Prayer at beginning of lecture:

We thank You, our Father, for this fellowship in study and the exciting field which we're studying together, and we thank You again that You have dropped into our hearts a great desire to be more effective communicators of Your unchanging message for the world. Help us today stimulate our thinking, we pray. For the glory of Your name. Amen.

Well, I mentioned yesterday that we finished in the first three lectures of this course what I call The Argument about Preaching. We’ve tried to weigh the pros and cons of the contemporary debate. We’ve considered some of the factors prejudicial to preaching today and some of the reasons why preaching must remain a permanent feature of the church’s life. That was my subject yesterday.

But now we come on to the nature and purpose of preaching, that is, what exactly is this argument about? What is Christian preaching that some should take such pains to decry it and that others should want so passionately to defend it? What is the nature and purpose of Christian preaching?

Now I begin by stating the obvious, preaching is verbal communication. It is one man speaking while many are listening and yet a sermon and a lecture are not synonyms. I think I probably mentioned a week or perhaps the previous week about the person who unkindly defined a lecture as the communication of facts and the lecturer’s notes to the students without that passing through the mind of either.

But what makes a sermon essentially different from a lecture is that a Christian preacher is a middle man. He's standing before the people in the name of Christ, and he is seeking to convey to
the people not his own opinions but God’s living and abiding Word, and that’s tremendous.

Many definitions have been attempted which indicate this fundamental truth about preaching. Bishop Phillips Brooks, the episcopal bishop in the last century, the more or less evangelical Episcopal Church bishop over here, in his famous lectures on preaching says, “Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements: truth and personality. Preaching is the bringing of truth through personality. These are the elements of preaching.” Then he goes on, “Truth and personality, the truth is in itself a fixed and stable element; personality is a varying and growing element.”

Now if he had added that of course it is truth from God through personality to other personalities you got something of what I’m talking about, the sense of the preacher as a middle man standing between God and the people seeking to convey God’s truth to a human congregation.

Well, Bernard Manning, in his little book A Layman and a Ministry define preaching as a manifestation of the incarnate word from the written word by the spoken word. So here is the preacher speaking the spoken Word from Scripture (the written Word), about Christ (the Living Word), and once again you begin to have this idea of his conveying something from God to man standing between the two.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones in his great book I’ve recommended to you, Preaching and Preachers says, “Preaching should make such a difference to a man who is listening that he is never the same again.” Preaching in other words is a transaction between the preacher and the listener with something vital and living taking place. The total person is engaged on both sides. Now there’s something vital taking place, of course he would go on to explain, is the work of the Holy Spirit and the word through the preacher to the congregation. But once again you’ve got this idea of traffic or of a transaction or of something going on between God and man, and the preacher is the privileged middle man.

Now that is going to be my theme both today and for the first lecture next week, and I’ve chosen four metaphors all of which seem to me to illustrate in their different ways this fundamental truth that the preacher is a middle man who stands between God and man and through whom in His grace God comes to men to
speak to them, to confront them, to liberate them, to change them.

My first metaphor is taken from the home or the household and is the metaphor of the steward. My second metaphor is taken from civil engineering and is the metaphor of the bridge builder. Those are the two we shall look at today.

My third metaphor which is a New Testament one is taken from diplomacy and is the ambassador and my fourth from warfare and is the soldier or the Freedom Fighter. And in each of these metaphors in their different ways we get this, I think, sublime and tremendous truth of the privilege of the preacher doing something in the name of God or God doing something through him.

Well we begin then with the steward. Now the apostles Peter and Paul both employed this metaphor with regard to the ministry. Peter in his first letter, chapter 4 verses 10 and 11 where he says, “As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” Varied if I remember rightly is polypoikilos which means many colored, an adjective that is used of tapestries and carpets, God’s variegated grace, [he said “whoever”-don’t think he meant to use that word here] and then God’s variegated grace is distilled in the different gifts (the charismata) that He gives to His people, and Peter gives a very short list. “Whoever speaks there is a speaking gift as one who utters oracles of God. Whoever renders service is one who renders it by the strength which God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”

Now here all Christians are stewards of God’s grace according to their different gifts but the teacher or the speaker, this will include the presbyter (the pastor) in particular is a steward of God’s revelation, and he is commanded to speak as one who utters oracles of God. Not of course because his own speech is an inspired oracular utterance although some preachers seem to think so but rather because he is commissioned to expand Scripture, and Scripture is the oracles of God, and it is of these oracles of God that we are stewards.

That brings us to Paul’s use of the same metaphor in I Corinthians chapter 4 and the first few verses. I’ve enlarged on this in my little book The Preacher’s Portrait. The first chapter if I remember rightly is on the steward. Paul writes in I Corinthians 4, “This is how one should regard us as servants of Christ.” There the Greek is huperetes which was literally the under-oarsman, the one who
rode in the second or third tier in the old Roman galleys, a galley slave, so Christ’s underling. We are the underlings of Christ, and we’re stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. Now here we’re stewards of God’s mysteries and mysterion in the Pauline vocabulary is of course not a mystery that remains a mystery, not a dark riddle that nobody can understand. Mysterion is a truth previously concealed but now revealed. The mysteria, therefore, are not secrets but open secrets, secrets that God has revealed to His apostles and particularly here to Paul, and of these mysteries the apostles were stewards or had an abiding conviction about this. He kept referring to the Gospel as truth that had been entrusted to him, committed to him, committed to his trust as a steward. If you want some references, I Thessalonians 2 verse 4; I Timothy 1 verse 11; Titus 1 verse 3. All these refer to the Gospel as committed to his trust as a steward.

Now we too are stewards in a secondary sense. The Gospel is a paratheke. Paratheke is the deposit, a thing that has been committed or handed over to somebody which Paul had entrusted to Timothy. The word comes in I Timothy 6:20 (one of you took this partly in your preaching laboratory, was it yesterday?) and II Timothy 1 verses 12 and 14, and Timothy must entrust it to others, II Timothy 2:2. So here is the paratheke, this precious deposit of the Gospel, this revealed truth, this faith once delivered unto the sense that God revealed to the apostles like to Paul, Paul handed to Timothy, Timothy was to hand to faithful men, faithful men were to hand to others, also. This is the apostolic succession. It is not an apostolic succession of ministry and orders, it’s an apostolic successful of doctrine; the transmission of apostolic doctrine faithfully from one generation to another, and our responsibility is to receive it, to guard it, and to teach it.

So as I argue at greater length then the preacher’s portrait we are not prophets. I personally don’t believe there are any prophets in the church today who can say as the prophets constantly did say, “The Word of the Lord came to me saying...” who can claim this original revelation and inspiration because the Word of the Lord has now come, and it has been recorded or inscripturated some people like to say, and the Word does not come to us, we come to It to expand it. We are not prophets; we’re preachers, so not prophets to whom the Word of the Lord comes fresh and original today but stewards of a word spoken to prophets in time past.
I would go further and say we’re not apostles. I don’t believe there are any apostles of Christ today in the strict sense in which the word is commonly almost exclusively used in the New Testament in application to the 12 and to the apostle Paul and possibly one or two others. Apostles who were personally chastened by Christ, sent and authorized by Him to teach as His personal representatives, as his plenipotentiaries, teaching in His name and with His authority and under the inspiration of the Spirit. We are not apostles. We are recipients and transmitters of apostolic traditions, that is, of the New Testament.

Again, we’re not speculators, what in the King James Version is called “babblers.” You know, the Athenian philosopher said of the apostle Paul, “What will this babbler say?” And the Greek word for babbler there is very interesting. I go into it, I think, in the Preacher’s Portrait but it translates the word spermologos, and I don’t know how advanced you are in your Greek studies but you will know enough to know anyway that the sperm part, a spermologos is a seed and that legein from which logos comes is to pick or choose so that spermologos is a seed picker, and a seed picker, spermologos, was originally applied to birds. I think it’s Aristophanes and other Greek ancient classical Greek writers who would use it of seed-eating birds. The rook for example would pick seeds as eating them. Then it came to be applied to the gutter snipe who instead of earning a living on there because he was impoverished and couldn’t, he would go along the gutters and pick up scraps of food or go to the dust bins or trash containers, whatever you call them, and he again would pick up scraps from the dust heap. And so it came to be used of the kind of person who has no mind of his own but whose opinions are entirely stolen from other people because he picks up his knowledge from other people.

Now, the preacher today (the Christian preacher) is not be a spermologos in the sense that he simply dispenses to other people a rag bag of miscellaneous ideas that he’s called from his fellow men. On the contrary, he is a herald proclaiming a message that he has been charged to deliver by God.

Now all these, you see, are in a sense applications of the idea of stewardship that we have been given our message so that the essential duty of the steward is to be faithful to the message that he’s been given. Steward in a household was to feed the household, and he’s to feed the household with the food which the householder gives him to distribute. The steward doesn’t feed
the household from his own pocket or from his own larder; he is given the wherewithal by the householder with which to feed the household. So the Christian steward teaches the whole counsel of God. He has no authority to change it, to modify it, to manipulate it, to add to it, or to subtract from it. He passes onto the household exactly what he has received from the householder, no more, no less and nothing else. His responsibility is only to dispense what he has received.

Now P. T. Forsyth in his book *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* has something important to say about this; the idea of taking the whole Bible as a text in the preaching ministry and not picking and choosing too much. He says one of the great tasks of the preacher is to rescue the Bible from the textual idea in the mind of the public, from the Biblicist, atomist idea which reduces it to a religious scrapbook and uses it only in verses and phrases. The preacher must cultivate more the free, large and organic treatment of the Bible where each part is most valuable but its contribution to a living evangelical whole and where that whole is articulated into the great course of human history.

Now I’m not sure that he expresses it very well, but I think you understand what he means. There are too many of us preachers who convey to our congregations just our favorite snippets and our favorite texts, and they don’t get any idea of the totality of the biblical revelation. This is one of the reasons I shall come to this later in the course when I come to our study as preachers. It’s one of the reasons why we as preachers need to soak our minds in the whole of Scripture. And I shall say it then, but I might as well as anticipate it now that I believe, and actually it’s Dr. Lloyd Jones who said this to me first about 15 years ago, and I’ve tried to follow his advice ever since that a preacher who is taking his preaching seriously ought to read through the whole Bible at least once a year, and I’ll tell you more about Robert Murray M’Cheyne’s little lectionary later but he enables one to read the New Testament twice and the Old Testament once every year. And this discipline has helped me, I must say, to soak my mind in the grand themes of Scripture, and it lifts you above this little atomist Biblicist idea as if you’re only using a microscope, you know. You only see bits and pieces and you don’t get an integrated understanding of the whole and yet we with our views of the Bible and the authority and inspiration of the Bible believe that God in progressive and now completed revelation in Christ and the apostolic witness to Christ has revealed to mankind a total harmonious truth. And I think we want our congregations to get excited about these
grand biblical themes that you can trace right through Scripture. Not just in these little individual cross references that some of us were discussing yesterday but in introducing them to the themes of Scripture so that their minds are stretched. They take, for example, a promise of God to Abraham in Genesis 12 and see it successively being fulfilled when God said to Abraham He’d make his seed like the stars in the heaven and the sound on the seashore, a phrase that’s quoted repeatedly of the children of Israel in the monarchy, and then of course there begins to be that is quoted, I think I’m right in saying, by Peter in his second sermon at the end of Acts 3, and then in the Gentile mission until it is finally fulfilled in Revelation 7 when the great company of the redeemed ‘round the throne of God is a great company which no man can number. “See as many of the sand of the seashore and of the stars of the skies. See how many there are. Can you number them?” God said to Abraham. You can’t number them. They’re too many to be numbered, and that promise 2000 B.C. will be fulfilled finally in the great company of the redeemed. Now it’s that kind of theme you see that stretches the mind and fills the heart with wonder and with worship. So this is the duty of the preachers as a steward to pass on the whole counsel of God.

Now faithfulness is another word for integrity, and the preacher’s integrity lies in submitting himself, his mind, and his teaching to Scripture. Neither to his own personal presuppositions (we must beware of our own prejudices and presuppositions), we all have them, nor to the popular fashions of the day which are pressing in upon us through the mass media, but we must submit to what God has revealed in His Word.

I rather like what Jesus said. I’ll give you a little mini-sermon which you can pinch if you like. No monopoly of Scripture, many sermons, or sometimes we put RIP at the bottom meaning not requiescat in pace but a reproduction in the provinces, and anyway that was a digression. I was going to say something about John the Baptist. Do you remember how Jesus said, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see?” Then He gave him three possibilities: a man clothed in soft raiment, a reed shaken with the wind, or a prophet. Now I don’t know whether you will think this is a legitimate exposition but what is the fundamental difference between those three portraits? With a reed shaken with the wind, will you see a reed or you see a great reed bed when the wind is high and the wind blows from the north and the reed bows down to the south, and the wind veers ’round to the south and the reed bows down to the north. And the reed is without any backbone.
or any stamina, and it’s entirely a victim of the wind and the direction to which it bows down is conditioned by the wind. Here is a person surely who is subject entirely to public opinion. When the winds of public opinion are in one direction, he bows down to the winds of public opinion.

John the Baptist wasn’t a man like that, and the dominant force in his life was not public opinion, and then again the second is a man clothed in soft raiments. What is he? A dandy, a softy? Somebody surely who is self-indulgent who gives in, in other words, to his own basa (sp) appetites, hasn’t got control of himself. John the Baptist certainly wasn’t like that. He had an austerity diet (locusts and wild honey) and wore nothing but a girdle and a loincloth, well, so he wasn’t either of those.

Well the third possibility is a prophet. What is a prophet? Well I’ve mentioned about the Word of God coming to him but you can say that fundamentally a prophet was somebody who is dominated by the Word of God; the Word of God came to him, and what he proclaimed was God’s Word. Now I think what Jesus was saying about John the Baptist is this was the dominant thing in his life; neither public opinion nor his own appetites but God’s Word. Now that surely should be true of every preacher that his opinions are formed by Scripture and he learns, he gets really intellectually converted, although many people are not intellectually converted because their minds have never been brought into submission to God’s revelation.

Well that’s all I have time for on the steward. Now let me come onto the second metaphor which is the bridge builder. I hope the first one has made clear to us the idea of the middle man. God is the householder, he gives the food for the household; we are the stewards, we pass it onto the household; and the steward stands between the householder and the household.

Now the bridge builder, this is not how I concede, itself a Biblical metaphor, but I hope you won’t dismiss it for that reason. I think it is an accurate one, and I hope you will find it a helpful one as I do. I want to suggest to you that preaching can be thought of as a bridge-building operation because a bridge is a means of communication between two places across a gorge or a gulf which would otherwise keep them apart. And the purpose of the bridge is to enable traffic to pass from one side to the other across this gulf. So what is the gulf that preaching is intended to span? Well not of course the gulf between God and sinful man is Jesus
Christ is Himself the only mediator in that sense between God and man, but rather the gulf between God’s revelation of Himself and man’s ignorance of it or maybe his misunderstanding of it. Or as I think I would prefer to put it, it is the gulf between God’s unchanging Word and man’s ever changing world, and preaching is the chief means of bridging the gulf. It is by preaching that God’s unchanging Word becomes related to man’s changing world.

Now the one indispensable condition of safe and defective bridge building is solid and sound foundations on both sides of the divide, and if a bridge is to be safe and secure for traffic to pass over it then the bridge has got to be solidly grounded on both sides of the divide. That’s obvious. But not so obvious is the application that for successful Christian communication today, 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.

Now herein I believe and I hope I shall carry you with me, lies the tragedy of today’s church that there are very very few successful communicators who’ve built their bridge that is solidly grounded on both sides of this divide. Let me take opposites in the Ecclesiastical spectrum. Let me take evangelicals first and radicals second. Evangelical Christians have a good grasp of biblical theology. We’re alright in one side of the divide in God’s Word. We love to study the Word of God. We have an appetite for Scripture. We like to scrutinize it, analyze it, memorize it, classify it, do all these things. We love the Word of God.

Biblical studies are our meat and drink but, generalized, we tend to have a poor understanding of the contemporary world. Many of us are very isolated from the contemporary world. One of the great problems of the pastor that he becomes insulated and isolated, he lives in his cloistered seclusion even if he isn’t a monk.

Indeed I sometimes wonder if we haven’t brought the present radical theological movement upon ourselves because of our very failure to grapple biblically with the serious issues of the day, and people are asking us urgently as King Zedeikiah asked Jeremiah, “Is there a word from the Lord?” That is, is there any relevant biblical message that speaks to our condition and our dilemma? And so much about evangelical preaching is right up in the air, and it isn’t earthed. It isn’t applied to relevant things that people are grappling with in today’s contemporary world.
Now I think again, I know it's a generalization, there are brilliant exceptions to this rule but I think you would agree with me that this is the characteristic evangelical fault. It is a good knowledge of Scripture and a poor knowledge of the contemporary world.

But radical or secular Christians, people in the Kumitical movement, for example, on the other hand are the opposite. They tend to have a good understanding of the modern world. This is where their reading is. Their reading on the whole is not in the Bible and biblical theology, their reading is in contemporary literature, and they understand the modern world. They study the contemporary mood. They plunge into the contemporary debate. They're prepared to get their hands dirty in contemporary affairs, and sometimes you know these Harvey Coxes and these secular theologians seem to have a deeper compassion than we for the victims of the world's pain. They are really concerned about the secular world. But alas, they've lost their hold on the biblical Gospel.

Now I think this is the tragedy. The tragic situation is that on the one hand you've got evangelicals who are good on Scripture and bad on the contemporary world, and on the other hand you've got ecumenical radical secular people who are good on the contemporary world but have lost the biblical Gospel, and we've polarized, and I tell you that one of my longings and one of my prayer burdens is that God will raise up a new generation of Christian communicators who are equally proficient in both, who take with equal seriousness the need to study God's unchanging Word and man's changing world because it's only when you study both and you understand both that you're able to build a bridge across the divide and enable the traffic to pass across the two and relate the one to the other, and this is the excitement of the bridge-building preaching operation.

Now I hope I haven't misled you in this. I'm 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.

Now because I'm talking to mostly students here who belong to the younger generation, I don’t think you need me to say this to you so much as the older generation, my own generation for example, who find the world bewildering, and there are many pastors in middle life who find it extremely difficult to understand the modern world at all. Their world in which they were born and bred
is totally different from the world in which they find themselves living today and try sometimes to have sympathy for men in the older generations who are in a real trauma in this matter, and it is to them one needs to say, “You’ve got to be willing for the church to change. You’ve got to be willing indeed for the Gospel not to change. It can’t change fundamentally. But for it even to seem to change in the sense that you’ve got to grapple with the problem in order to relate it in a meaningful significant way to modern man in categories that modern man can understand.”

Now this, of course, is one of the ways in which we need to pray for discrimination, to discern between what cannot change and what can, should, and must. It is ultimately the difference between Scripture and tradition. I’m digressing here a bit but it’s so important, I think I’ll go on.

I was at Uppsala you may know as perhaps I’ve told you before this at the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1968, I think it was, and one of the things that upset me most was that as soon as one arrived at Uppsala, one was categorized, and you were put in a neat pigeonhole, and there were only two pigeonholes or categories. One is you were a stuck in the mud conservative traditional reactionary, a status quo man, you see, and the other was you were a radical, and anything could go. You were just living in the quick sands of secular radicalism, and these were the only two possibilities, and I kept saying to people and lead us in the Kumatical movement during Uppsala, this is a ridiculous categorization.

The true evangelical Christian who I believe to be the true biblical Christian has a foot in both these counts. He is essentially conservative or in a sense I prefer the word “conservationist” because what he is doing is to conserve the biblical revelation which the church can never allow to be wrested from our hands. All Christians must be conservationists. We are tethered forever to certain events of the first century: the birth, life, death, resurrection, spirit gift of Jesus (the apostolic witness to these events) we can never lose this. We’re tethered to this. We’re conservationists but as far as I’m concerned everything else can go, and I’m willing to be as radical as anything in all those areas that Scripture does not require me to return.

That is to say in matters of church buildings, lifestyles, clerical dress, Ecclesiastical buildings (I think I’ve already mentioned), pastoral methods, the shape of the ministry, evangelistic methods,
etc., etc. There are whole areas in which we can be as radical as we like. Now what is so sad I think about many who are conservative theologically is that they are conservative in every other way as well. They're conservative politically. They're...well I don't say necessarily that you shouldn’t be or that I find some American conservatives some rather strange Christians but that’s another matter.

Anyway, there are not only conservative politically but they're conservative temperamentally. I think their very blood is blue and conservative. But now it seems to me we are conservative theologically in this sense that we retain the biblical revelation but do let us sit light to all our traditions even our evangelical traditions. I believe Jesus comes to us as He did to the Pharisees and say, “You still make the Word of God of null effect by your traditions,” and these are many of the things to which evangelical churches are holding onto are the traditions of the evangelical elders, and they are not biblically required so that I long for this new kind of Christian to arise. He’s a new kind of RC, not a Roman Catholic but a Radical Conservative. This is the sort of evangelical that I hope and pray and believe Trinity is producing. These are the kind of evangelicals that the world needs today.

And now let me come back to my bridge-building and say that alternatively we can think a bridge-building operation, not literally in terms of civil engineering but figuratively, that is building a bridge between two cultures or two languages because preaching is translation work. It’s translating the language of God into the language of men and the preacher is the translator. He is the interpreter.

And what is essential in a good translator or a good interpreter especially in the extraordinary feat called simultaneous translation is an equal fluency in both languages. You can’t translate German into English or English into German or French into American and American into French unless you are equally fluent in both. This is an essential in the translator.

Now missionaries as we know are prepared to spend several years mastering a foreign language and culture. In order to communicate Christ to the people who belong to that language and culture and the difficult languages, it may take them ten years to become really fluent. Some never become really fluent. Now I simply say should not we who stay in our own language area and within our own culture to some extent, the world’s western secular culture
anyway, should we not be equally diligent in seeking to master the
language and understand the culture of other man’s minds and hearts in order to make Christ known to them? And how much time does the average preacher spend in this in his reading? I think it’s one of the reasons we ought to go at least to occasional movies or see some of them on television and I believe we ought to go occasionally to theater and so on.

Now I don’t want to tread on anybody’s corns, and you may have strong convictions about this, but I think a preacher ought because this is the way in which the world is expressing its mind. This is the culture, the art forms of the day in which we learn what the world is thinking and saying and sometimes it’s a tremendous shock to us. There are times I have been to the movies when I literally don’t understand what the author is saying. I think we’ve got to give ourselves that kind of culture shock in order to begin to try to understand. Maybe I should stop here. Let me just conclude.

I have suggested there is a God-given place in the church of preachers and teachers. There are stewards (dispensing food to the household), there are bridge-builders spanning a divide between God’s Word and man’s world that translators interpreting an ancient message in a modern idiom. Let me quote from another Arch Bishop, Arch Bishop of York, Donald Coggin. “Here is the miracle of the divine economy that between the forgiveness of God and the sin of man stands the preacher. That between the provision of God and the need of man stands the preacher. That between the truth of God and the quest of man stands the preacher. It is his task to link human sin to divine forgiveness, human need to divine omnipotence, human search to divine revelation. Jesus had seen into the heart of God, and He had seen as had none other into the heart of man, and He was content if He might interpret the one to the other so Jesus came preaching. Is that not enough?”

Well, we’ve got about four minutes. Questions? Yes.

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Student: Does the steward stand between...

Dr. Stott: The householder...

Student: the householder and the household?

Dr. Stott: ...and the household, yeah.
Student: Does this......

Dr. Stott: Does it make a distinction between clergy and laity which is unfortunate?

Well it does make a distinction but I’m not sure how unfortunate it is. That is to say although I believe, of course, that clericalism which is the clerical domination of the laity by the clergy is a great evil from which the church has suffered for generations and has been one of the great hindrances to the church’s growth into maturity; nevertheless, there is a distinction of function between clergy and laity. It is not a distinction of status, it is a distinction of function, namely that God has called the clergy to be teachers. I believe that the pastoral office is essentially a teaching office as I said yesterday, and the laity are therefore in the role of the taught. Now I grant that there are members of the laity who also have a subordinate teaching role but there is, I mean, the biblical metaphor is of the pastor and the flock or the teacher and the taught, and I think the steward and the household simply continues that kind of distinction but it is a distinction of function.

Student: ....

Dr. Stott: Yeah, well it’s a perfectly fair question, Bill, and I had tried, I think, to cover myself in the first two lectures when I was talking about Marshall McLuhan and I went on either in that lecture or on the second one to talk about the four ways in which people learn, and I did, I think, say that preaching is only one method, and that we do need to supplement it with these others, but I have then left these other methods and am concentrating on preaching because my course is in biblical preaching and not in Christian Communication. If it was in Christian Communication, I would have to talk a lot more, not that I would be qualified to do so, about these other means of communication: the group and the individual and the visual and so on.

Student: ....

Dr. Stott: As A form or as B form?

Student: A form.

Dr. Stott: If we said the Scripture tells us that the one and only way of Christian communication is preaching, I think we would go beyond Scripture. If we were to say it is A form and I think
I would want to say not only a permanent form but I think I would want to say it is the dominant form which God has chosen, a proclamation of His Word supplemented in these other ways, visual in the whole life of the congregation but I believe since God Himself has communicated verbally with us He is calling us to communicate verbally with others to make His verbal revelation relevant in a verbal way to others.

Student: ….

Dr. Stott: And especially for evangelistic proclamation, you mean?

Student: ….

Dr. Stott: In the acts. Well, even that is enough incidentally, isn’t it? I think it is enough that they were in Troas, wasn’t it? All had gathered, the church had gathered together, incidentally it was on the first day of the week, and they had gathered to break bread and Paul preached. Very interesting as you say, example of the unity of the ministry of the Word and the sacrament or Christian people on the first day of the week, and the other, or one of the other bases for this argument, I think I would find and shall seek to enlarge on in my pastoral epistle course is in I Timothy chapter 4 verse 13 where Paul says to Timothy, “Until I come, attend to the public reading of Scripture to preaching to teaching.” Now there I believe that the public reading of Scripture is exactly what it says. I would want to argue that it may well include apostolic letters already as well as Old Testament books because there are several examples of Paul telling the churches to reserve the letters of the apostles and to read them in public so that our practice today of having Old Testament and New Testament lessons goes right back to apostolic days where they had an Old Testament Scripture reading and a reading from an apostle’s letter and on the basis of that public reading of Scripture it was paraklesis (exhortation) and (didascalia) teaching, and I think both those are drawn from the public reading of Scripture in the local community.