplined study
- B. A false antithesis (Dan. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:7)
- C. Sundial illustration

III. The Church

- A. Indirect teaching by the Holy Spirit
- B. John Calvin on the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:25-40)

One Final Word: Scripture, reason, and tradition are not equal!

Question Period

- “When you enter a passage, how do you relate your inductive study to that of consulting other men's, or even the church's interpretation of that passage?”
- “What do we do with men who reject the authority of Scripture? Do we take them as some of our more significant teachers, or as teachers at all?”

“If the Bible is God's written Word, then we should spare no pains and grudge no effort to discover what He said, and still says, in Scripture.”

– John R. W. Stott

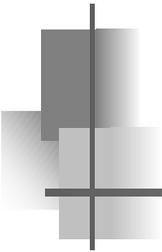
“Pride is the greatest barrier to understanding.”

– John R. W. Stott

Daniel 10:12: “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard.”

“Get on your knees with the open Bible and ask God, by His Spirit, to illumine your mind and warm your heart and speak to you through this passage, that you may speak to others.”

– John R. W. Stott



Pause to Reflect

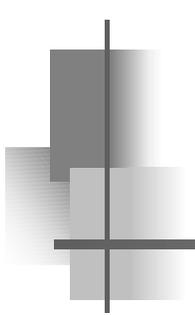
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. Describe in your own words how biblical authority relates to the three areas of discipleship mentioned in the lecture (faith, obedience, worship). Which area(s) seems especially meaningful to you today?
2. Dr. Stott gives the Church a significant role for believers in their interpretation and understanding of the Bible. Explain that significance in your own words. Do you agree or disagree? Explore how this can be correctly applied in your life and your congregation.

Application for Life:

3. Reflect on Dr. Stott's four conditions of illumination by the Holy Spirit. Which one(s) are most convicting or challenging to you? What can you do today to make yourself more open to the Holy Spirit's work?
4. What advice does Dr. Stott give on studying the work of teachers who reject the authority of the Bible? How have you approached this challenge? Do you agree or disagree with Dr. Stott's advice? Explain.

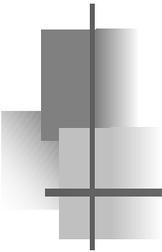


Lesson Ten

PART THREE: Biblical Authority & Interpretation

The Principles of Biblical Interpretation I:

Simplicity & History



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Have you ever heard someone interpret the Bible in a way that seemed ridiculous? Have you ever interpreted it yourself only to realize later that you were wrong? How can we avoid this? In this lesson, Dr. Stott continues teaching on biblical interpretation and introduces two key principles: simplicity (the natural sense) and history (the original sense). Preachers especially need to avoid the temptation of finding something novel in Scripture only because it will appeal to our congregations or finding something easy that will avoid hard study of the text. These principles will help listeners bypass many of the common pitfalls and more faithfully proclaim the true riches of God's Word.

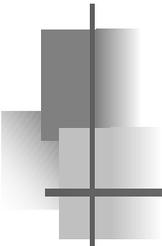
“Although Scripture is unlike all other books in being the Word of God, it is also like all other books in being the words of men. Since it is unique, because divine, we study it like no other book, praying to the Holy Spirit for illumination. But since it is ordinary, because human, we study it like every other book, and we cannot avoid the common rules of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Recognize and affirm the ultimate reason God gave us the Bible.
- Apply, in your own study, the interpretative principles of simplicity and history.
- Understand the use of metaphor, allegory, and parable in Scripture and be able to identify each.
- Interpret Old Testament prophecy more accurately by applying a pattern of three-fold fulfillment.
- Articulate the importance of the principle of history in biblical interpretation.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION I: Simplicity & History

“You can make the Bible mean anything you like
if you are unscrupulous enough.”
– **John R. W. Stott**

I. Principle of Simplicity – The Natural Sense

A. Clarity not confusion

1. Destructive criticism
2. Fanciful reconstructions
3. The “perspicuity of Scripture”

B. How to study Scripture

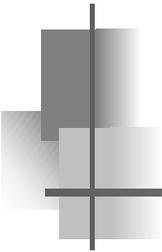
1. Allegorization?
Example of the Epistle of Barnabas
 2. Natural meaning vs. literal meaning
 3. Distinguishing parables and allegories
 - a. Examples of allegory
 - b. Example of a parable: the Good Samaritan
 - c. Danger of arguing from analogy
 4. Look for the natural sense
 - a. Psalm 75
 - b. Washing robes in blood?
- ##### C. Prophecy and the “natural sense”
1. Threefold fulfillment of prophecy
 - a. Literal/Historical Fulfillment

“Our God the God we believe in, is a God of revelation, a God who has spoken, a God who desires to make Himself known, and, therefore, the whole purpose of revelation is clarity and not confusion.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

“Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning, and let us embrace it and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended interpretations which lead us away from the natural meaning.”

– **John Calvin**



Plan to Listen

- b. Spiritual/Gospel Fulfillment
- c. Final/Heavenly Fulfillment
- 2. Rebuilding the Temple (Ezek. 40-48)
 - a. Literally fulfilled in history under Zerubbabel
 - b. In the New Testament, the Temple's Spiritual/Gospel Fulfillment is the Church:
 - i. Universal Church (Eph. 2:20ff)
 - ii. Local church (1 Cor. 3:16)
 - iii. Individual Christian's body (1 Cor. 6:19)
 - c. In the Final/Heavenly Fulfillment, John says, heaven is the Temple.

II. The Principle of History – The Original Sense

- A. Grammatical-Historical Method
- B. Three considerations
 - 1. The situation
 - a. Joshua 1
 - b. Luther's trouble with Paul and James
 - 2. The style
 - 3. The language
 - a. *Koine* Greek: the common, non-literary Greek language of everyday speech—the language of the New Testament
 - b. *Ataktos* (1, 2 Thess.)
 - i. Classical definition: “disorderly”
 - ii. *Koine* usage: “idle” (1 Thess. 5:14)

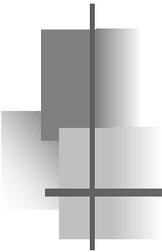
(Continued in the next lesson)

“The permanent and universal message of Scripture can be understood only in the light of the circumstances in which it was originally given.”

– John R. W. Stott

Koine (Gr. κοινή): “common”

Ataktos (Gr. ἄτακτος): “disorderly” or “idle”



Pause to Reflect

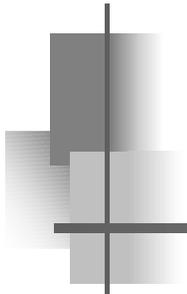
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. In your own words, define the principles of “simplicity” and “history” as you would describe them to a twelve-year old who is just starting to read the Bible. Are these good principles to follow? Why or why not?
2. How does Dr. Stott distinguish between parables and allegories? Can you find examples of each in Bible? In what ways does this help your reading of Scripture?

Application for Life:

3. Think of a time when you misinterpreted a biblical passage. What did you do wrong? Did you avert any of the principles described in this lecture? What did you learn from that experience?
4. What is one key insight either from this or the previous lesson regarding biblical interpretation that you find significant? Why is this important for you to apply? What steps do you need to take to ensure that you are correctly reading and understanding the Bible?

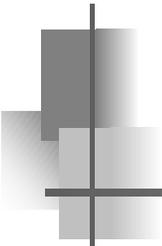


Lesson Eleven

PART THREE: Biblical Authority & Interpretation

The Principles of Biblical Interpretation II:

History (cont.) & Harmony



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Have you ever heard someone dismiss part of the Bible because it is “cultural” or “times have changed”? In this lesson, Dr. Stott concludes the principle of history by addressing the “cultural problem”—*How do we apply a text that seems culturally bound?* He then takes up the third principle of interpretation: the principle of harmony (the general sense). Perhaps the most challenging of the three, this principle requires a preacher to interpret a text in light of its context within the *entire* Bible. Dr. Stott ends the lecture with a summary of the three principles of interpretation and how they all reflect the character of God.

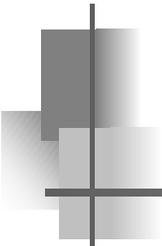
“Because God is light and wants to be known, we look to the natural meaning – the principle of simplicity. Because God has spoken and His speech is a historical revelation, we look for the original meaning – the principle of history. And because God cannot deny Himself, He is self-consistent; we look for the general meaning, which is the principle of harmony. These three principles . . . arise naturally from the nature of God and from the nature of Scripture as a plain, historical, consistent communication of God to man.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Articulate three legitimate ways of dealing with cultural aspects of a passage of Scripture.
- Study two different contexts for any given passage: the historical and scriptural contexts.
- Apply, in your own study, the interpretive principle of harmony.
- Explain how an account in Scripture might contain both literal and figurative components.
- Understand how the three principles of interpretation as presented in these lectures reflect the character of God.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION II: History (cont.) & Harmony

(Continued from previous lesson)

C. The cultural problem

Three possible reactions:

1. Reject the teaching.
2. Embrace both teaching and culture.
3. Translate teaching.

Examples:

- a. Foot Washing
- b. Holy Kiss
- c. Behavior and Dress of Women

III. The Principle of Harmony – The General Sense

Basic presupposition: *God's Word is unified.*

1. Interpreting legal documents
2. Interpret Scripture by Scripture
3. The double context of Scripture: historical (the principle of history) and Scriptural (the principle of harmony)
4. Two kinds of Scriptural context: immediate and distant

A. The immediate context

Examples of taking Scripture out of context:

1. "Hear the Church"
2. "More than conquerors"
3. "I make all things new"

"The purpose of the cultural transposition is not to avoid obedience...it is the exact opposite. It is to ensure obedience, and to ensure an obedience that is contemporary."

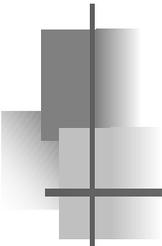
– **John R. W. Stott**

"We should seek to interpret Scripture as one harmonious whole."

– **John R. W. Stott**

"The Scriptural context is both immediate, that is the particular verse, paragraph, chapter, book, in which it is embedded, and distant, the total biblical revelation."

– **John R. W. Stott**



Plan to Listen

B. The distant or overarching context

Examples:

1. Adam, Eve and the Garden (Gen. 1-3)
 - a. In light of Romans 5:12-21
 - b. In light of the Book of Revelation
2. The Finger of God (Ex. 31:18)
 - a. Compare other passages
 - i. Psalm 8:3
 - ii. Exodus 8:19
 - iii. Luke 12:20
3. The Return of Christ
4. Promises to Israel
 - a. Progression in revelation
 - i. Hebrews 1:1-2
 - ii. Truth to more truth, not error to truth
 - b. Peter's use of the promises (1 Pet. 2:5-9)
 - c. Paul's use of the promises (Gal. 3)
 - d. Threefold fulfillment of prophecies to Abraham
 - i. Literal/Historical – Innumerable Israelites
 - ii. Spiritual/Gospel – A gathering of the Gentiles
 - iii. Final/Heavenly – The great heavenly company

Summary of Three Principles of Interpretation

Question Period:

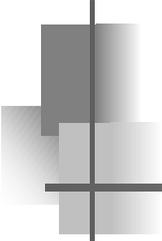
- Is the great company of saints in Revelation 7 really a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham?

“The Old Testament is a partial revelation; the New is the fulfillment of it. We all of us believe in progressive revelation. But what the principle of harmony will want to emphasize is that the progression has not been from error to truth, but from some truth to more truth, which is a very different thing”

– John R. W. Stott

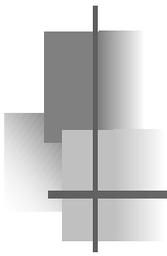
“We believe that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. He intended His revelation to be plain, perspicuous, and readily intelligible to ordinary human beings.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

- Are the three fulfillments of prophecy strictly successive, or do they overlap? When the Gospel fulfillment came, was the Jewish literal fulfillment set aside?
- Do you think all this talk about rebuilding the temple on its original site is speculation?
- What do we do with prophecy not specifically explained in the New Testament?
- Is Revelation a special case regarding prophecy?



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

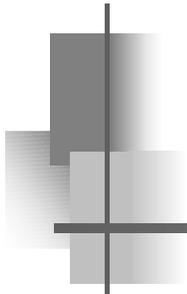
Understanding the Content:

1. Summarize Dr. Stott's approach to interpreting cultural issues in the Bible? Is this a helpful approach in your view? Discuss any points of agreement or disagreement that come to mind (esp. regarding the examples of foot washing, greeting with a kiss, or the veiling of women).
2. In your own words, define the principle of "harmony" as you would describe it to a twelve-year old who is just starting to read the Bible. Is this a good principle to follow? Why or why not?

Application for Life:

3. What do we learn about the character of God as we apply the principles of simplicity, history, and harmony to our interpretation of Scripture? How does this understanding encourage your relationship with God and His Word?
4. How equipped do you feel to apply the principle of harmony? Grade yourself on your overall understanding of the Bible as a whole. What can you do personally to ensure that you are acquiring and building upon your knowledge of the entire text of God's Word?

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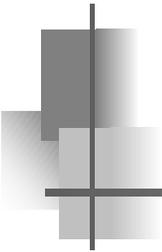


Lesson Twelve

PART FOUR: Ideals of Ministry

The Biblical Ideal

The Good Shepherd (John 10)



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

What is an ideal preacher like? Can we separate the task of preaching from the role of pastor? In this lesson, Dr. Stott begins a two-part discussion of the “ideals of ministry” and here expounds the biblical ideal of the Good Shepherd (John 10). He argues that we must view the task of preaching and the role of the pastor as inherently united—they go together. Despite many negative attitudes towards clergy in society and the Church, the ministry of a pastor is a vitally important service to the Body of Christ. Here, you will learn six characteristics of a good shepherd, which describe the pastoral role as a comprehensive ministry including knowing, serving, guarding, leading, feeding, and seeking the sheep.

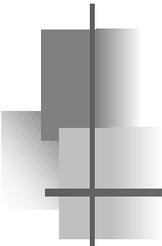
“Our teaching will be so true and accurate that they will have no need to reject it, so plain that they can feed upon it with ease, so rich that they go on sucking its juices all week, and so tasty that their appetites are whetted for more.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Understanding the close relationship between the overall ministry of a pastor and the task of preaching the Word of God.
- Explain how both serving and leading are closely and irrevocably linked in pastoral ministry.
- Describe the biblical relationship that needs to develop between a pastor and his congregation based on Jesus’ teaching.
- Articulate and begin to apply six characteristics of pastoral ministry in light of the model of the “Good Shepherd” in John 10.
- Adopt a biblical approach for confronting false teaching and false teachers in our churches and society today.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE BIBLICAL IDEAL: The Good Shepherd (John 10)

Introduction

A. Rationale for this topic in a course on Biblical Preaching

1. Preaching is part of the pastoral ministry.
2. Reappraisal of the ordained ministry and its purpose

Origins of this dilemma:

- a. Anticlericalism in contemporary society
- b. The assault of secular theologians on traditional orthodoxy
- c. Decreasing enrollment of pastoral students and increasing number of pastors who quit the ministry

B. The Foundations of Pastoral Ministry

1. Ministry means service.
2. Ministry is an end in itself.
3. Christian ministry is patterned after the ministry of Jesus Christ.

I. The Biblical/Pastoral Ideal of the Pastor: The Good Shepherd

- A. Definition: Pastor means shepherd.
- B. Paradigm: Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd
- C. Limits of the shepherd analogy

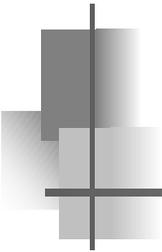
II. Characteristics of the Good Shepherd (John 10)

- A. Good shepherds **know** their sheep (v. 3).
 1. Importance of personal relationships

Diakonia (Gr. *διακονία*): “service” or “ministry”

“Jesus Christ saw ministry not in terms of status, but rather in terms of function. The passion for Christian ministry that He has set was one of service.”

– Michael Green



Plan to Listen

2. Practical advice on how to remember names
 - a. Faces first
 - b. Pray for people
- B. Good shepherds **serve** their sheep (v. 11).
 1. God's complaint (Ezek. 34:2, 8)
 2. A good reminder (Acts 20:28)
- C. Good shepherds **lead** their sheep (v. 2-3).
 1. Psalm 80:1
 2. Psalm 23:1
 3. Leading by example (1 Pet. 5:2-3)
- D. Good shepherds **feed** their sheep (v. 9).
 1. Ezekiel 34:2
 2. The shepherd leads, the sheep feed themselves (Ezek. 34:14)
- E. Good shepherds **guard** their sheep (v. 12-13).
 1. Understanding the analogy
 - a. Shepherds – faithful pastors
 - b. Wolves – false teachers (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29-30)
 - c. Hired hands – unfaithful pastors
 2. It is a costly task (1 Sam.17).
 3. It is a compassionate task.
- F. Good shepherds **seek** the lost sheep (v. 16).

“One of the foundations of a distinctively Christian ministry, patterned on the ministry of Christ, is the personal and living relationship that grows up between the pastor and the people.”

– John R. W. Stott

“We are called to lead the sheep, particularly by our example, in such a way that it is safe for them to follow.”

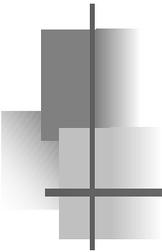
– John R. W. Stott

“The Bible preaching minister should develop a Bible reading congregation.”

– John R. W. Stott

“I think that a vague denunciation of false teaching and false teachers is not enough... I think we have to...give ourselves the pain—and I mean that, the pain of close combat—of reading their literature which we would far rather not read, of listening to and wrestling with the arguments, and so in our preaching and teaching dealing with the real issues that are at stake.”

– John R. W. Stott



Pause to Reflect

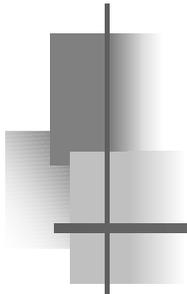
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. Review the three foundations of pastoral ministry explained in the opening portion of this lecture, and consider popular concepts of “leadership.” Do you see any tensions between “service” and “leadership”? How do you reconcile those tensions?
2. Briefly summarize the biblical ideal of the Good Shepherd in your own words, and identify concrete ways this ideal should impact the actual ministry and activities of a pastor. Do you see any changes that need to be made in your ministry?

Application for Life:

3. Dr. Stott discusses in the lecture how pastors are to guard the sheep, which means at times fighting against false teaching by “reading their literature which we would far rather not read” and “listening to and wrestling with the arguments” so that they can deal with the “real issues that are at stake.” Do you enjoy this process or tend to avoid it? Consider the motivation behind your response.
4. Are you comfortable with leading a congregation by the example of your life? Why or why not? Prayerfully consider the implications of your answer.

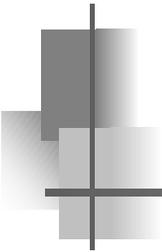


Lesson Thirteen

PART FOUR: Ideals of Ministry

The Historical Ideal

Charles Simeon (1759-1836)



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

In 1782, a young minister was appointed to Holy Trinity Church in the heart of Cambridge University. There, his passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ brought him significant hardship. Many refused to attend the services and prevented others from attending. The preacher was routinely insulted and pelted with rotten eggs, stones and other debris by rowdy crowds. Is this really the kind of preacher you want to learn from? Yes, says Dr. John Stott. In this lesson, he presents a historical ideal of ministry in the influential preacher, Charles Simeon. He was a man who not only suffered for the Gospel, but also through patience and perseverance went on to have an influential ministry.

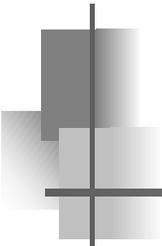
“There is nothing in the whole universe to be compared with the Scriptures of truth, nothing that will so enrich the mind, nothing that will so benefit the soul. To treasure them up in our minds should be our daily and most delightful employment. Not a day should pass without adding to their blessed store, not only in memory and mind, but in heart and soul as well.”

Charles Simeon (1759-1836)

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Describe the life, testimony, and ministry of Charles Simeon.
- Identify several key characteristics of an effective ministry of the Gospel.
- Compare and contrast Simeon’s approach to Scripture to approaches of systematic theologians such as Calvin and Arminius.
- Articulate a view of antinomies in Scripture that allows both extremes to be true.
- Understand the role of God in any ministry as it relates to human commitment, talent, and humility.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE HISTORICAL IDEAL: Charles Simeon (1759-1836)

I. The Historical Ideal of the Pastor: Charles Simeon

- A. Simeon's influence: He was one of the greatest and most influential preachers that the Church of England has ever known.
- B. Simeon's background and career

II. Secrets of Charles Simeon's Effectiveness

- A. His personal faith in Christ crucified
Simeon's Conversion
- B. His willingness to suffer for Christ
 - 1. Isolation
 - 2. Persecution at Cambridge
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:24
 - b. Matthew 27:32
- C. His dedication to preaching
 - 1. He took time to prepare.
 - 2. He conserved his strength.
 - 3. He had a clear objective.
 - 4. He cultivated a direct and simple style.
 - 5. He was in "dead earnest".
- D. His faithfulness to Scripture
 - 1. He was submitted to Scripture.
 - 2. He was wary of human systems of theology.

"I would also look to him as my all-forgiving God and my all-sufficient God and as my all-atoning God and as my covenant-keeping God. I have not a doubt or a fear, but the sweetest peace. I cannot have more peace."

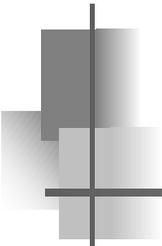
- Charles Simeon
(on his deathbed, 1836)

"For the attainment of divine knowledge we are directed to combine a dependence on God's Spirit with our own researches. Let us, then, not presume to separate what God has thus united."

- Charles Simeon

"Who ever heard a dry sermon from Simeon's lips?"

- Canon Abner Brown
(about Charles Simeon)



Plan to Listen

3. He emphasized that truth lies in both extremes.
 - a. John 5:40 vs. John 6:44
 - b. Antinomy or paradox?
 - c. Example: Christological controversy
- E. His disciplined private life
 1. Daily meditation
 2. Effect on character

“He takes his religion from the Bible and endeavors, as much as possible, to speak what that speaks.”

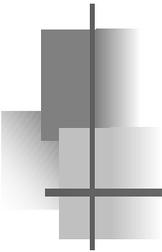
– **Charles Simeon**
(about himself)

“Man is responsible. God is sovereign...the truth lies in both extremes.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

“He became a great man of God, sanctified by the grace of God, from a very unpromising start in his character and his disposition. And may God’s grace do the same with us.”

– **John R. W. Stott**
(of Charles Simeon)



Pause to Reflect

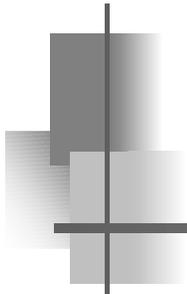
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. Review the five characteristics of Charles Simeon that shaped his ministry and allowed God to use him with effectiveness? Which of those characteristics do you think are most critical in Christian leaders today? Why?
2. Summarize Simeon's attitude toward human theological systems. Do you agree or disagree with his view? Explain.

Application for Life:

3. In what ways are you currently disciplining yourself grow in your spiritual maturity? Are your disciplines proving fruitful? Why or why not? What are some things you might add or change to encourage this growth?
4. Does the life of Charles Simeon inspire you? Explain why or why not. Look for at least one or two concrete action steps that you should take today to be more faithful in or prepare for your ministry.

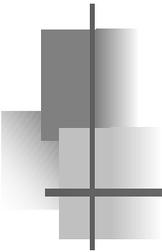


Lesson Fourteen

PART FIVE: Characteristics of Biblical Preaching

Characteristics of Biblical Preaching I:

Accuracy, Relevance & Courage



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

How should we describe “good” preaching? Inspiring? Convicting? Motivational? Biblical? True? In this lesson, Dr. Stott begins a two-part presentation of the most important characteristics of true biblical preaching. Here, he explains the necessity of accuracy, relevance and courage. He laments that evangelical preaching is often viewed as dry and irrelevant—impressions that cause the Gospel to lose its impact. He points out that evangelicals ought to be the most compelling preachers because they have the highest view of Scripture. These things require the preacher to work very hard, but if we want our message to be heard and to impact lives we must accept the responsibility.

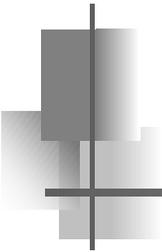
“It is of supreme importance that the congregation we serve and to whom we preach recognize our conscientious submission to the authority of Scripture. They need to be able to see, to hear, and to feel that our personal faith is determined by Scripture and our personal life is nourished by Scripture.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Describe the first three of six marks, which should characterize all true biblical preaching and apply them to your preaching.
- Explain how one’s view of Scripture impacts the way one approaches its message and presents that message to others.
- Understand how pastors can encourage their congregations to exercise their own critical abilities in studying the Bible without just being suspicious.
- Explain the importance of relevance in preaching to both contemporary issues and Eternal Truth.
- Apply practical suggestions on how to preach with clarity and simplicity.



Prepare to Discover

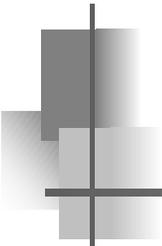
Before you listen to this lecture, take a few minutes to think about and answer the following questions. Think critically and carefully regarding **your beliefs about “good” preaching**. Open yourself to what God wants you to learn and how he wants to work in your life.

Instructions: In this lesson, Dr. Stott presents three characteristics of true biblical preaching: Accuracy, Relevance and Courage. Before listening to the lectures, describe **your initial impression** of what each characteristic means for preaching. What does it look like for preaching to be “accurate,” “relevant” and “courageous”?

1. Accuracy:

2. Relevance:

3. Courage:



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL PREACHING I: Accuracy, Relevance & Courage

I. Accuracy

- A. Our treatment of Scripture coincides with our view of Scripture.
- B. *The Moon and Sixpence*
- C. Paul and Scripture (2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2)
- D. Public demonstration of submission to scripture
 - 1. Encouraging a critical but not suspicious congregation
 - 2. The preacher's role (Matt. 23:8-10)
 - 3. The congregation's role (1 John 4:1; 1 Thess. 5)
 - 4. The goal (Heb. 5:14)
 - 5. Example: John 20:23
- E. Simplicity: C.S. Lewis on writing
 - 1. Make your sentence clear; make sure it couldn't mean anything else.
 - 2. Prefer plain, direct words.
 - 3. Never use abstract nouns.
 - 4. Don't use adjectives to tell the reader how to respond; use them to make him respond.
 - 5. Don't use words too big for the subject.

II. Relevance

- A. Truth and timeliness

"Evangelical preachers should be conspicuously the best preachers in the visible church of Christ."

– **John R. W. Stott**

"If we are teaching our congregation regularly from Scripture, we should, as it were, take them into our confidence. Not lay down the law from an unassailable position of authority, but let them into the secrets of our exegesis..."

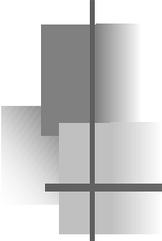
– **John R. W. Stott**

"To make easy things hard is every man's work, but to make hard things easy is the work of a great preacher."

– **Archbishop Ussher**

"I'm afraid there is only one secret of learning simplicity, and that's hard work."

– **John R. W. Stott**



Plan to Listen

B. Themes

1. Handle contemporary issues
2. Handle eternal questions

C. Language

1. Appropriateness of biblical language
2. Need for translation

D. Learn to listen

III. Courage

A. Preaching hard truths

1. False prophets (Jer. 23:16-17; Lam. 2:14)
2. False teachers (Gal. 5:11)
3. True teachers (Gal. 6:12; 1 Cor. 2:3)

B. A word of caution

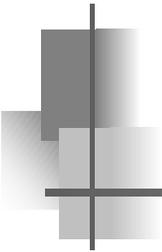
(Continued in the next lesson)

“The best preachers are nearly always the best pastors. They are relevant in their speaking because they are sensitive in their listening.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

“Although we must preach the depravity of man and the wrath of God, we must also preach the dignity of man and the love of God.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Pause to Reflect

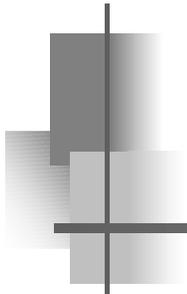
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. In your own words, describe the characteristics of accuracy, relevance and courage as they pertain to preaching. Which one do you think is most critical in the church today, particularly where you live and minister?
2. What does Dr. Stott mean when he says the congregation should be “critical” of what the pastor says but not “suspicious”? How can a preacher encourage this?

Application for Life:

3. Looking again at the characteristics discussed here, which ones do you do well? Which ones have been a struggle? How might you improve in these areas?
4. Are there any “hard truths” that you might be inclined to avoid in your teaching? Explore the reasons for this hesitancy (e.g., a need for approval, the culture of your church, uncertainty in your own beliefs, etc.), and identify how you might proceed in your preaching/teaching ministry more courageously.

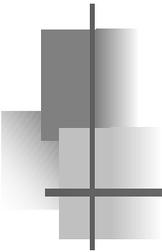


Lesson Fifteen

PART FIVE: Characteristics of Biblical Preaching

Characteristics of Biblical Preaching II:

Authority, Sincerity & Humility



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Continuing to describe true biblical preaching, Dr. Stott offers three more vital characteristics: authority, sincerity, and humility. The majority of this lesson focuses on the nature and limits of a preacher's authority: *What is this authority and how far does it go?* In the next lesson, he finishes the last two characteristics and provides a summary of all six. Here, listeners find that the anti-authority mentality in some societies has caused preachers to offer only suggestions and insights rather than the authoritative words of God. However, Stott argues that authority is crucial to preaching, and that it is, in fact, what most people want! At the same time, he acknowledges its limits and emphasizes that preaching is a dialogue.

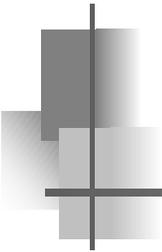
“It is our job as preachers to penetrate their walls of defense, to arouse their interest, to deepen it into a concern, to stimulate their mind, to disturb their conscience, and to whet their mental, moral, and spiritual appetite to get answers to questions which they had never asked before.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Define ways in which preachers can preach with divine authority rather than human authority.
- Understand how many cultures challenge the authority of pastors and their preaching.
- Distinguish between dogma and dogmatism and explore ways this should affect preaching.
- Distinguish between biblical revelation and human speculation and explore when to be dogmatic and when to be agnostic in your teaching.
- Describe how preaching should be a dialogue, and offer biblical examples of dialogical teaching.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL PREACHING II: Authority, Sincerity & Humility

(Continued from previous lesson)

IV. Authority

- A. Even people who resist authority want it in some ways.
- B. Distinguish between divine and human authority (Ezek. 2, 3).
- C. Distinguish between dogma and dogmatism.
- D. Distinguish between revelation and speculation.

- 1. Acts 1:7
- 2. Secret things and revealed things

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children that we may do the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29).

- a. Dogmatic and agnostic?
 - b. The shaded area
- E. Preaching is dialogical.
- 1. Engage the audience.
 - 2. “None Shall Sleep” (*The Guardian*, a British publication)
 - 3. Biblical warrant
 - a. The purpose of biblical parables
 - i. Nathan’s parable (2 Sam. 12:1-4)
 - ii. Jesus’ parable of the tenants (Matt. 21:33-45)
 - b. The apostles’ preaching (Acts 18:4)
 - 4. Be sensitive to (and anticipate) questions and objections.
 - 5. Provoke the right questions.

“Authority is something which men at once resent and crave.”

– **P. T. Forsythe**

“Scripture is silent, either wholly or partially, on many perplexing problems that tease our minds today.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

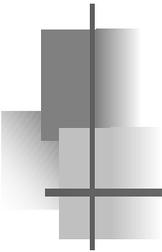
“It is as much a sign of maturity to say ‘I don’t know’, as it is to say, ‘I know,’ provided you’re saying them about the right things.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

“While the preacher alone is speaking, there should be an active interplay between the mind of the preacher and the minds of the listeners because he is speaking to their condition and he is answering their unspoken questions.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

Dialeptomai (Gr. διαλέγομαι): “discuss”



Plan to Listen

V. Sincerity

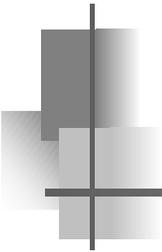
NOTE: The need for authenticity (e.g. Billy Graham)

Two marks of sincerity:

(Continued in the next lesson)

“Authenticity gets across from deep down inside people and the momentary insincerity can cast doubt on all that has made for communication up to that point. What communicates now is basically personal authenticity.”

– **John Poulton**



Pause to Reflect

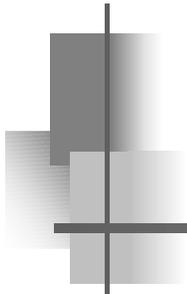
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. Describe in your own words the way preachers should be both dogmatic and agnostic? How should this be practiced?
2. What does Dr. Stott mean by “preaching is dialogical”? Summarize this in your own words, and comment on any agreement or disagreement you have.

Application for Life:

3. Reflect on your attitude toward authority. How has this affected your spiritual life and ministry (either positively or negatively)? Do you relate to the tendency of many to both resist authority but desire it at the same time?
4. Brainstorm *concrete* ways you can make your preaching more dialogical and how you might begin incorporating these things into your preaching style?

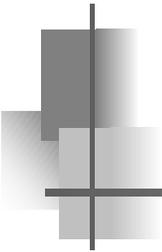


Lesson Sixteen

PART SIX: The Practice of Preaching

The Practice of Preaching I:

Sincerity & Humility (cont.) & Sermon Preparation



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, Dr. Stott discusses sincerity and humility—the final two characteristics of true biblical preaching—and emphasizes that both intense studying and spiritual freshness are required for faithful and effective preaching. He then moves into “the practice of preaching” and the very practical topic of sermon preparation. He first describes in some detail the process that preachers should use in choosing sermon topics and several factors that should play into these decisions. A lot goes into preparing sermons, especially if one wants to avoid last minute preparation, weak application and burn out. Here, Dr. Stott offers experienced insight into what for many is the daily grind of being a biblical preacher.

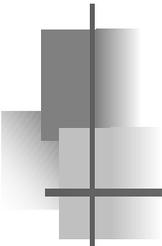
“If we’re bored with our preparation, they’re certain to be bored with our delivery.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Consider the impact a person’s actions and lifestyle will have on the effectiveness of his preaching.
- Describe the importance of preaching with heart, solemnity, and a proper use of humor to effectively and appropriately communicate the message of God’s Word.
- List three qualities that will evidence humility in a preacher of the Word.
- Summarize and explain six characteristics of true biblical preaching.
- Explain the process of choosing a sermon topic and text.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE PRACTICE OF PREACHING I: Sincerity & Humility (cont.) & Sermon Preparation

(Continued from previous lesson)

Two marks of sincerity:

A. Consistency of conduct

1. Acts 20:28
2. 1 Tim. 4:12
3. Baxter – *The Reformed Pastor*
4. “Orthopraxis”

B. Earnestness of manner

1. Preaching with heart and solemnity
2. What is the place of humor in the pulpit?

VI. Humility

A. A humble determination to submit to Scripture

B. A humble desire not to come between the Lord and his people

1. The danger of being a middleman
2. The conductor Otto Klemperer

C. A humble dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit

1. Preparation is important but insufficient.
2. The “no man cans” (1 Cor. 12:3; John 6:34)

Summary of the Six Characteristics of Preaching

- The Need for Hard Study
- The Need for Spiritual Freshness

“He that means as he speaks will surely do as he speaks.”

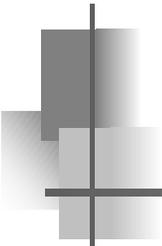
– **Richard Baxter**

“The doctrine of Christ is like the sun. You cannot separate its light from its warmth. I cannot bring a gospel that is only light; I must, at the same time, be something that warms the heart and soul and heals human wounds.”

– **Cardinal Suenens**

“None of our learning, our eloquence, our personality and power, none of these things can have a lasting effect unless the Spirit is working through them in carrying the Word home.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Plan to Listen

SERMON PREPARATION

I. Choosing the Subject

- A. When to choose?
- B. Who chooses?
- C. How to choose?
 - 1. The pastoral factor
 - NOTE: Controversial topics
 - 2. The personal factor
 - a. Mark 4:24 (Luke 8:18)
 - b. Capture moments of illumination
 - 3. The national factor
 - a. Religious festivals and church calendar
 - b. Current issues

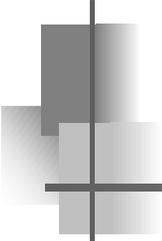
II. Studying the Text

- A. Distant preparation
- B. Immediate preparation
- C. What does it mean?
- D. What does it say?

(Continued in the next lesson)

“Every text has a meaning in and of itself and a message for contemporary man. It’s not enough to elucidate the meaning. You’ve got to go on to struggle to discern its message for today.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Pause to Reflect

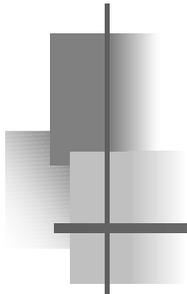
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. In your own words, describe the characteristics of sincerity and humility as they pertain to preaching. How do you think they help preachers today reach people effectively?
2. Explain the process Dr. Stott suggests for choosing sermon topics (be sure to comment on the pastoral, personal, and national factors). What do you think of this process?

Application for Life:

3. Reflect on your life in light of the characteristics of sincerity and humility. What do you do well in these areas, and what do you struggle with? Explore what God may want to do in your life through this.
4. What does Dr. Stott mean by a preacher's "luminous thoughts"? Where do you suppose such thoughts come from? What do you do when you have them? Think through how you can best capture those moments and put them to use in your teaching for the benefit of others.

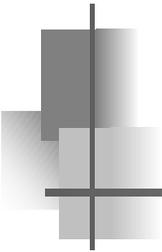


Lesson Seventeen

PART SIX: The Practice of Preaching

The Practice of Preaching II:

Sermon Preparation (cont.) & Delivery



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Sermon style and delivery is perhaps the most familiar aspect of preaching for most people because it is exposed to the congregation. Is there a right or wrong way to preach? Should we stick to a well-crafted script or “let the Spirit lead”? In this lesson, Dr. Stott continues his discussion on sermon preparation and moves into sermon delivery. Drawing on his extensive personal experience and informed convictions, Dr. Stott gives several suggestions to preachers. Among his more straightforward advice, he advocates that preachers should have a fully written manuscript of their sermons for at least the first ten years of their ministry. However, he recognizes the risk of being a slave to one’s script as well. Listeners explore ways to balance this need for preparation and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

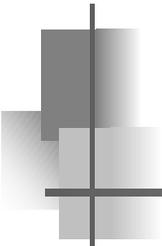
“Self is the greatest enemy of the preacher, more so than in the case of any other man in society, and the only way to deal with self is to be so taken up with, so enraptured by, the glory of what you’re doing, that you will forget yourself altogether.”

Martyn Lloyd Jones

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Apply Dr. Stott’s approach of meditating on a text of Scripture until you find the core message to be preached to your congregation.
- Shape sermon material through a careful application of the principles of elimination, division, and illustration.
- Prepare appropriate introductions and conclusions to your messages.
- Understand the importance of applying precise language when communicating the message to your audience.
- Begin to learn an effective preaching style that focuses on the message, the congregation, and God instead of on self.
- Evaluate reasons for writing your sermons in full prior to preaching.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE PRACTICE OF PREACHING II: Sermon Preparation (cont.) & Delivery

(Continued from previous lesson)

III. Isolating the Message

- A. Meditation on the text to let the dominant theme emerge
- B. Impact of the theme on the preacher
- C. The next step (shaping the material) is dependent on this step.

IV. Shaping the Material

- A. Elimination
- B. Division
- C. Illustration
- D. The head and the tail

V. Writing the Sermon

Three arguments for writing sermons:

- A. The Holy Spirit's example – Inspiration (1 Cor 2:13)
- B. Our own laziness
- C. The needs of other people
 - 1. Closed minds
 - 2. Stale minds
 - 3. Leaky minds
 - 4. Untrained minds

VI. Praying Over the Message

“A sermon with too many illustrations is like a woman with too many jewels...The jewels which were originally intended to enhance the figure hide it.”

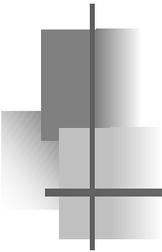
– **Theodore Parker Ferris**

“It is impossible to convey a precise message to people if you do not clothe it in precise words.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

“We've got to find new and pungent words by which to say the same old truths to the same old people.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Plan to Listen

SERMON DELIVERY

I. What we take in the pulpit

- A. Variety in practice
- B. Variety in personality/gifting
- C. Avoid the extremes
 - 1. Bondage to the script
 - 2. Extemporaneous preaching
- D. The freedom in between

II. How We Speak

- A. The rule: Be yourself.
- B. Avoid contrived gestures.
- C. Be unself-conscious.
- D. Appoint lay critics.

“He who has a good friend needs no mirror.”

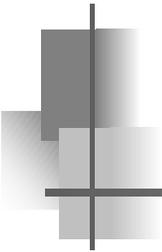
– **Anonymous man**
(from Karela, India)

“Genuinely extemporaneous preaching is a very rare phenomenon, and I venture to say, a very dangerous phenomenon. There are very few, if any, men who are so gifted by God that they can clothe their thoughts with words spontaneously.”

– **John R. W. Stott**

“The ideal of biblical preaching is to be unself-conscious...We’re so taken up with our message, so taken up with the people to whom we are declaring it, to whom we are longing to get it across, so taken up, too, with the Lord in whose presence we are preaching and to whom we are responsible, that there is simply no room left for self-consciousness.”

– **John R. W. Stott**



Pause to Reflect

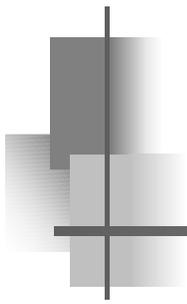
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. Describe in your own words how Dr. Stott says preachers should “isolate the message”. What challenges do you think preachers face in this process, and how can you overcome them?
2. Compare and contrast the two extremes of sermon delivery as described in the lecture. What balance do you think is best?

Application for Life:

3. Dr. Stott emphasizes that in sermon preparation and delivery there are different approaches for people of different gifts and talents. Consider your own gifts and abilities, what has worked for you, and what has not. Briefly describe what might be the best approach for you to take in preparation and delivery.
4. Consider the concept of being “unself-conscious” in preaching. Have you ever experienced this? What needs to happen for you to be more focused on the message and the congregation than on your self as you preach or teach?

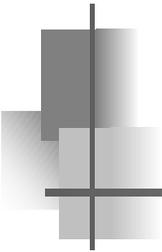


Lesson Eighteen

PART SEVEN: Illustrations of Biblical Preaching

Illustrations of Biblical Preaching I:

Verses & Short Paragraphs



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Sometimes to learn something you have to watch someone else do it. That's the purpose of this next two-part series, "Illustrations of Biblical Preaching." In this lesson, Dr. Stott gives several examples of how to outline and preach single verses and short paragraphs. He demonstrates how a single verse can be used to summarize an entire book or how a short line can teach an essential doctrine, like the nature of Heaven. Be sure to have your Bible handy as Dr. Stott talks through these sermon skeletons, offering advice and explaining why he does what he does. As he teaches how he would preach on these various texts, listeners are sure to be encouraged by his insight and experience.

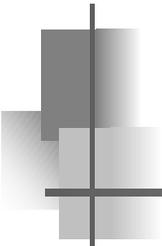
“When you enter a spiritual time of darkness, in which the light of God’s presence is withdrawn and the soul gets cold and lonely and frightened, the thing to do is to wait eagerly for the morning. That is, don’t get so accustomed to the dark that you can accept it as a permanent state. Look forward eagerly to the dawn.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Craft a spiritually powerful sermon from a single verse or short passage of Scripture.
- Identify key components to successfully communicating biblical truths to a congregation.
- Choose texts of Scripture that can be applied to listener’s needs both individually, culturally, and within the Church body.
- Apply verses or short passages of Scripture in such a way as to cause the congregation to make a decision to act instead of just listen and move on.
- Understand how to apply the discipline of meditation on your chosen text until you receive from the Holy Spirit the core of the message to be delivered.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLICAL PREACHING I: Verses & Short Paragraphs

Introduction

The rationale and purpose of these illustrations is to show how to expand Scripture properly.

- A. Not just a lecture—but a sermon
- B. Not just verse-by-verse exposition—but enabling people to grasp the overriding message, feel its impact, and bow to its authority

EXAMPLE 1 – Matthew 5:9, “Peacemaking”

I. Introduction

II. What is the Relationship Between Being a Peacemaker and Being a Son of God?

- A. What it does *not* mean
- B. God as the Divine Peacemaker

III. What Can We Learn About Peacemaking?

- A. The condition: We must be at peace ourselves.
- B. The character: We must take the initiative.
Follow God’s example.
- C. The cost: peace through pain
 - 1. Not appeasement
 - 2. Give examples.

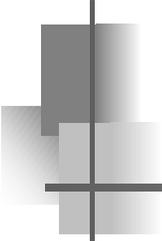
IV. Conclusion (Close the Escape Routes)

- A. This describes every Christian.
- B. Are you a child of God?

Matthew 5:9: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God”

“Christian peacemaking is not the same as appeasement. It is not peace at any price. It is peace through pain. It is costly peace. And, the divine prototype makes this plain. God made peace through the blood of Christ’s cross.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

EXAMPLE 2 – Psalm 130:5-6, “Waiting for the LORD”

I. Introduction

- A. Spiritual disappointment
- B. False cures

II. Finding the Major Cause

- A. Sin and guilt (v. 1)
- B. Failure to wait

III. The Night Watchman Waits *Eagerly* For the Morning.

- A. Illustration: The experience of night
 - 1. Cold
 - 2. Loneliness
 - 3. Fear
- B. Do not get accustomed to the darkness.

IV. The Night Watchman Waits *Confidently* For the Morning.

- A. The certainty of the sunrise
- B. The greater certainty of God’s faithfulness
 - 1. The Psalmist’s hope (v. 5)
 - 2. Hosea 6:3

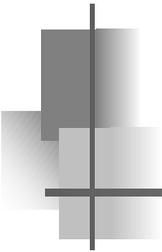
V. The Night Watchman Waits *Patiently* For the Morning.

- A. The ineffectiveness of impatience
- B. The need for patient trust (Hebrews 6:12)
- C. The problem of an “instant” culture
 - 1. Unsatisfied “instant” Christians
 - 2. A call to counter-cultural living

Psalm 130:5-6: “I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.”

“I believe that a major cause of spiritual malaise in the whole Church today is a failure to wait for the Lord.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

EXAMPLE 3 – Revelation 7:15, “Heaven and How to Get There”

I. Death and Foolish Ignorance

II. What is Heaven Like?

- A. The first answer: “We don’t know.”

A warning against literalist presumption

- B. The popular answer (v. 16-17): No more hunger, thirst, etc.

A true but negative, individualistic description

- C. The essential biblical doctrine of Heaven: *The presence of the throne of God*

III. How Do We Get There?

- A. “Therefore” (v. 15)

- B. The cleansing blood of the Lamb

- C. The Great Tribulation (describes the Christian life)

1. John 16:33
2. Acts 14:22
3. 1 Thessalonians 3:4
4. Revelation 1:9

- D. A brief description of the great company of the redeemed

EXAMPLE 4 – Galatians 6:14, “Glory in the Cross”

I. What Does It Mean to “Glory” in Something?

II. The Teaching of Galatians About the Cross

We glory in the cross because:

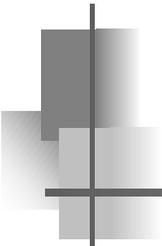
- A. It is the way of our acceptance—the wonder of the Atonement (3:13-14).

Revelation 7:15: “Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.”

“The essential biblical doctrine of heaven is not the absence of sorrow, suffering, and sin, but the cause of these absences: namely, the presence, the central, overshadowing, dominating, irresistible presence of the throne of God.”

– John R. W. Stott

Galatians 6:14: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”



Plan to Listen

B. It is the pattern of our self-denial (6:14).

NOTE: Two Crucifixions (cf. 5:24)

C. It is the substance of our witness (3:1).

III. Conclusion – Are We Glorifying in the Cross Today?

EXAMPLE 5 – Matthew 11:25-30, “Come unto Me”

I. Examine Matthew 11:28 in Context

A. Who is this “me”?

B. Jesus is speaking (v. 25-27).

II. Two Tremendous Assertions:

A. Only the Son reveals the Father (v. 27).

B. God is only revealed to babies (v. 25).

III. Two Tremendous Invitations:

A. “Come to me.”

B. “Take my yoke upon you.”

The Exchange:

1. A misfit yoke and a heavy burden (sin and guilt)
2. An easy yoke and a light burden (Christian discipleship)

IV. Conclusion – The Balanced Invitation of Christ

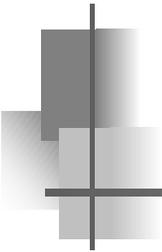
“The cross in the Christians experience is not just as a cross of Christ through which we are accepted. It is a pattern for our own self-denial.”

– John R. W. Stott

Matthew 11:25-30: “At that time Jesus said, ‘I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’”

“Rest is found not only in losing our burden, but rest is found also in gaining Christ’s burden.”

– John R. W. Stott



Pause to Reflect

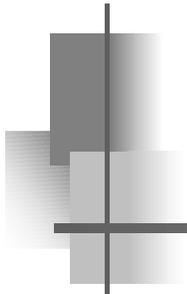
Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. What observations can you make from the example sermons in this lecture? Select one example and describe how/why Stott outlined it the way he did (e.g., by sentence structure, flow of thoughts, etc.). How is this approach helpful as you consider preaching on single verses or short paragraphs? Comment on any advantages or disadvantages you see in preaching on short passages.
2. Explain in your own words the two distinctions made in the introduction to this lecture. How is this helpful? Do you have any remaining questions?

Application for Life:

3. Using the teaching in this lecture as a guide, choose a beatitude (from Matt. 5:3-12) other than the one Dr. Stott used, and prepare a sermon outline based on the verse you choose. Comment on your experience.
4. Reflect on the actual messages of these sermons. What points of application do you see for your own life?

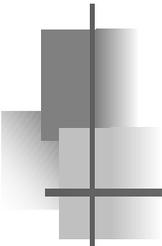


Lesson Nineteen

PART SEVEN: Illustrations of Biblical Preaching

Illustrations of Biblical Preaching II:

Long Paragraphs, Chapters & Books



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

Have you ever thought of how you would preach on the entire book of Job in one sermon? What about the book of Habakkuk? In this lesson, Dr. Stott continues to demonstrate how to formulate sermons but here looks specifically at longer paragraphs, chapters and even entire books. As Dr. Stott recognizes, some passages are best taken as a whole rather than broken up, and he takes listeners through several examples: three paragraphs, one chapter, and two books. These illustrations come from the Gospels, Epistles, Psalms and two Old Testament books and show listeners how to find the unifying theme of a long passage in order to communicate that message clearly.

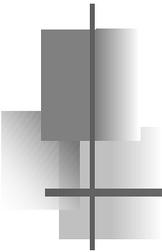
“God has not answered Job’s questions. He has not solved the problem of suffering. He has not unlocked the mystery. He has simply revealed Himself as the God of wisdom, power, and love. And He has asked for Job’s trust.”

John R. W. Stott

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Cite principles that can be applied in choosing whether to preach on a verse, a chapter, a longer passage, or an entire book.
- Explain what is meant by the “natural unity” of a passage and why understanding that unity is necessary in preparing to teach on the passage.
- Apply several principles on sermon preparation as you approach longer passages of Scripture, including entire books of the Bible.
- Understand the importance of application and encouragement in crafting the conclusion to sermons on longer texts.



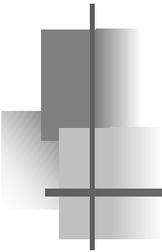
Prepare to Discover

Before you listen to this lecture, take a few minutes to think about and answer the following questions. Think critically and carefully regarding **your approach to preaching on long paragraphs, chapters, and books**. Open yourself to what God wants you to learn and how he wants to work in your life.

1. If you had to preach or teach on a long section of Scripture (i.e. an entire book), how would you condense the material down to one sermon so that you can apply it effectively to your listeners and stay faithful to the message of that book? What advantages and disadvantages do you see in covering this much material at one time? (Suggestion: If you have never done this, you may want to try a book to see what it takes.)

2. What takes the most your time and attention in sermon preparation? Studying the text? Creating an outline? Finding illustrations? Writing the introduction or conclusion? Other? Are you satisfied with this approach?

3. Think of a sermon you have heard recently. What was powerful about the message? How might you have treated the subject matter differently if you were giving the sermon? Why?



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLICAL PREACHING II: Long Paragraphs, Chapters & Books

Introduction

- A. Some passages need to be taken as a whole and not in isolated verses.
- B. We must find the unity that is there not impose an artificial unity.

EXAMPLE 1 – Luke 14:25-33

I. Preliminary Considerations

- A. The theme: the cost of discipleship
- B. The context: the great multitudes (v. 25)

II. The Cost of Discipleship

- A. Christ comes before family relations.
- B. Christ comes before our ambitions.
- C. Christ comes before our possessions.

III. Ending the Sermon

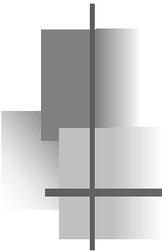
- A. It is unwise to end on such a negative note.
- B. Jesus balanced this teaching in context.

IV. The Positive Reasons to be a Disciple

- A. The compensation: a great banquet (v. 15-24)
- B. The privilege: to be the salt of the earth (v. 34-35)
- C. The cross of Christ: We take a cross because He took the cross (v. 27).

“He (Jesus) is asking a cross for a cross. He is asking from us no more than He was willing to give for us. It’s when we have glimpsed the cross of Christ that we are willing to bear the cost of discipleship.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

EXAMPLE 2 – Mark 10:17-22

I. Introduction

- A. The person of the rich young ruler
- B. His quest: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”
 1. Few people ask that today.
 2. However, many seek quality of life.
 3. Eternal life is a life worth living.

II. Learn From the Rich Young Ruler’s Mistakes.

- A. He didn’t understand Jesus.
 1. He called Jesus a “good teacher”.
 2. Address defective views of Christ.
- B. He didn’t understand himself.
 1. His profession of innocence
 2. Jesus’ selectively quotes the commandments.
 - a. Omits #10: The man’s problem was covetousness.
 - b. Omits #1-4: The man’s god was money.
 3. This is a common problem today.
- C. He didn’t understand life.
 1. He chose wealth over Christ
 2. Life is found in Christ

III. Therefore, To Attain Eternal Life We Must:

- A. Understand ourselves (less hypocrisy).
- B. Understand Jesus (Son of God, Savior of men).
- C. Understand the meaning of life (following Jesus).

The Rich Young Ruler’s Mistakes:

- He didn’t understand **Jesus**.
- He didn’t understand **himself**.
- He didn’t understand **life**.

Plan to Listen

EXAMPLE 3 – 1 Peter 2:1-11

I. The Descriptive Metaphors of His Readers:

- A. “Like newborn babies” (v. 2)
- B. “Like living stones” (v. 4-5)
- C. “A holy priesthood” (v. 5)
- D. “A chosen race...a holy nation” (v. 9)
- E. “Like aliens and exiles” (v. 11)

II. The Corresponding Obligations

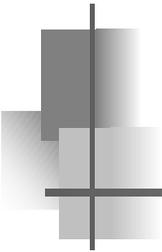
- A. Newborns: the duty to grow
- B. Living stones: the duty of fellowship
- C. Holy priests: the duty of sacrifice
NOTE: Clarify that Christian sacrifice is worship.
- D. Holy nation: the duty to witness
- E. Aliens and exiles: the duty to be holy

III. The Unifying Link: The Call to Be Who We Are

- A. Ask the impelling questions:
 - 1. Are you reborn? Yes, then...
 - 2. Are you a living stone in the building? Yes, then...
 - 3. Has God made you a priest? Yes, then...
 - 4. Has God made us His people? Yes, then...
 - 5. Are we aliens and exiles? Yes, then...
- B. A good illustration – the Duke of Windsor

IV. Conclusion - A Reminder

<u>Metaphors</u>	<u>Duties</u>
Newborn babies	Growth
Living stone	Fellowship
Holy priests.....	Worship
Holy nation	Witness



Plan to Listen

EXAMPLE 4 – Psalm 95

I. The Two Invitations:

- A. Worship
- B. Hear God's Word

II. The Invitation to Worship

- A. It is addressed to one another.
- B. The worship is twofold.
 - 1. Make a joyful noise (v. 1).
 - 2. Bow down (v. 6).
- C. The cause of the difference:
 - 1. God is great in creation—Jubilance.
 - 2. God is great as our God in condescension—Humility.

III. An Invitation to Hear His Voice (A Pendulum Swing)

- A. God speaks in His Word.
- B. We speak in our worship.

EXAMPLE 6 – The Book of Job

I. Preliminary Considerations

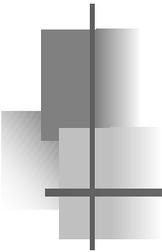
- A. Job cannot be divided.
- B. The theme is suffering.

II. Introduction

- A. The problem of suffering
- B. The story of job's calamity

“First we hear God's Word as He speaks to us; and then we speak back to Him in worship – worship that is evoked by His Word. The worship of God is evoked by the Word of God.”

– John R. W. Stott



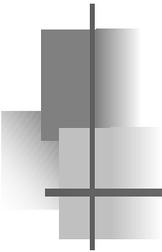
Plan to Listen

III. Various Responses to Suffering

- A. Self-pity: the response of Job
 - 1. Job had amazing courage at first.
 - 2. Then he lost control (3:3).
 - 3. Job responds in many ways but settles on self-pity.
 - a. He remembers his former prosperity.
 - b. He contrasts his past with his present.
 - 4. This response, though understandable, is wrong.
- B. Self-accusation: the response suggested by the friends
 - 1. They told Job to look at his sins.
 - 2. They believed sickness was always due to personal sin.
 - 3. They told Job he was getting less than he deserved.
 - 4. Granted, Scripture supports some of their reasoning, but they are wrong.
- C. Self-discipline: the attitude recommended by Elihu
 - 1. God as teacher, not judge
 - 2. Chastening, not punishing
 - 3. This view is Scriptural.
- D. Self-surrender: the attitude demanded by God
 - 1. God interrogates Job (ch. 38).
 - 2. Job cannot respond.
 - 3. God questions him again (ch. 40-41).
 - 4. Job humbles himself (ch. 42).

Reactions to Suffering in Job:

- Job: Self-pity
- Friends: Self-accusation
- Elihu: Self-discipline
- God: Self-surrender



Plan to Listen

IV. Conclusion

- A. God does not answer Job's questions; He asks for Job's trust.
- B. If Job could trust God, how much more can we who have seen God in Jesus Christ!

EXAMPLE 7 – The Book of Habakkuk

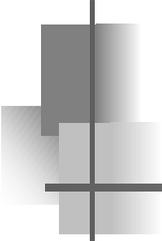
I. Introduction

- A. The problem of evil
- B. Habakkuk's situation
 - 1. He is a contemporary of Jeremiah.
 - 2. Jehoiakim, a wicked king, is on the throne.
 - 3. The nation is wicked and lawless (1:1-4).

II. The Dialogue

- A. Habakkuk's cry:
 - 1. Why?
 - 2. How long?
- B. God's reply:
 - 1. God is not inactive (1:5-11).
 - 2. God is raising up the Babylonians to judge Israel.

NOTE: They are a ruthless and wicked people.
- C. Habakkuk's second question: How can God use these people who are even more wicked to judge Israel? (1:13)
- D. God's second reply
 - 1. The vision will be slow to happen, but you must wait (2:3).

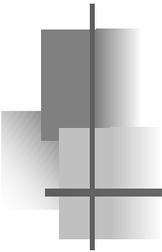


Plan to Listen

2. The righteous will live by faith (2:4).
3. The contrast

III. Application for Today

- A. We live in a similar situation.
- B. Various views of history
- C. In the Christian view, history has meaning and has a goal.
- D. Two reasons why we trust, wait, and live by faith:
 1. God works in judgment and salvation.
 2. God works slowly.



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

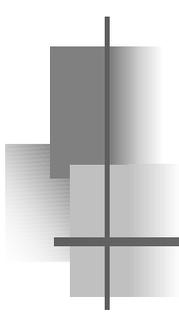
Understanding the Content:

1. What observations can you make from the example sermons in this lecture? Select one example and describe how/why Stott outlined it the way he did (e.g., by sections, paragraphs, flow of thought, etc.). How is this approach helpful to you? Comment on any advantages or disadvantages you see in preaching on long sections of Scripture.
2. Why does Stott advise against ending a sermon on a negative note? Do agree with him? Why or why not?

Application for Life:

3. Using the teaching in this lecture as a guide, choose a biblical book other than Job and Habakkuk, and prepare a sermon outline. Comment on your experience.
4. Reflect on the actual messages of these sermons. What points of application do you see for your own life?

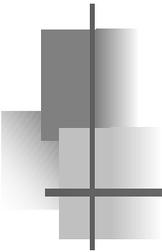
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Lesson Twenty

PART EIGHT: Prerequisite of Biblical Preaching

The Preacher's Discipline in Study



Prepare to Discover

Lesson Overview

In his final lecture, Dr. Stott emphasizes a major prerequisite of biblical preaching: *disciplined study in the pastorate*. There are two basic principles he feels are important to affirm: first, that the pastoral ministry is a teaching ministry, and second, that teaching is impossible without study. In order to help those aspiring to or already in the pastorate, Dr. Stott answers the “what,” “when” and “how” of disciplined study. Any person desiring to have a more effective ministry and more efficient study will benefit from Dr. Stott’s candid advice based on his years of experience.

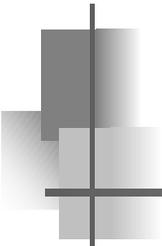
“Learn to study for the sake of truth. Learn to think for the profit and the joy of thinking and then your sermon shall be like the leaping of a fountain and not like the pumping of a pump.”

Phillips Brooks

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson you should be able to:

- Understand and defend the necessity of disciplined study and learning in multiple arenas throughout a pastor’s life and ministry.
- Identify at least five areas of reading and/or learning that a preacher should engage on a continuing basis.
- Evaluate your own study habits and determine where improvements can be made.
- Plan and implement a personal reading or study program that will strengthen and enhance your preaching ministry.



Plan to Listen

Lecture Outline

THE PREACHER'S DISCIPLINE IN STUDY

Introduction

- A. The “labor” of preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17)
 - 1. A severe and exhausting burden (*kopiao*)
 - 2. The labor is in the preparation as much as in the delivery.
- B. Examples of disciplined study
 - 1. J.B. Lightfoot
 - 2. Billy Graham: *“I’ve preached too much and studied too little.”*

I. What Should We Study/Read?

- A. Five areas of reading coverage
 - 1. Biblical
 - a. Read through the Bible annually.
 - b. Danger of distinguishing between Bible study and devotional reading
 - 2. Theological
 - 3. Historical
 - 4. Devotional
 - 5. Secular
- B. Reading selection
 - 1. Book reviews
 - 2. Newly-published books
 - 3. Talk to friends.

1 Timothy 5:17: “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”

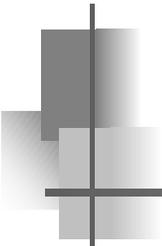
Kopiao (Gr. κοπιάω): “to make great exertions” or “to wear oneself out”

“The preacher’s life must be a life of large accumulation. He must not be always trying to make sermons, but always seeking truth. And out of the truth, which he has won, the sermons will make themselves.”

– Phillips Brooks

“We need to learn to view all truth in the light both of the whole biblical revelation and of the whole of Christian history.”

– John R. W. Stott



Plan to Listen

4. Keep a list.

C. Reading program

1. Long distance goals

2. Immediate needs

II. When Should We Study/Read?

A. Daily

B. Weekly

C. Annually

D. Occasionally (Sabbatical leave)

III. How Should We Study/Read?

A. Preview the book.

B. Work out a system of studying (keep it simple).

Conclusion – Two Basic Convictions:

A. Pastoral ministry is a teaching ministry.

B. Teaching is impossible without study.

NOTE: The congregation must share the pastor's convictions.

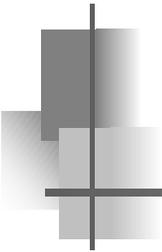
Dr. Stott's Closing Prayer

“Our Father, we are all conscious of our temptations to laziness, and also the difficulty that we have in sorting out our priorities.

We ask you to help us in this matter, when we get into a busy pastorate, to make time for study and to seek to share with the people in the church the vision that comes from your own teaching in Scripture about the church and these different ministries. We ask you for the good of the church and for the glory of your great name. Amen.”

“It's not enough to read a book. You have to reflect on it.”

– John R. W. Stott



Pause to Reflect

Reflection Questions

Understanding the Content:

1. What do you think are the most important suggestions given by Dr. Stott for creating a personal reading/study plan? What impact do you think it would have on the Church if preachers took this advice seriously?
2. Why does Dr. Stott advocate that preachers should keep up on current news, go to movies periodically, and read secular writings (both current bestsellers and classics)? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Application for Life:

3. Compare and contrast your own study and reading habits with what Dr. Stott describes as ideal for a preacher. How you might be able to improve your habits? Identify one or two concrete steps that you plan to implement.
4. As you wrap up this course, look through the lecture outlines and your notes and identify a few of the most significant thoughts, comments, pieces of advice, or instructions that you have learned. Why are they significant for you?