



Equipped

TO PREACH THE WORD

MODULE 1

EQUIPPED BY THE LORD



















TRAINEE MANUAL

DAVID JACKMAN

MODULE 1

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This manual comprises eight training Units. Your leader will guide you through each Unit.

Instructions are in *italics*.

This manual uses the English Standard Version (ESV) translation of the Bible.

All videos can be found at www.proctrust.org.uk/equipped

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

The preacher can be sure that in the text of Scripture he has the God-given tools to accomplish God's work in the power of God's Spirit. Hence this Module is entitled: *Equipped by the Lord*.

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UNIT 1

WHY DOES PREACHING MATTER?

Share aloud your answers to the following questions:

What words come to mind when people hear the word “preaching”?

What do you think the average person experiences when they hear preaching today?

VIDEO

Watch Unit 1. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. We heard in the video that:

Preaching matters because the God of the Bible is a speaking God.

Preaching matters because Christ himself is its supreme focus.

Preaching matters because everyone everywhere needs to hear.

Do you agree? Why or why not? Why do you think preaching matters?

2. Paul charges us to “preach the Word”, to “proclaim” Christ, to “preach Christ crucified”. What do you think these phrases mean for the content and style of our preaching?

1. Read and think through the words of Jesus in John 5:39–47. Jesus is speaking to the religious leaders in Jerusalem, whose hostility has grown to such a degree that they are now “seeking all the more to kill him” (5:18). Notice especially what he says keeps people from believing his words, with regard to the Scriptures and also with regard to their own motivation. How does this teaching develop your understanding of why preaching matters?

2. Reflect on the following extracts from different foundational statements of Christian faith, both historical and contemporary. What do they affirm about the nature of Scripture and how does this help you to be committed to preach the Word?

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.² 1562, Article 6 of the 39 Articles of the Church of England

The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.³ Contemporary statement of faith, UCCF

Of the Holy Scriptures ...it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards...to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary... The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God... The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.⁴

1647, The Westminster Confession of Faith

Revelation God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.⁵

Contemporary confessional statement, The Gospel Coalition

3. Write down 3 things you want to think and pray about with regard to your preaching at the start of this Module.

² source: <http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/book-of-common-prayer/articles-of-religion.aspx>

³ source: <http://www.uccf.org.uk/about/doctrinal-basis.htm>

⁴ G.I. Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2004), 1, 7, 24.

⁵ source: <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents/confessional-statement>



UNIT 2

WHAT IS EXPOSITORY PREACHING?

Write down your answer to the following question:

How would you define preaching?

VIDEO

Watch Unit 2 Talk 1. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. We heard in the video that:

Expository preaching is preaching that is driven by the Bible; that recognises that the Bible drives the content, structure, and scope of the preaching; and it is also preaching that conveys God's unchanging truth through the preacher's individual personality.

What are the likely effects for preachers and churches when the Bible is not in the driving seat?

2. Sometimes it is claimed that having the Bible in the driving seat and allowing it to govern and direct everything that is said during the preaching is equivalent to Bibliolatry, worshipping the Bible, even displacing Christ from his proper headship in his church. How would you answer this claim?

3. We heard in the video that:

The Spirit of God takes the Word of God to do the work of God.

What does this mean for us as preachers?

VIDEO

Watch Unit 2 Talk 2. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

4. What will it mean for you to be “content to be nothing more than a servant of Jesus”? What does it mean practically and for our preaching to be “servants of Christ”?
5. Recognising that we are all different personalities, how do you feel the principles we have discovered in this Unit should relate to a preacher who has a very confident personality and who finds it easy to speak in public, and, by contrast, one who is by nature shy and retiring?
6. Watch Clip 2A: “How would you define preaching?” Discuss the definitions in the clip and having done so look again at your definition from the start of this Unit and revise or enhance it accordingly. You may want to share your definition aloud.

7. Ask someone to read aloud 2 Timothy 3:14–4:5. Split into small groups of two or three to answer this question together: “If we only had this passage in the whole Bible about the role of the Scriptures, what would we learn about their nature and purpose?” Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

HOME STUDY AND PRAYER

In the previous Home Study we read in the confessional statement of the Gospel Coalition on the subject of revelation:

This God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words... The Bible is to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.¹

What does this statement affirm about the nature of Scripture and what our response should be?

Please complete the Home Study on the following page.

Pray that God will give you a deeper confidence in his authoritative, divinely inspired, eternally significant Word.

¹ The Gospel Coalition Confessional Statement, source: <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents/confessional-statement>

1. Read Psalm 19:7–11 several times, noting the different descriptions of God’s Word. What does each of these add to our understanding of the value of the Scriptures? What benefits flow from God’s Word and how does this knowledge motivate you in your preaching?

2. In his chapter on the sufficiency of Scripture, Wayne Grudem writes:

We can define the sufficiency of Scripture as follows: *The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.*

This definition emphasizes that it is in Scripture alone that we are to search for God’s words to us. It also reminds us that God considers what he has told us in the Bible to be enough for us, and that we should rejoice in the great revelation that he has given us and be content with it.²

The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture has several practical applications to our Christian lives. The following list is intended to be helpful but not exhaustive.

1. The sufficiency of Scripture should encourage us as we try to discover what God would have us to *think* (about a particular doctrinal issue) or to *do* (in a particular situation). We should be encouraged that *everything* God wants to tell us about that question is to be found in Scripture. This does not mean that the Bible answers all the questions that we might think up, for “The secret things belong to the LORD our God” (Deut. 29:29). But it does mean that when we are facing a problem of genuine importance to our Christian life, we can approach Scripture with the confidence that from it God will provide us with guidance for that problem...
2. The sufficiency of Scripture reminds us that we are to add nothing to Scripture and that we are to consider no other writings of equal value to Scripture...
3. The sufficiency of Scripture also tells us that God does not require us to believe anything about himself or his redemptive work that is not found in Scripture...
4. The sufficiency of Scripture shows us that no modern revelations from God are to be placed on a level equal to Scripture in authority...
5. With regard to living the Christian life, the sufficiency of Scripture reminds us that nothing is sin that is not forbidden by Scripture either explicitly or by implication...
6. The sufficiency of Scripture also tells us that nothing is required of us by God that is not commanded in Scripture either explicitly or by implication...
7. The sufficiency of Scripture reminds us that in our doctrinal and ethical teaching we should emphasize what Scripture emphasizes and be content with what God has told us in Scripture.³

Read through this definition and practical applications carefully (if possible please read the entire chapter from Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* entitled “The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (4) Sufficiency”). Underline anything you find helpful and write down anything that you need to change or think about further in relation to your preaching.

3. Watch Clip 2B: “How would you define preaching?” Think about the definitions in the clip and having done so look again at your definition from the start of this Unit and revise or enhance it accordingly.

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007), 127. ³ Ibid., 131–134.



UNIT 3

WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL PATTERNS?

Read aloud Acts 2:14–41.

VIDEO

Watch Unit 3 Talk 1. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. We heard in the video that:

The Bible is God's book about God before it is his book about us. So, we look first for God's activity in every passage we preach and then for his explanation, which will feed into the application of the text to the contemporary world. This means that our proclamation focuses eyes on what God is doing and opens ears to what he is saying, in the text, rather than putting ourselves and our concerns at the centre of the picture.

In other words the pattern is: Revelation = Event + Explanation. Split into small groups of two or three. Look together at 1 Corinthians 15:3, Mark 1:9–11 and Luke 5:17–26 and work through how the pattern (Revelation = Event + Explanation) applies to each text. Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

2. Moving to the Old Testament, how can we identify the same pattern in some of the main events of Old Testament history: the conquest of the land in Joshua 21:43–45, the start of the monarchy in 1 Samuel 8:7–11, and after the return from exile in Nehemiah 9:30–31. Again, split into small groups of two or three to work through how the pattern (Revelation = Event + Explanation) applies to each text. Choose a different spokesperson to contribute comments and ideas to the larger group when we come back together.

VIDEO

Before watching the video, read aloud Acts 13:16–41 and Acts 17:22–31.

Watch Unit 3 Talk 2. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

3. In the video we followed the pattern of the apostolic God-centred preaching, majoring on what God has done and said, as the ground for how the hearers are to respond. We heard in the video that the pattern is:

Recounting the Events

Relating the Explanation

Responding to the Revelation

Ask someone to read aloud Acts 17:1–4. Trace the pattern in this passage.

4. In describing Paul's ministry of proclamation, Acts 17–19 uses the following phrases:

In Thessalonica:

“reasoned...from the Scriptures”; 17:2

“explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead”; 17:3

In Berea:

“the word of God was proclaimed”; 17:13

In Athens:

“reasoned in the synagogue... and in the market-place every day”; 17:17

“preaching Jesus and the resurrection”; 17:18

In Corinth:

“reasoned...and tried to persuade”; 18:4

“testifying...that the Christ was Jesus”; 18:5

“teaching the Word of God”; 18:11

In Ephesus:

“spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading...about the kingdom of God”; 19:8

“reasoning daily... so that all the residents...heard the word of the Lord”; 19:9–10

Look at the different verbs used. What will be the practical implications for our preaching if we are going to follow the model they describe?

5. Revisit Paul's proclamations in Acts 13:16–41 (in the synagogue in Antioch) and Acts 17:22–31 (to the Gentiles in Athens). Split into small groups. Identify the similarities between these two proclamations. Identify the differences due to the different occasions and audiences. What can we learn from these proclamations for our own preaching of the gospel? Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

6. Dr Timothy Keller writes in his *Studies in the Book of Acts*:

Paul does not “change” the gospel, but only “adapts it”. And this is the very key to effective ministry. If we never adapt the gospel, we will be completely ineffective. Like Paul, we must deeply discern the particular beliefs, hopes, aspirations, fears, prejudices, and wisdom of others or our gospel communication will seriously miss the mark. But if we change or lose the basics of the gospel, we will also be completely ineffective. Like Paul, we must not shrink from declaring that there is only one true God, that every single person (no matter how nice and good) is sinfully trying to be his or her own Lord and Savior, that Jesus was really divine and human, that he died in our place and was raised bodily from the dead. These basic truths and “events” are non-negotiable. To alter or omit any of them leads to the loss of distinctive Christianity.¹

How should this quote and the patterns defined in this Unit change the way you will now approach preaching?

HOME STUDY AND PRAYER

In the previous Home Study we read part of Wayne Grudem's chapter on the sufficiency of Scripture, in which he states that Scripture “contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly”.² How should a growing conviction about the sufficiency of Scripture shape our lives and our preaching?

Please complete the Home Study on the following page.

Pray that God would grant you a deeper understanding of the Bible and how to proclaim it.

¹ Timothy Keller, *Evangelism: Studies in the Book of Acts, Leaders Guide* (published by Timothy Keller and Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2005), 121.

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007), 127.

1. In the three proclamations we looked at in the book of Acts, we saw the pattern of: Recounting the Events, Relating the Explanation, and Responding to the Revelation. Identify this same pattern in Acts 4:8–12. What can we learn from this presentation for our own preaching?

2. Read the sermon by C.H. Spurgeon entitled *Repentance and Remission*, downloadable from www.spurgeongems.org. It is sermon #3224, on the text of Luke 24:47. Write down anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult. Note especially the opening paragraphs:

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:47.

THIS verse is among our Lord’s last words to His disciples just before He left them to return to Heaven. He wished to impress upon them the Truth of God that it was His purpose and desire that their lives should be devoted to the preaching of His Gospel among all nations upon the face of the earth. In Christ’s own words and throughout the New Testament, we find the greatest stress laid upon preaching. Preaching is the great battering ram that is to shake the gates of Hell! Preaching is God’s chief method of winning souls unto Himself—“for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” We cannot too often remind this age in which we live of this Truth, for this is a time in which it is supposed that rites and ceremonies, human learning and literature and I know not what else, may very properly be allowed to supplant the preaching of the Word! Yet our Lord has given no intimation of any change in His purpose and plan—on the contrary, His great commission is evidently intended to cover the whole of this present dispensation—“Go you, therefore, and teach (that is, make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them (that is, those who have been made disciples) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (or, more properly, unto the end of the age). Amen.” So, until this dispensation is brought to a close by the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, “repentance and remission of sins” are to “be preached in His name among all nations.”

First, let us consider THE SUBJECT OF OUR PREACHING as here stated by our Lord—“that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name.” So the first part of the subject is that repentance should be preached in the name of Jesus... What does this mean? First, it means that we are to preach repentance as the gift of God. Christ was exalted with His Father’s right hand, to be a Prince and a Savior, “to give repentance” as well as “forgiveness of sins.” Wherever there is real sorrow for sin, wherever there is an honest determination, by God’s Grace, to cease from sin, wherever there is a complete change of mind with regard to sin—for that is what repentance means—that repentance has been produced by the Spirit of God and it is as much a gift of the Covenant of Grace as even the pardon which comes with it is! This is the repentance which we are to preach in Christ’s name... Further, to preach repentance in the name of Jesus also means that wherever there is real repentance, it is the token of the pardon of sin—not merely a hopeful sign, but the sure and Infallible sign of pardon. If any man’s heart is turned away from sin. If he prostrates himself in the dust before God because of his offenses. If he looks with true penitence to Christ upon the Cross, crying, “Lord, remember me,” “Lord, save me,” “God be merciful to me, a sinner”—it is not a question whether forgiveness may or may not be granted to him—it is a fact that he is already forgiven!...

Now, secondly, we are to think of THE AUDIENCE THAT IS TO BE ADDRESSED UPON THIS SUBJECT... Why is this Gospel to be preached among all nations? Well, first, because all nations need it! And then, because the Gospel is exactly suited to all nations. And further, because God has a chosen number in all nations who will receive the Word and be saved by it. And also because it shall be a witness against those in all nations who hear it but refuse to heed it. We also are to preach, not as unauthorized persons who hope that what we say may possibly prove to be true, but as those who are proclaiming Divine Truths and certainties on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!³

3. Watch Clip 3: “If you could give one piece of advice about preaching—what would it be?” Write down anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

³ source: <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols55-57/chs3224.pdf>



UNIT 4

WHAT ARE THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES?

Read the following aloud and then discuss briefly:

In his *The Calling of the Ministry* (written over four-hundred years ago) the English Puritan, William Perkins, laments the fact that few men of ability were seeking the calling of the ministry and that of those who did, few deserved the name of messenger and interpreter. He traces this to the “contempt” with which the preacher is treated, because his task is to reveal sin and unmask hypocrisy. But it is also due, Perkins noted, to the difficulty of the work, since speaking to people on behalf of God is truly an overwhelming and awesome responsibility. Perkins wrote:

To stand in God's presence...to be God's mouth to his people, and the people's to God; to be the interpreter of the eternal law of the Old Testament and the everlasting gospel of the New...to take the care and charge of souls—these considerations overwhelm the consciences of men who approach the sacred seat of the preacher with reverence and not with rashness.¹

We live at a very different time, but do you think Perkins' words are applicable to our contemporary context? Discuss.

VIDEO

Watch Unit 4. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. We heard in the video of 7 strategies to use and remember as we face our contemporary challenges:

- Determine that prayer will be foundational.
- Develop a robust doctrine of Scripture.
- Deepen your dependence upon the Holy Spirit.
- Designate the building up of your hearers as your priority.
- Don't be diverted into celebrity models of ministry.
- Dialogue with the world and its contemporary culture.
- Develop authenticity in both life and teaching.

Split into small groups of two or three and each share your answer to this question with your group: “Which of these is the most difficult for you personally and why?” Pray for one another in light of your answers.

¹ William Perkins from *The Calling of the Ministry* in *The Art of Prophesying and The Calling of the Ministry* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996), 90.

2. We heard in the video that:

We need to be biblical critics of our own culture and especially of our own presuppositions and attitudes. In this way we shall be able to help our hearers to see where the culture needs to be challenged, when commended and where its evil has to be exposed.

What are the specific challenges you face in your particular cultural setting and what will be the best strategy to help you face them?

3. Read Acts 6:2–4. Split into small groups of two or three and each share your answer to this question with your group: “What will it mean for you personally to devote yourself to prayer and to the ministry of the Word—what will you need to give up, re-think, or delegate in order to make this a priority?”

4. In his book, *The Trouble with the Church*, the German preacher Helmut Thielicke explored why the Reformation view of preaching as “the source and spring of Christian faith and life”² was no longer current in postwar Europe. Central to his enquiry were two questions:

Does the preacher really live “in the house of the dogmas he proclaims”?³

Does the rest of his life (out of the pulpit and the church) relate to that house?

His sad conclusion was that many a preacher no longer lived “in the house of his own preaching”.⁴ The problem, Thielicke observed, is that the preacher no longer believes, personally and passionately, the truth that he preaches; that the preacher has become bored with his work, and so the congregation are soon bored by his preaching. Discuss. Why is it important that we closely watch our lives as well as our doctrine?

5. Ask someone to read aloud 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10. Split into small groups of two or three to answer this question together: “What were the responses to Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica and what produced such responses?” Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

HOME STUDY AND PRAYER

In the previous Home Study you were asked to identify the biblical pattern we observed in Unit 3 (Recounting the Events; Relating the Explanation; Responding to the Revelation) in the passage Acts 4:8–12. Share your answers aloud.

Please complete the Home Study on the following page.

Pray that even as you identify the challenges of your culture, God would deepen your dependence upon his Word and his Spirit.

² Helmut Thielicke, *The Trouble with the Church*, translated by John W. Doberstein (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966), 1. ³ Ibid., 5. ⁴ Ibid., 6.

1. Read 2 Timothy 2:1–7 several times. As you reflect on the challenges your culture presents, how does this passage encourage you to keep persevering? Consider the resource for the task (v. 1 and v. 7), the essence of our responsibility (v. 2), the three pictures of priorities and what each teaches (vv. 3–6).

2. Listen to the talk by D.A. Carson *The What and Why of Expository Preaching*, downloadable from <http://resources.thegospelcoalition.org/library/the-what-and-why-of-expository-preaching>. This will help to reinforce what we have been learning in the Units so far. Write down anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult. Note especially the following headings from that talk, as well as the final quote taken from his chapter “Preaching that Understands the World”:

Preaching is verbal oral communication of which at least the following things are true:

1. Its content is God’s gracious and special self-disclosure; his revelation...that means its content is the Bible, as its focus is Christ.
2. It is biblical truth mediated through human personality.
3. Its immediate purpose is to inform, persuade, appeal, invite a response, encourage, rebuke, instruct in righteousness. More generally put, to elicit an appropriate human response to the God whose revelation is its content.
4. Its ultimate goal is the glory of God and the calling forth and edification of the church.
5. It has an inescapable heraldic element.

Expository preaching:

1. It is preaching subject matter which emerges directly and demonstrably from a passage or passages of Scripture.
2. It is not simply running commentary on the text.
3. It is not necessarily preaching through a book or large parts of a book; although that is the most common form of it.
4. The length of the passage is exceedingly variable.
5. It is preaching which, however dependent it may be for its content on the text or texts at hand, draws attention to inner-canonical connections that inexorably move to Jesus Christ.
6. In many instances, expository preaching can be usefully combined with other forms within the one sermon.

Why then establish expository preaching as primary?:

1. It is the method least likely to stray too far from revelation.
2. Properly done, and especially if the selections of Scripture you choose to expound are reasonably extensive,... expository preaching teaches people how to read their Bibles.
3. It gives confidence to the preacher and authorizes the sermon.
4. If truly applied...it meets the need for relevance without letting the clamour for relevance dictate the message.
5. It not only enables but compels preachers to deal with tough questions.
6. It enables the preacher most systematically to expound the whole counsel of God.⁵

Notwithstanding...the critical importance of a fundamentally biblical understanding of the world, it is essential for preachers to integrate with their general Christian understanding of the world an acute and accurate understanding of the particular culture where they minister... [W]hile trying to understand a culture, we must still be trying to think biblically and theologically. This means we shall be obliged to decide what cultural elements are largely neutral, what are to be opposed and reformed by the gospel, what are the fruit of common grace and therefore to be espoused and cherished... And if for reasons of communication a preacher *begins* with the self-perceived interests and needs of his people, sooner or later he must establish links between these and the Bible’s agenda, or he should stay out of the pulpit... The student of Scripture must try to understand the Bible on its own terms, within the cultures in which it was first given, and then learn to transport and apply its truth into his or her own world... We seek the Spirit’s help, while recognising that the burden of responsibility and privilege in heralding the gospel accurately and comprehensibly falls on us.⁶

3. Watch Clip 4: “If you could give one piece of advice about preaching—what would it be?” Write down anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

⁵ D.A. Carson, *The What and Why of Expository Preaching*, delivered June 1, 2003 at Katoomba Christian Conference Centenary (Sydney, Australia). source: <http://resources.thegospelcoalition.org/library/the-what-and-why-of-expository-preaching>. The transcription is from this source.

⁶ D.A. Carson, *Preaching that Understands the World* in *When God’s Voice is Heard*, edited by Christopher Green and David Jackman (Leicester, UK: IVP, 2003), 154–157.



UNIT 5

HOW DOES THE PREACHER PREPARE?

VIDEO

Watch Unit 5. Use the space below if you would like to take notes. The headings and main points in the video are listed below to aid note-taking.

Section 1

EXEGESIS

Understanding the Meaning of the Text

Read, read and read again.

Locate the text in its setting.

Divide up the text and make connections.

Explore the meaning of particular words or phrases.

Summarise the theme of the text in one sentence.

Section 2

EXPOSITION

Understanding the Significance of the Text

- 1 What is the author's purpose for his original audience?
- 2 Where does the original purpose parallel our contemporary context?
- 3 Where are the differences between then and now?
- 4 Are these differences about primary truths or secondary applications?
- 5 How do other Scriptures help us to see the significance of the text?
- 6 How would you summarise the aim of the text in one sentence?

Section 3

STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY

Applying the Message of the Text

Every sermon is a journey and the journey needs a map.

The sermon outline takes its shape from the main points of the text.

Try to express the main points didactically not just descriptively.

Teach the truth to the mind, the heart and the will.

Make sure the sermon includes practical application.

Section 4

SCRIPTING

Producing your Sermon on the Text

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. The video suggested an approach to preaching preparation. What did you find helpful or unhelpful about this approach?

2. **We heard in the video that:**

The clear given meaning of a Bible text can develop many applications, but they all have to be tested by the contents of the text in its context. Because we are products of our generation and culture, we naturally tend to read our situation into the text and then impose our own ideas on it, so that a text has only the significance that we invest it with. But that is not the way the Bible interprets the Bible... What we must avoid, for example, is taking an Old Testament narrative, or prophecy, and imposing on it our own contemporary moral lessons, which were not the purpose of the original inspiration. The strongest line of connection and relevance will always be drawn from what God is teaching the readers about himself, which is, by definition, unchanging in its content.

“The story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) is primarily a call to be brave and to have faith in God as we face the giants of life. The narrative of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35–41) tells us that he can calm the storms in our lives too. The feeding of the 5000 (Luke 9:12–17) is a call for us to share our provisions with others.” Discuss.

3. **Split into small groups of two or three. Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together. Remembering that:**

The *theme sentence* summarises in contemporary language the core content of the text, in faithfulness to its original meaning. It identifies what the essentials are, in other words—what must be preached from this text.

The *aim sentence* summarises the significance of the text in one sentence. It should reflect the original purpose of the text as it focuses on its on-going significance.

Look at John 2:1–11 and Exodus 17:1–7 and write a theme sentence and an aim sentence for each respectively.

4. We heard in the video that:

Illustrations are good servants, but bad masters. They can open windows in the sermon, when they help people to understand the text more clearly, or apply it more helpfully. But, if they are merely “breathers” or amusing interludes they are ultimately counterproductive, whatever light relief they may seem to bring.

Consider two biblical examples of illustration: 1 Corinthians 9:24–25 and Psalm 42:1. Split into small groups again to explore how each one works to illuminate understanding and motivate response. Choose a different spokesperson to contribute comments and ideas to the larger group when we come back together. (You may also want to discuss—in your small group only—your own use of illustrations and give examples of why they worked or why they were unhelpful.)

5. Ask someone to read aloud Galatians 5:1–6. Split into small groups of two or three to answer this question together: “How could this passage be preached with relevance today, when in almost all cultures circumcision is not a religious issue?” Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

HOME STUDY AND PRAYER

Given all you have learned so far (both in the Units and the Home Studies) what would you say is the difference between an expository lecture and expository preaching?

Please complete the Home Study on the following page.

Pray that God would guide you as you consider how to prepare to preach his Word to his people.

1. Practise writing theme and aim sentences by working on an Old Testament narrative in 2 Kings 4:1–7 and a New Testament epistle in 2 Peter 1:3–8.

2. Reflect on the following extracts about preaching preparation. Underline anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

It does not answer the aim which God had in this institution, merely for men to have good commentaries and expositions on the Scripture, and other good books of divinity; because, although these may tend... to give a good doctrinal or speculative understanding of the word of God, yet they have not an equal tendency to impress them on men's hearts and affections. God hath appointed a particular and lively application of his word, in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect sinners with the importance of religion, their own misery, the necessity of a remedy, and the glory and sufficiency of a remedy provided; to stir up the pure minds of the saints, quicken their affections by often bringing the great things of religion in their remembrance, and setting them in their proper colours, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already.¹

Jonathan Edwards

It may perhaps be not unuseful to point out the manner in which these discourses are formed. As soon as the subject is chosen, the first inquiry is, *What is the principal scope and meaning of the text?* Let us suppose, for instance, that the text of Jer. xxxi. 18–20, were the subject. Upon examination, it appears to be a soliloquy of the Deity, expressing what He had seen to be the workings of Ephraim's mind, and declaring the emotions which the sight of his penitent child had occasioned within his own bosom. Having ascertained this, nothing is to be introduced into any part of the discourse, which does not, in some way or other, reflect light upon the main subject.²

Charles Simeon

The first thing you have to do is deal with the meaning of your text. At this point there is one golden rule, one absolute demand – honesty. You have to be honest with your text. I mean by that, that you do not go to a text just to pick out an idea which interests you and then deal with that idea yourself... You must take your text in its context... You must discover the meaning of the words and of the whole statement... Ask questions such as, *Why did he say that? Why did he say it in this particular way? What is he getting at? What was his object and purpose?* One of the first things a preacher has to learn is to talk to his texts. They talk to you, and you must talk to them.³

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

To begin with, we have to transport ourselves back, by the use of both our knowledge and our imagination, into the biblical writer's context, until we begin to think what he thought and feel what he felt. Our responsibility is not to assimilate his views to ours, by reading our opinions back into what he wrote, but to assimilate our views to his, by struggling to penetrate into his heart and mind... Read the text... Turn it over and over in your mind... Probe your text... To discover the text's meaning is of purely academic interest unless we go on to discern its message for today... But to search for its contemporary message without first wrestling with its original meaning is to attempt a forbidden short cut. It dishonours God (disregarding his chosen way of revealing himself in particular historical and cultural contexts), it misuses his Word (treating it like an almanac or book of magic spells) and it misleads his people (confusing them about how to interpret Scripture).⁴

John Stott

3. Watch Clip 5: "How do you prepare your sermons?" Write down anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

¹ Jonathan Edwards from *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections in The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (London: William Ball, 1839), 242.

² Charles Simeon, *Horae Homileticae* (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1832), vi.

³ Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (London: Hodder, 1971), 198, 201.

⁴ John Stott, *I Believe in Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982), 170, 205, 206.



UNIT 6

HOW DOES THE PREACHER DEVELOP?

Share aloud your answers to the following questions:

How do most people react to criticism?

How should we deal with criticism of our sermons?

VIDEO

Watch Unit 6. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Recognise that you are not yet the finished article.

What does the Bible have to say on the subject of pride and humility? How does this affect us as preachers?

2. Review and be self-critical.

Request feedback from others.

Why is it important to assess and be assessed when it comes to our sermons? What are the values of doing this and what are the possible drawbacks?

Please note that we provide a sample assessment on page 23.

3. Resolve to cultivate strong relationships across the congregation you serve.

Relate through pastoral interaction and care.

Reserve time to nurture your own personal relationships.

With all the demands placed on a preacher and with the priority we must have on “prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4) do we really have time to develop these “extra” relationships? Don’t we just need to concentrate on our preaching? Discuss.

4. Retain your evangelistic edge.

Should we preach differently to Christians and non-Christians? Are there parts of the Bible we should avoid when preaching evangelistically?

5. Remember the essentials.

Split into small groups of two or three and let each member take 2 minutes to articulate the essentials of the gospel. In other words, give as succinct and clear a gospel presentation as you can in the time limit. For example, one of you can take the 2 minutes to sum up the gospel under the headings of creation, fall, redemption, restoration. After each of you has given a short gospel presentation, take 2 minutes to discuss and comment on the presentations.

6. Ask someone to read aloud Philippians 3:7–16. Split into small groups of two or three to answer this question together: “What developments can Paul see have already happened in his life, and what is he still hoping to achieve?” Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

HOME STUDY AND PRAYER

In the previous Home Study you wrote theme and aim sentences for an Old Testament narrative in 2 Kings 4:1–7 and a New Testament epistle in 2 Peter 1:3–8. Share your answers aloud.

Please complete the Home Study on the following page.

Pray that God will enable you to have an appetite to make progress in your preaching.

1. Read and consider Paul's testimony about his own ministry as recorded in 1 Thessalonians 2:1–12. What were his priorities in the short time he was founding the Thessalonian church? How did they relate to his own well-being, to the methodology of his preaching, and to the attitude he has towards his hearers? Think through whether you need to make changes in your assessment of your own ministry and your development as a preacher in the light of the apostle's example.

2. Reflect on the following extracts about God's concern for holiness in his ministers. Underline anything you find helpful and write down anything you need to develop or change in relation to your own life and ministry.

Do not forget the culture of the inner man—I mean of the heart. How diligently the cavalry officer keeps his sabre clean and sharp; every stain he rubs off with the greatest care. Remember you are God's sword, His instrument—I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.¹

Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Take heed to yourselves, lest you should be void of that saving grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual working of that Gospel which you preach; and lest while you proclaim the necessity of a Savior to the world, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should miss of an interest in him and his saving benefits. Take heed to yourselves, lest you perish, while you call upon others to take heed of perishing, and lest you famish yourselves while you prepare their food... Can any reasonable man imagine that God should save men for offering salvation to others, while they refused it themselves; and for telling others those truths which they themselves neglected and abused?... God never saved any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his Master's work. Take heed, therefore, to yourselves; first, that you be that which you persuade your hearers to be, and believe that which you persuade them daily to believe, and have heartily entertained that Christ and Spirit which you offer unto others.²

Richard Baxter

Whatever "call" a man may pretend to have, if he has not been called to holiness, he certainly has not been called to the ministry... [W]hen God calls us to ministerial labor we should endeavor to get grace that we may be strengthened into fitness for our position, and not be mere novices carried away by the temptations of Satan, to the injury of the church and our own ruin. We are to stand equipped with the whole armor of God, ready for feats of valor not expected of others: to us self-denial, self-forgetfulness, patience, perseverance, longsuffering, must be every-day virtues, and who is sufficient for these things? We had need live very near to God, if we would approve ourselves in our vocation... We must cultivate the highest degree of godliness because our work imperatively requires it. The labor of the Christian ministry is well performed in exact proportion to the vigor of our renewed nature. Our work is only well done when it is well with ourselves. As is the workman, such will the work be... Seek then strength from the Strong One, wisdom from the Wise One, in fact, all from the God of all.³

C.H. Spurgeon

3. Watch Clips 6A and 6B: "How do you deal with criticism?" and "Do you preach differently to Christians and non-Christians?" Write down anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

¹ Robert Murray M'Cheyne quoted in Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoirs of McCheyne* (Chicago: Moody, 1978), 95.

² Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (London: Thomas Ward, 1656), 28.

³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Albany, OR: AGES Software, 1996), 13, 19, 22.

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

This sample assessment is a tool which we can use for ourselves, but is probably best used by our listening group.

Much more detail is given than could be used in any one assessment—but it is designed to provide a range of features and issues, any of which could be profitably employed in a critique. It would be a good idea to select questions from each section according to the sermon heard and the stage of development of the preacher, but to cover all four sections at some point. Please pay special attention to the explanations beneath the questions, which will help to develop the use of this assessment in a positive and creative way.

SECTION 1: AIM AND STRUCTURE

Q1 Was there a clear structure to the sermon and if so what were the main points?

This is not designed to impose a particular homiletical pattern or method on the text, but to ask whether the Bible text was in the driving seat and whether the structure of the talk reflected the structure of the original passage with accuracy and clarity.

Q2 Was there a clear message? What was it?

The message should represent the contents of the passage, but presented in a more than merely informational way. A “message” is something deeper and more urgent. It is a communication through the mind, to the heart, to activate the will. So if preaching is designed to change lives, to make us more like the Lord Jesus, in what way did the sermon accomplish that?

Q3 Was the introduction engaging and appropriate? Did the sermon deliver what the introduction promised?

Q4 Was there a clear conclusion? How effective was it?

A strong conclusion will probably drive home the aim of the whole sermon and provide a strong motivation not only to receive and understand what the Bible text is saying, but to put its significance into practice in our lives.

SECTION 2: INTERPRETATION

Q1 Was the text properly understood and expounded? Did the main points of the text come across clearly?

Was the meaning of the text explained adequately, especially the more difficult parts? And as it was expounded, did the hearers have a sense of how it fitted together, its integrity and purpose?

Q2 Was the text set in its immediate and whole Bible context? How did that help to clarify the contents?

The clarification this brings is in understanding the significance of the passage; why it is an important Word of God to our minds and hearts so many centuries later.

Q3 Did the application arise from the text and reflect its main points?

This is an extension of Q2 to ensure that the method was not “impositional”, bringing in the application from the outside. Was there a smooth transition from the original hearers then to us now?

SECTION 3: PRESENTATION

Q1 Was the sermon clear and easy to follow?

Good preaching is intellectually stimulating but it is not complex or abstract. Were the main points stated clearly, explained lucidly and applied cogently? Were the connections between the sections of the sermon explained well, so that there was no loss of purpose or direction as the sermon unfolded?

Q2 Were illustrations used effectively to deepen understanding or focus application, or did they distract?

Q3 Was the talk compelling? What response was being asked for?

This is less about content and more about the preacher’s style. The preacher will be in the foreground and our attitude to him will determine our attitude to the whole talk.

Q4 How appropriate were the manner of the preacher, the verbal style, and use of language, as well as the pitch and pace and the body language of the preacher?

Each of these should be considered and commented upon, since any of these aspects can greatly heighten or diminish a sermon’s usefulness.

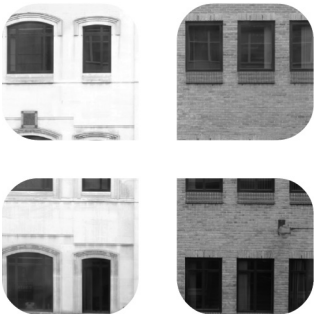
SECTION 4: GENERAL

Q1 What was the strongest positive quality of the sermon?

We all need that sort of encouragement so that we take away something from the critique which can act as a stimulus to work at developing our strengths as well as resolving our weaknesses.

Q2 What immediate steps could be taken to improve?

The ‘immediate steps’ stresses that we all need to start somewhere in developing what is a lifelong improvement programme. But it is a long haul—and if the criticisms are too many or too negative it can be confusing and discouraging. Identify an aspect or two that you can work on immediately, and go away hopeful and prayerful, with a desire to be faithful and above all dependent on God himself, who makes us grow.



UNIT 7

HOW DOES THE PREACHER CONNECT?

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 and Ephesians 4:17–5:2.

VIDEO

Watch Unit 7. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. We heard in the video that:

It's been said that contextualization is not about how to make Jesus relevant—it is about how to show the relevance of Jesus... What the text has to say about Christ will be the first and strongest connection from its original context to our own. He is the eternal, unchanging element of God's truth, then and now, whatever the differences in cultural setting may be... For our preaching to connect we must preach Christ as the supreme and sufficient answer to all the real-life issues, challenges and opportunities that are the everyday experience and context of our hearers... So, preach Christ in all the Scriptures; preach him as unique, supreme, central and sufficient; and preach the Word in such a way that motivation springs always and unfailingly from the gospel.

Discuss. What do you find surprising, encouraging or difficult about this?

2. Read aloud the following quote taken from Dr. Timothy Keller's address: "Gospel-Centered Ministry":

Jesus is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us. Jesus is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood now that cries out, not for our condemnation, but for acquittal. Jesus is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void not knowing wither he went to create a new people of God. Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham, "Now I know you love me because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love from me," now we can look at God taking his son up the mountain and sacrificing him and say, "Now we know that you love us because you did not withhold your son, your only son, whom you love from us." Jesus is the true and better Jacob who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us... Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant... Jesus is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer, who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends. Jesus is the true and better David whose victory becomes

his people's victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves... Jesus is the true and better Jonah who was cast out into the storm so that we could be brought in. Jesus is the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. He's the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread. The Bible's really not about you—it's about him.¹

Split into small groups of two or three and state as a principle the implications of this quote. Write down the same connections for the narratives of Joseph, Daniel, and Esther. Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

3. Martyn Lloyd-Jones described preaching as “logic on fire”.² Cotton Mather wrote of preaching:

The office of the Christian Ministry...is an office and character that are deeply interested in the highest concerns of God's perfections and glory. It is an employment that obliges a man to the closest attention, to find out the true mind of God in the holy Scriptures. It is a work in which we are called, to instruct the minds of men in the noblest knowledge, and teach them to adore and love God. The great design and intention of the office of a Christian preacher are to restore the throne and dominion of God in the souls of men; to display in the most lively colours, and proclaim in the clearest language, the wonderful perfections, offices and grace of the Son of God.³

How is preaching “logic on fire”? How is the throne and dominion of God to be restored in the souls of men?

4. We learned in the video the pattern of Christian development as expounded by Paul in Ephesians 4:22–24: “put off your old self...be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and...put on the new self”. This he describes as learning Christ (4:20). The gospel changes our thinking and becomes the motivation for a radically different lifestyle. We heard that:

The same pattern emerges in Paul's dealing with unwholesome talk and malice [Eph. 4:29–32]. In every practical example the details are clear and uncompromising, the actions are equally specific and the theological motivation springs always and unfailingly from the gospel. This is how Paul connects with the real life situations facing the churches.

Split into small groups of two or three. Look at Ephesians 4:29–30 and 4:31–32 and identify the way Paul does this. Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

¹ Dr. Timothy Keller's address, “Gospel-Centered Ministry,” from the Gospel Coalition conference. source: <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2007/05/23/keller-gospel-centered-ministry/>. See also: <https://vimeo.com/23642755>.

² Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (London: Hodder, 1971), 96.

³ Cotton Mather, *Student and Preacher* (London: Charles Dilly, 1781), iii–iv.

5. Connective preaching needs to be grounded both in the truth of the Bible and in the realities of our contemporary world. What will be the consequences for our hearers, in their thinking and lifestyle, if our preaching majors only on one part of the connection process, if it is either all exegesis or all contemporary application?

6. Ask someone to read aloud 1 Corinthians 6:1–11. Split into small groups of two or three and divide the passage under the following headings:

Identify the problem clearly and uncompromisingly.

State the action that must be taken.

Give motivation for things to change.

Relate the issue back to the revelation of the gospel.

Support the argument with spiritual reasoning.

Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.

HOME STUDY AND PRAYER

Discuss what you discovered from the previous Home Study in 1 Thessalonians 2:1–12 about Paul's reflection on his ministry.

Please complete the Home Study on the following page.

Pray that God would show you new ways to connect with your hearers from the divinely-given examples within the Scriptures themselves.

1. Read and consider Joshua 23:1–16, 24:31 and Nehemiah 8:1–12, 9:1–3. What were Joshua and Ezra’s strategies for connecting the people of Israel with God’s will and purpose? What results did it produce? What can you learn and put into practice from these examples?

2. Reflect on the following extracts. Underline anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

For what ought sermons and doctrines be, except expositions of what Scripture contains? Truly, if we add the slightest nuance, it only results in corruption. Our Lord has left us a perfect doctrine in the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel. Thus, what ought we be preaching today? We ought not be adding anything new to the text, but ought to be providing a clearer exposition that would confirm our understanding of God’s teachings. That, I repeat, is the purpose of any sermon...we hear, that we might each be better instructed with respect to God’s will. That way, whenever we hear anything, we have a basis for inquiring whether God has spoken or not. By the same token, all who are charged with preaching God’s Word know that it is wrong of them to add anything of their own, or anything they might invent. They must be certain that what they preach is not of their own conjecture but derives from God, who guides them on the basis of his certain and infallible truth.⁴

John Calvin

Great is the profit to be derived from the...Scriptures and their assistance is sufficient for every need. Paul was pointing this out when he said, ‘Whatever things have been written have been written for our instruction, upon whom the final age of the world has come, that through the patience and the consolation afforded by the Scriptures we may have hope.’ (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11) The divine words, indeed, are a treasury containing every sort of remedy, so that, whether one needs to put down senseless pride, or...to trample on the love of riches, or to despise pain, or to cultivate cheerfulness and acquire patience—in them one may find in abundance the means to do so.⁵

John Chrysostom

I think the preacher is the one who learns most, and I think the word of God kept me going. The point of the parable of the sower is to say that in sowing the seed we shall be infinitely discouraged, and yet there will be a great harvest. So I learnt fairly early not to worry too much about discouragement, which I think is the chief temptation of a preacher, but to realise that the harvest is not only in this world but in the world to come. Then I was fortunate over the years in having the support of friends and some wonderful Christians in the congregation. But above all, a merciful God. I think you can only say that God who began a good work continues it. I’ve been sent back again and again to the word of God, to bore into it and to find out what God is really saying, and I think that’s spoken to me, as well as to other people.⁶

Dick Lucas

The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls. Nor does it lie in the preacher’s learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of man... Again, the power which converts souls does not even lie in the pathos which the speaker may employ. Men may weep to the tragic muse in a theater as well as to prophetic strains in a chapel!... No, there is something more than this needed and where it is absent, all preaching is nothing! We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless there were the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit going with it, changing the will of man!... We might as well preach to stone walls as preach to humanity unless the Holy Spirit is with the Word to give it power to convert the soul!⁷ ...[H]ave genuine faith in the Word of God, and in its power to save. Do not go up into the pulpit preaching the truth and saying, ‘I hope some good will come of it,’ but confidently believe it will not return void, but must work the eternal purpose of God... Speak boldly; for if you speak by the Holy Spirit, you cannot speak in vain.⁸

C. H. Spurgeon

3. Watch Clip 7: “If you could give one piece of advice about preaching—what would it be?” Write down anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

⁴ John Calvin from his sermon on Micah 3:5–8 in *Sermons on the Book of Micah*, translated by Benjamin Wirt Farley (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2003), 160.

⁵ John Chrysostom from “Homily 37: On John” in *The Fathers of the Church: Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homilies 1–47* by John Chrysostom, translated by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin (The Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 359.

⁶ Spoken by Dick Lucas, Rector Emeritus of St Helen’s Church, Bishopsgate, in an interview with John Nicholls. source: <https://banneroftruth.org/uk/resources/articles/2006/an-interview-with-dick-lucas/> ⁷ C. H. Spurgeon from the sermon: *Election—its Defenses and Evidences* (No. 2920), 1862.

⁸ Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1969, orig. 1900), 343.



UNIT 8



HOW DOES THE PREACHER PERSEVERE?

Read aloud 1 Timothy 4:6–16.

VIDEO

Watch Unit 8. Use the space below if you would like to take notes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. We heard in the video that:

GOD'S WORD is always living.

GOD'S WORD always penetrates human hearts.

GOD'S WORD always does God's work.

At what times and in which circumstances do we find it difficult to persevere as preachers and how can these truths and God's promises in the Scriptures help us?

2. The exhortation in 1 Timothy 4:16 is to “keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching”. In what areas of life and doctrine do you feel yourself to be particularly vulnerable? Split into small groups of two or three and try to be open and honest with one another about these personal matters. Pray for one another in light of your answers.

3. What are the dangers if we do not protect our time for study and rest? What are some practical things we can do to protect this time?

4. Look again at 1 Timothy 4:6–16. Split into small groups of two or three. Make a list of all the imperatives (commands) that Paul uses in his instruction to his younger colleague, Timothy, as he is seeking to train him to be “a good servant of Christ Jesus”. Make a list of the expected results. Think together about these lists as you consider your priorities and how to persevere as a preacher. Each group should choose a spokesperson, ready to contribute comments and ideas from the small group to the larger group when we come back together.
5. Watch Clip 8: “What keeps you going and persevering as a preacher?” Discuss anything you find surprising, encouraging or difficult.

MODULE SUMMARY AND PRAYER

As this is the final Unit, write down 3 things that you want to work on in your preaching as a result of this entire Module.

- 1 _____

- 2 _____

- 3 _____

As this is the end of the Module, pray together, for one another.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16–17