

Explanation

Let us review the distinguishing features of topical, textual, and expository sermons. A topical sermon only gets its topic from a text. Until you do it, it will not make quite so much sense. The topic is developed according to its nature rather than the text's nature. Let us say I want to do a topical sermon on gambling. My first major point might be about the history of gambling in our culture. That will not come out of the text, so I will develop the subject according to its nature rather than the text's nature. The text may mention something about being caught up in the materialism of the world, but it is not talking about the history of gambling in the United States. A topical message gets its topic from the text, but it develops the topic according to its nature rather than the text's nature. It could be a doctrinal subject. You may want to talk about the nature of predestination as it is found in the Old and New Testaments. You would develop it according to the way in which it is developed across those testaments. You probably will not develop it according to one text. That is a topical message.

A textual message gets its topic and main points from the text. This is a message in which you would get the idea from the text and even the divisions of the idea. These are the things of the world: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. These things are of the world and not of God. Those things are not developed in the text, but they are major divisions. If I talk about the lust of the flesh, I might say, "In the life of David this took this shape." David is not discussed in the New Testament in that text, but I develop the text according to other texts. I get the main divisions out of this text, but its developmental features come from other places. That is a textual message. I do not want to give you the idea that either topical or textual messages are wrong. They are just not foundational things in what we are developing. In the history of preaching, both topical and textual messages have a rich history.

Finally, expository messages get their proposition, main points, and subpoints from the text. In the expositors' ethic, let me tell you what this text says. I am forced to deal with this text. The main points and subpoints come out of this text. A key point of qualification is that you can go to other texts for further proof or development. But you have to show what is in the main text first before you go to another one.

The multiple scriptural terms tell us there is more than one right style or attitude with which to preach. Some scriptural terms that describe preaching are quite strong, like *epitimaō*, which means "rebuke strongly." Or there is the notion of *paramuthia*, which means "to give comfort." All of those are different scriptural understandings. We went through many of those in the last lesson.

Then we talked about some basic advantages of expository preaching. You could multiply these many times, but the ones that were mentioned in class are good ones. Authority is one reason for expository messages. You say what the text says. The expositor's ethic mimics Augustine. When the Bible speaks, God speaks. If I clearly say what the Bible says, I speak with the authority of God. Expository preaching also helps with variety. It forces you to preach through a text with its ideas more than your own. It can avoid getting into your favorite subjects, and it can avoid your opinion ruling. There is authority and variety. There is also disciplined Bible learning for the congregation as well as the preacher. I am forced to look at the text and ask, "How do I know what this means?" I have to work through a text on its own terms so that the Bible is developed clearly in my understanding. I become better able to look at it. Those were basic thoughts that we talked about in the last lesson.

I encourage you to look back over the material out of Broadus. He talked about advantages of expository preaching. He said this method better corresponds with the very idea and design of preaching, which is

to explain the text. Expository preaching does that with the authority of the text. He also says it is the ancient and primitive method.

We questioned that a little bit, saying it is the ancient and primitive ethic to make sure we say what the text says. In terms of the method of expository preaching, it is seen very little in the history of preaching prior to Broadus. Most of what you saw prior to Broadus was topical or textual preaching. It was not expository. Broadus gave us a methodology for expository preaching against the German liberalism that was creeping into North America. Expository preaching ensures a better knowledge of the Scriptures on the part of the preacher, the hearers, and the Scriptures in their connection. It causes sermons to contain more of pure Scripture truths and Scripture modes of doing things. Opinion is not ruling. Broadus' writing was primarily post civil war. He died prior to the twentieth century. His primary writing was in the 1850s with it hitting its stride in the 1870s. Broadus' multiple volumes and editions continued to be the most used homiletics throughout the twentieth century. It took many different editions. The final ones, which would have been to his great shame later on, were taken over by liberals. The later editions have very little reflection of the ethic that he tried to establish. Even here for years we used what was called the Witherspoon Edition. If you are in bookstores and look for a legitimate edition of Broadus, the Witherspoon edition is the classic edition that took Broadus at its best and melted it down.

So expository preaching gives occasion for remarking on many passages of the Bible that otherwise might never enter into one's sermons. It allows you to give important practical hints and admonitions that might seem to some hearers offensively personal if introduced into a topical discussion. They are here naturally suggested by the passage in hand. That is a lot of words, but it is wonderful pastoral wisdom. Broadus says that you can admonish people without seeming to point your finger at them. You are just preaching the text! Last week you were in chapter 1, this week you are in chapter 2. It just came up! You seem to address things that might be patently offensive if you have just picked it this week instead of if you were moving through the text. You can deal with very touchy subjects in a way that is not so personally offensive. It still has the authority that you need.

Finally, expository preaching greatly diminishes the temptation to misinterpret texts by excessive allegorizing or accommodation. Allegorizing is where you impose on the text what is not there. You may begin to spiritualize or say, "This means something," that you cannot prove this text means. The way that usually happens is imposing something from the New Testament on an Old Testament text. You do not take the text on its own terms, but it is icegeesis. You bring something in that is not really there. It is somewhere in the Bible; it is just not what this text says. Expository preaching forces us to deal with the text on its own terms.

That was what we talked about last time. Let us pray, and we will move forward for this time.

Father, thank You for Your goodness to us. Equip us this day, we pray, to learn what You intend for us for Your Word. Father, as we return here next time, we will be on top of our national elections. We are reminded to pray for those in authority over us. We remember a chief justice who has just been struck with cancer. We remember a president who will be chosen this next week who will be responsible for choosing new chief justices. There are many issues of life and justice that will be determined by the president and his choices for Supreme Court judge in the next few years. Father, would You, therefore, guide our nation. We know that righteousness exalts a nation. We pray that the one whom You would bring and allow this country to elect would be one who would honor Your Word. And we pray that there would be people more and more gathered around him as well who would reflect the principles of the Bible in the way in which justice affects this nation. Father, each of us probably has our preferences, but our greatest preference as men and women of God is that You would do what You know is best, for then

we would be most blessed. Help us, Father, even if it is a time of great hardship that would turn us back to You to depend on You. Help us not to look to our circumstances to determine Your goodness but rather to look to the cross. There, Father, is the character of our God revealed. We trust you for eternal things and ask your blessing in these temporal things. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The goal for today's lesson is to understand the basic nature and process of the explanation component of sermonic exposition. We have been creating a homiletic taxonomy as we have been going. We now have a lot of the pieces together. The Scripture introduction has the contextualization and creation of longing (C and C). Creation of longing is the harder of the two for us to do. Everybody gets contextualization: give me a little background on the text. But to say why you need to read something and go into it is the harder part to explain in terms of its importance, even as we introduce the text. Sometimes in contextualization you slice out the text. You say, "This narrative goes on for 78 verses, but we are not going to read the whole thing! Instead we are going to summarize a little bit, read a little bit, summarize a little bit more, and read a little bit more." We will tell people what we are doing and why we are doing it in the Scripture introduction. We will alert them that we will do some summarizing and paraphrasing, and usually you will read the key portions significant for the sermon itself. The other thing you can do when you slice out the text is say, "This is a very complicated text, and it has two major issues going on in it. Next week we will deal with the second issue. This week we will deal with this issue." That way everyone does not come to you at the door afterward and ask why you did not deal with the whole passage. You can remind them that you told them you would deal with the other topic next week. You can sometimes narrow your purpose in the Scripture intro by saying what you will deal with this week even though you know there is more there. So there is Scripture reading and an introduction that has various components in it. That leads to the proposition, which is made up of principle and application. Then you have the main points, which have their components: explanation, illustration, application. All of this leads to a conclusion.

In this lesson, we will look at what comes after the subpoint statement, still within the explanatory component. In essence, we will talk about what happens in the paragraph under the subpoint statement. Every subpoint is roughly a paragraph of explanation, so we will talk about what goes into the meat of the little bones there. The explanation component is the material that goes in. The explanation component answers the basic question, "What does this text mean?" We try to both do and avoid certain things. Stott says, "To expound the text is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view." The opposite of exposition is imposition, which is to impose on the text what is not there. If you do not understand the meaning of the text, you can impose on the text a meaning that is not there. You might impose inadequate understanding on the text. You might import information from your experience, from other texts, or from what someone else told you. In some ways it is twisting Scripture. Imposition is also to choose a text based on what you want to talk about. The text may refer to that topic in some way, but as you look at it, your opinion rather than the text rules. So experience, opinion, or ignorance may rule. Finally, other texts may rule in that you may not say what the text itself says.

We make sure we are on the right track when we think about the explanation's purpose. The explanation's purpose can be broken down into two categories. There is a theological purpose for explanation, and there is a homiletical purpose. The theological purpose of explanation is to confront the people of God with the meaning of God's Word. Homiletically, explanation has more explicit purposes. You should try to amplify, explain, or prove the main point or the subpoint that you just stated. It is pretty straight forward, except sometimes the tendency when you form subpoints is to form something that does not support the main point. We talked about a stool where we put the legs somewhere else. This material may have lots of good information in it, but it does not directly support the subpoint or main point statement.

Let us define explanation. Generally, explanation answers the question, “What does this text mean?” More particularly, explanation acts as the proof of the main point or subpoint statement and the warrant for its application. It is not either/or; it does not only explain what the text says. We always have this ethic behind us. My goal as a preacher is not just to data dump. I am not just a minister of information. I am a minister of transformation. As I bring all this information forward, I try to say how, with this information, I can exhort you to do what the Word of God requires. It has an end, *telos*, or purpose behind it. Proper explanation always, therefore, keeps in mind something that happened very early in the introduction. It is the fallen condition focus (FCF). As I deal with explanation, I should always come back and make sure I deal with the burden of the sermon. It is not just a data dump. I should not just give you information of some sort. The main points deal with the FCF, the subpoints support the main point, and the information that supports the subpoints takes us back to some exhortation that deals with the FCF.

In expository preaching, you make two proofs. First, you try to show that the text actually says what you just said. The second proof is also as important. It is to say, “As a result, I can tell you to do something about it.” You do both things. You say what the text means, and you tell people to do something about it. You have the proof and authority of the text to do that. Where people get into trouble, particularly when they start preaching, is that they only think of the first side. They only try to prove what the text means. “This text really does support predestination.” On the basis of that, you should urge them to do something. That has to come from the text and be part of the explanation as well. Explanation is not merely the transmission of information. It is the conscious establishment for the biblical basis for the action or belief the sermon requires of God’s people.

Jerry Vines has a good way of summarizing this. He says, “Some have understood an expository sermon to be a lifeless, meaningless, pointless recounting of a Bible story.” That is a knock on expository preaching! A preacher might say, “Let me give you a few thoughts on this text.” They give information on the text, but they do not say what it has to do with those who are listening. That is often the caricature of expository preaching. Vine says, “I can still remember a very fine man deliver such a sermon from John 10. He told us all the particular details of a sheepfold in ancient Israel. We were given the complete explanation of the characteristics of sheep; we were informed about the methods of an oriental shepherd. When the message ended, though, we were still on the shepherd fields of ancient Israel. We knew absolutely nothing about what John 10 had to say to the needs of our lives today. This is not expository preaching.” Expository preaching proves that the text means what you just said. And because of what you just said, you can prove with the authority of the Word that you must respond in a certain way. The explanation always has in mind both aspects of that. When we first think of what expository preaching is, we think of ourselves getting all our organization, exegesis, historical literary information, and even illustrations together. We try to move a great stone of explanation by getting information into peoples’ minds. But expository preaching, even according to Broadus, is actually something else. It tries to get the application into peoples’ hearts. The old line says, “We are not ministers of information; we are ministers of transformation.” I gather the explanation, organize it, do the exegesis, and prepare the delivery. Everything I do is on the fulcrum of exposition in order to do application. This explanation component, the meat of the sermon, is not just for information transfer. It moves an idea to the listeners of what God requires of them. That is the scary part of preaching. You do not just tell them what they need to know, but you tell them what God requires of them.

In an expository sermon, subpoint statements must be taken from the expository unit. Explanatory material following the subpoint statement can refer to other passages, though. The subpoint statement has to come from the text. I have to be able to show that something I say is in the text. As I begin to

support that statement, there is going to be some material in the text that supports it. But there may also be material from other texts that further supports it. That is legitimate. To be truly expository, I have to show the idea originates in the text. I did not just create it. To support that idea, there must be something in the text that supports it. But I can corroborate and build the case further by using other texts as well. I cannot, however, say, "Let us look at James to see what justification means in Paul's letter to the Romans." You cannot do that because they mean different things and use different words. To try to say what Paul means exclusively by going to James will mess you up. You can start with Paul and further it with Paul. You can say, "Not only do we see Paul saying it here, but we know, by what he said in the next chapter, even more." You can expand your expository unit. You might even have to say, "James uses the word 'justification' a bit differently. Do not get confused here. You may go to James and think that is not what it means. I want you to know that I know what James says, and he uses the word differently." You may actually refer to James within this material to show that that is what Paul does not mean. It is part of the explanation. It is something that can confuse people at points. We have talked about this several times, and I have said it at least once in each of the last three lessons. I want you to feel that expositor's ethic. You have to tell what this text means. To run over to other texts to do that breaks that ethic. In fact, it leads you astray. It is hermeneutically not sufficiently powerful to let me prove to you what the text says by going other places. In fact, I can make the text say anything I want by doing that. I want to take the text on its own authority. I can prove support in other places, but I need to at least start here to show the apostle or prophet's argument on his own terms. That way I do not twist Scripture.

Let me make some important notes. Explanation causes exposition. When I explain, I unfold the text and open up its meaning. Explanation forms the outline point structure of expository sermons. We talked about this early on. When we talk about subpoints, going back to our double helix, we talk about explanation. The illustration is not a subpoint. The application is not a subpoint. We will see in the lessons ahead that the subpoint's language actually goes into the illustration and application. You have to support and develop the subpoints before you get into the illustration and application. Subpoints are the instruments by which you form illustration and application. After all, you are going to apply what you proved was in the text. You have to prove it is there so that you can apply it. We will develop that as we go. This is a reminder that the skeleton or bones of the sermon is the explanation component.

There are three stages by which we prepare explanation. If you are in InterVarsity (IV) training, this will be very familiar to you. The three stages are observation, interrogation, and restatement. Observation says, "What is in the text?" Interrogation says, "What does it mean, and how do I know that?" Restatement says, "Now that I know what it means, how do I best communicate it to others?" For the next several minutes, we will take those pieces and begin to explore them. We will talk about their further implications.

Under observation, the best way to identify what is here is obviously to read the text. I have actually had the awful experience of standing in the pulpit, reading the text, and saying, "Uh oh! I have not prepared to deal with this!" I had begun to focus on a narrow part of the text that I wanted to talk about. Then when I was forced to read the text completely and all together, suddenly I was aware that I had not dealt with all that was there. As simple and easy as this sounds, the way in which we identify what is here is by reading the text. We absorb its particulars, we try to get captured by its thought, and we try to have it control us rather than vice versa. Spurgeon's famous quote is this: "Get saturated with the Gospel. I always find I preach best when I can manage to lie asoak in my text. I like to get a text and find out its meanings and bearings and so on. Then, after I have bathed in it, I delight to lie down in it and let it soak into me." I do not think it is a very pleasant image to think of Spurgeon sitting in a tub! But I love the notion of being a sponge and letting the Scripture just soak into you. That happens primarily as we just

let it come. Read, reread, and read again. Do I really understand what that text says, and am I letting it control me? The second aspect of observation beyond reading the text is to identify the text's features. As we read, we try to ask what is here by asking what words are being repeated. What does that name mean? Do I know what the destination or city is? Observation often makes use of the five W's and the H. They are who, what, when, where, why, and how.

The next piece is interrogation. Once we identify what is here, we ask what it means. In particular, we involve these subsidiary questions such as "How do I know it means that? How can I communicate it to others?" I am about to give you five major forms of explanation that fill up this meat under these bones of subpoints. These are types of things that we do in these paragraphs under the subpoints. The first way that we show what the text means is by plain statement of the text. In other words, I may say, "What does it mean when Jesus says, 'Pray and do not give up?' It means to pray and not give up!" This is plain statement of the text. If plain statement of the text is the way that I explain the text, then the form of explanation is simply repetition. If plain statement of the text makes it plain, then mere repetition of the text is what actually goes under the subpoint. It may be a paraphrase of the text, but it merely repeats it. Restatement of what the text says works about 80% of the time to explain the text. It is strange, but it works. There are other things to do in the remaining 20% of the time. But a lot of the time, the shortest distance between two points (what you know and what they can know) is simply to repeat what the text says. Point out that portion of the text that will support that subpoint statement.

The second major thing that happens in explanation to make clear that your subpoint is in the text is to point to contextual features. We explain the context of the text. My rubric is "Context is part of text." Sometimes people wonder if they can mention what is around the text. Of course they can. If Paul is in prison, it will explain a lot of what he says and how he says it. If we are in the Passover service, your knowing what the different cups mean explains what Jesus is doing as He distributes the elements for the Lord's Supper. There are two forms context features: literary context and historical context. For literary context, you might talk about the genre. It could be poetry or a Proverb. If it is a Proverb, it is not a promise. You could also point out surrounding verses or chapters. There may be author commentary, something the author says in a preceding chapter that bears on this. Or how does God Himself comment in other places on this? The other main form of context is historical context. What are the events, the people, and the ethnography? One of the famous books that deals with the New Testament is *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim. For a generation, it told people what they did not know about the life and times of Jesus. It explained what they were talking about when the disciples went through the fields and husked it in their hands. He talked about how wheat, not corn, in our explanation, is actually what they were doing. They would take the husk off and eat the kernels. If you did not have Edersheim to help explain what was going on, it might not make sense. Understanding the life and times of the people is part of the historical context.

What everybody expects the explanatory component to be is the third major component, which is exegesis. The material that goes under the subpoint is your exegetical insight. What exegetical insight proves that subpoint statement? I have five possibilities of how we do exegesis. There could be many more, but these are ones that we do over and over again.

The first form of exegesis that is very common is definition. We may give a definition of what that original language term meant, often in our contemporary terms. Sometimes we give a definition in theological explanation. How does propitiation differ from expiation? Propitiation is a substitute to turn away wrath whereas expiation turns aside wrath. These are only slightly different, but it is a very important nuanced difference that people may need to know between key biblical terms. So you may need to give a definition.

Grammatical insights are another form of exegesis. You can give the tense, gender, case, mode, and modifiers of a word. In Luke, Jesus says to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, “The reason we know that there is a resurrection is that God said to Moses, ‘I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’” That is Jesus’ own proof for the resurrection. The tense proves the resurrection. It is present tense. “I (still) am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Jesus actually uses an exegetical argument of the present tense to prove the resurrection. It may be important for you to know that in Galatians 5 the language is singular when it says, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, loving kindness...” You often hear people say in common language, “the fruits of the Spirit.” They say it as plural. But when you make it plural, you can create a sort of excuse for yourself. “The reason I am not kind is because I do not have that spiritual fruit. I have the spiritual fruit of patience, but I do not have the spiritual fruit of kindness.” In saying that, you have made different fruits. But Paul in Galatians says it is all one fruit. Those who have the Spirit display all of these things. It is not this or that; you have all of these characteristics. You cannot dodge and say you will take one and not another. In that example, you simply say it is plural or singular. That is an exegetical insight that allows you to make some exhortation based on it.

The third exegetical tool is comparison passage usage. You can look at various places and ask how it is used elsewhere. You could say, “Paul actually uses this word only once” or “Paul uses this word 13 times in the book of Philippians.” The frequency of a word or the way it is used in other places sometimes gives us insight.

The fourth form of exegesis is to use comparison translations. You hear pastors do this all the time. “The New International Version (NIV) says it this way, but the English Standard Version (ESV) adds this richness.” It is not wise to say, “The NIV really messed up here.” When you speak that way to people it can create doubt about the Bible. People do not normally think about the translation that they look at as a translation of the Word of God. They think, “This is the Word of God, but what did the preacher just say? He said it is messed up. So it must be messed up in other places. How do I know where else it is messed up?” That is one problem that can happen. It also comes across as arrogance when we say that the translators messed up. The Bible is messed up, and I am arrogant. Is not this a wonderful pastoral approach? There is a way to compare translations to actually help people have further trust in the Bible and further appreciate you. You can tell them that the translations differ, but there is something good about that. You can say, “This translation expands our understanding. We gain a richer understanding by... We even learn more by looking at...” There are many positive ways to look at it instead of simply saying, “They are wrong.” Then you can feed people’s need and desire to know more.

The last aspect of exegesis is structural or linguistic patterns. We looked at this in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus indicates His change of subject by saying, “You have heard it said, but I say unto you... You have heard it said that a man who commits adultery sins, but I say to you that a man who even looks at a woman with lust in his heart has already committed adultery.” This is the last major giving of the Law, and it is the highest reading of the Law. Jesus not only says what behavior is wrong, but He notes what in your heart is wrong as well. That too is going to be judged by God. We often take the Sermon on the Mount out of context when we read it as the perfect law of God for the kingdom and say, “Therefore go do it.” The Sermon on the Mount was the highest and perfect law of the kingdom. Jesus gave it so early so that you would know that you cannot do it. Therefore you must turn to someone other than you. You must now look to His ministry. It is all the right moral instruction. But if all we have done is stopped right there, we have not presented the text in its context. What was its intention? What was Jesus doing as He gave this last and highest reading of the Law in terms of pointing to the ultimate purposes of redemption? There are other linguistic patterns. We know that Hebrew poetry sometimes follows acrostics. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme; it uses parallelism. If you want to know what one

phrase says, look at the one ahead of it. It typically will say it a slightly different way. If you do not understand what this phrase says, look just before or after it. There will usually be some parallelism that reflects the meaning of that phrase. It may be a contradictory meaning or a furthered meaning. Poetry always functions in tandem statements of chiasmic structure. Knowing that may be part of your explanation.

Another form of interrogation in explaining is expert witness. So far we have plain statement of the text, context features, exegesis, and now expert witness. There are two forms of witness: human commentary and divine commentary. Human commentary explains what the text means by quoting Calvin, Hendrickson, or some other human commentator. Divine commentary shows what God explains a passage to mean. For instance, God explains Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 2. We know that *alma* in Isaiah 7:14 means virgin versus young maiden because of Matthew. There may be divine commentary that looks at other texts.

Last, there may be logical proof in explanation. I may simply use logic to prove what I mean to say. There are infinite variations of logical proof. Let me give three basic ones: cause and effect, evidential proof, and necessary implication. You could say, "The Bible itself says the Gospel is true in terms of Christ's resurrection because so many people witnessed to it and the church grew so fast." Paul himself in 1 Corinthians says, "This is how you know the resurrection is true. People you still know say it happened." That is logical cause and effect that is explained. There may be evidential proof. Some of you may remember Romans 8:26 from last time. Many people say that the groanings that are mentioned in Romans 8 are ecstatic tongues. But the groanings are used three times. Two times they refer to "The whole creation groans as in the pains of childbirth, waiting for its redemption and the redemption of our bodies." The groanings are not described as ecstatic language; they are described as the crying out pains of childbirth. It is unlikely that when you talk about the Spirit speaking for us with groanings too deep to utter that it is talking about ecstatic language. The very word has been used twice already to talk about screaming, great pain, and not ecstatic language, within the same passage. Another form of logical proof is necessary implication. The reason you know this means something is it is a necessary implication out of the text. I say that you must be born again before you can believe. Much of our culture says you must believe in order to be born again. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Until he is born again and the Spirit is at work in him, he cannot see the things necessary to believe. Being born again, regeneration, has to precede justification, rather than the other way around. Justification does not lead to being born again. You cannot believe in order to be born again.

You could multiply those things many times. I just wanted to give you some basic tools and examples. When you look at sermons, and when you begin to see these subpoints and the paragraphs of material under them, you will see these things. You will see telling context, repeating the text itself, giving some exegesis, giving historical background, and giving logical proof. That is the material that goes into that meat of the paragraph under the subpoint statement. Subpoint statements summarize it, and this is the material that supports the subpoint. A lot of this is common sense, and this is where we do these things in the sermon. Typically under the subpoints is where a lot of the information that you learn in seminary is put.

Sometimes you get divine commentary in the New Testament that comments on the Old Testament. You end up preaching on both texts, but that is not a bad thing to do. For the expository unit, you may actually declare both texts to be your expository unit. I did a sermon about two weeks ago in which I preached from Numbers. I very much needed 1 Corinthians to comment on that. I wanted both to be my text. I said, "Paul says this means this, so when I read this, I want you to see Paul's direct commentary."

That is not icegenesis because I am still using the authority of God to say what the text means. “Here Paul specifically says that Christ is the Rock.” I want to know how the rock is reflected in Paul’s writing, so I use both texts. I might start in Numbers and later on say that we understand how Paul addresses this. That is a little different than on my authority using a text to explain a text where the Bible itself does not bring the two together. Where the Bible has made a reflection at times, you might feel that you cannot explain it without bringing in both texts. You will need them both in order to do what the Bible says.

There could be an overlapping of different types of explanation. For instance, the context of Psalm 119 is a sevenfold repetition of the Hebrew alphabet. That is its context, and at the same time it is part of its pattern too. The idea of the Law of God being perfect is repeated in two different places, so in the second place, part of the context is what has already occurred. It is also part of the pattern of what occurs. There could be, in many of these things, an infolding of the different distinctions. I do not think you can differentiate entirely between exegesis and pattern. There will be categories that implode in those things.

Realize that you cannot do all the forms of exposition in any one main point. That would be a long sermon. We had the preaching lessons last week, and it was even in the Westminster Directory of Worship that Stephen Phillips actually wrote of preaching, “Do not feel that you have to prosecute every doctrine of the text.” You do not have to use every method. How do you know which method to use if you have all these alternatives by which to make something clear? Use what is the most efficient to make the text plain and to prove what you need to prove. It may be determined by the nature of the audience or the nature of the text. My goal is to be as efficient as possible. Once I have proven it, I need to move on and not keep using other methods. I need to use the one that is most effective and so forth.

Let us go onto restatement, which is the last aspect of how to best communicate the meaning. There are three points here: organize, crystallize, and memorable-ize. To organize, you seek to sequence and subordinate. We sequence so that we can cover the territory. Have I covered all the verses? You will not cover them all equally. You make prudential choices about what needs to be addressed, but you still need to make sure that you have covered the territory. To subordinate, you prioritize. What really needs to be addressed at greater length, and what does not really need a lot of explanation? Let me tell you about one of my favorite cartoons on preaching. This is what you should try not to do. The pastor says, “Verse 33 is one of the most difficult and controversial passages in the whole Bible, so let us go to verse 34!” That is when you know you have not covered the territory. It is tempting at times, because there are things that you know you will not have time to cover or those things will be hard to talk about. So you want to just move on. When you cover the territory, it is particularly with respect to problem aspects. You know you need to spend more time on verses that will cause people to get hung up. Particularly with regard to problem aspects, we cover the territory by how we organize. Crystallizing is trying to be as efficient as possible. We crystallize our material. We divide what is lengthy, and we group what is numerous. You may have read passages where there are lists of things. The fruit of the Spirit is one example. You might deal with the lost parables in Luke 15. You might think there are too many things for you to cover sequentially, so you may have to find ways to group things together. I may have to deal with the things that are lost and the things that are found in Luke 15. There are many things lost, but I may have to group them if I want to deal with the whole chapter. I could deal only with the things that are found later. It may be a two-point message, though I recognize there is a lot more sequence there.

When you identify your expository unit, you may have a verse that you know is particularly problematic and is going to distract from what you want to address in the sermon. Your Scripture intro is a place to say, “Folks, I know that verse 3, which talks about the unforgivable sin, is a very difficult passage. We are going to get to that next week. For now, this week, we are going to deal with the assurance that we

have in things that are clearly forgivable.” I have sliced out the text. I have said, “I know this is a problem, and we will deal with it later. Allow me at this point just to deal with these assurances that we have. We will come back to this another time.” You will get in trouble, though, if you never come back to it! They will say that you gave them a false read. You can slice out problematic parts, narrow your purpose, and be fine as long as you have clearly told people why you narrowed and how you will deal with the fact that you narrowed it.

After organize and crystallize, the third aspect of restatement is memorable-ize. This is a made-up word, but I made it up because it is one of the forms of putting things in memory. It is known as a neologism, to make it stick in some way. I did this by putting “izes” at the end of these three distinctions of restatement: organize, crystallize, and memorable-ize. When I use the word memorable-ize, it is an example of what I am trying to say. One of the things that is a mark of really great preachers is they love to communicate. They just love doing it. They love watching people’s lights go on. They love learning the tools that make things stick in people’s memory. We can organize beyond just academically saying what is in the text. We should want to make it stick with people a bit and make an impression. We are trying to find ways of making the outline stick in people’s memory. As we word main points and subpoints, so far you have concentrated on using key terms. We said to make parallel statements with key word changes. Over time, we will begin to learn ways of making those key words stand out. The classic way that you can make key words stand out is by using alliteration. The key words can start with the same consonant. A slight difference is assonance, where they start with the same vowel. The idea is that they start with the same letter. This particular outline I just gave to you did not start with the same sound, but it ended with the same sound. That is another way of making it stick. You could use strong graphical images. “Satan’s ways are a web. Satan’s ways are a trap. Satan’s ways are a cliff.” Strong graphical expression is another way of trying to make things memorable. Eventually you will get beyond feeling like you have to use the very words of the text when you make your outline. You will begin to realize you are obligated to the truth of the text. Many times the words of the text will help you do that. I will say something and tell people to look at the text. They will look down and see those same words. That is great. Other times you actually want to use new words, not necessarily created words, to make the truth stand out in people’s minds. Then I can support it with the material of the text. Great communicators sometimes have to group concepts together or break things apart. Always they try to figure out how to make it stick in your mind. That calls on us not only to be academic but also creative. This is where preaching starts to take on an artistic form as well. How can I really make this stick in a way that actually gives me some joy to see lights going on when you hear it?

Having talked about creativity, let us talk about simple things that go on when we explain concepts. There are two steps of explanation’s progress. We have said that there is a subpoint and material that comes under it. If you were to actually break this down, here is what happens. You state what the text means, and the material under that shows how you know it. Even though we have gone through all of this material of different forms of exegesis and context, we are really only stating what the text means and showing how we know it. That is what happens in a sermon. That is the progress of the thought. Here is the way that we actually present it. There are three stages of explanation presentation in the typical main point or subpoint. First, we state the truth, and then we place the truth. You will hear the preacher say something like, “Look with me in verse 2. It says...” I state the subpoint statement, and then I place the truth. Look in the text where that is. If it is a context feature, I will say, “The way we know this is because Paul was in jail.” I place him in jail. I place where I got the knowledge. State the truth, place the truth, and prove the truth. State, place, prove.

In academic training, the most difficult of these to do is to place the truth. We usually forget to do this. We state a truth, and then we start running off with our explanation of doctrine. We just start rolling

instead of saying where the text says the truth. As you prepare your sermons, highlight in your notes that that is the most common trip. People will state something that is true somewhere in the Bible, and they will begin to explain it, but they will have never shown where it is. “Look with me in verse 2; right in the middle of the verse it says...” To place it is the very thing people are hanging on the edge of their seats to have you do. They all say at the end of the sermon, “Where was that in the text?” State the truth, then place it. When you do that you put such high hermeneutical observations on yourself that you almost cannot help but to speak with authority. “Here is what I said. There is where the text says it. Now I will prove to you the text says that.” Once you have placed it in the text, you have very high authority for the things that you say.

Sometimes the subpoint answers the question why. My main point may have an analytical question, which is a “why” question. The main point might say, “We can trust God. Why should we trust God?” The subpoint may say, “First, He knows what is going to happen.” We will still say, “Look at verse 2, where it says that.” I will still answer the question and show where in the text that answer is. Then I will prove that the answer is there.

You are not just elaborating on the main point. You support or prove that the main point exists within the text material. It is a little rubric, but if you get it, it almost makes preaching easy: state, place, prove. Already this semester, you have probably thought, “I never really thought of sermons being explanation, illustration, and application.” But once you learned it, you listen to sermons and hear that pattern. In the same way, once you hear this pattern, you will hear it in sermons over and over again. “My pastor does that! He states something is true, points to the texts, says where it is, and then he proves it.” Once you see that you may think, “I can do this! Now I see how this is going.” It is not just a long essay. It is an essay that proves what the text says in its particular places. State the truth, place the truth, prove the truth becomes a very standard pattern. After we have done those things, we will also illustrate and apply the truth. In a classical order, we state, place, and prove the truth, then we will illustrate it and apply it. We will vary this some later.

Let me make some small reiterations for us. First, in your sermons, the anchor clause is established just before or after the proposition, possibly early in the first main point. When you do main points, you know that the subpoints are about the developmental clause or magnet clause. The anchor clause is developed just before or after the proposition or early in the first main point. It is the foundation of all that follows. If it takes you five paragraphs to prove the anchor clause, it should not be the anchor clause. There is too much material behind it. The anchor clause is usually something pretty obvious and plain from the text. It is the foundation for the rest of the things that you will explain. Second, the developmental clause becomes the magnet clause. It is the side that changes for the remaining exposition. The exposition within the main points focuses on the developmental phrase’s distinctives. The developmental phrase acts as the magnet attracting the exposition. The subpoints are about the magnet clause. Third, lengthy explanation is developed with subpoints that support or prove the magnet statement of the main point. If your explanation has gone on for two paragraphs, you still need subpoints. The ear needs it even though your eye does not think so. It is a strange thing. That is the difference between an essay and a sermon. Your eye will say, “That is easy to read. I can go through that.” The ear typically will need road signs through that material. If you have a main point without subpoints and you have a long paragraph of explanation under that main point, you are all right. But if you have two or three paragraphs, you need subpoints. Main points do not have to have subpoints. But if you have one subpoint, you have to have at least one more. If you only had one subpoint, it should have been the main point.

If you have an interrogative subpoint, it should be worded in parallel with the other question subpoints.

The answers should also be worded in parallel. This is because the real subpoint is the answer. When you say, “state, place, prove,” you are really placing not the question but the answer. “Here is where the answer is in the text.” The thing that we will see very shortly is that it is the answer that will be developed in the illustration and the applications. That is why the answers need to be in parallel. They actually hold the concept that is most key. It will then go into the illustration. When you do bullet subpoints, it will be plain to you because everything will be parallel except the keyword change. When you do interrogatives, it might not be as clear to you. That is why the answers need to be in parallel as well as the questions. The answers hold the key terms that will go into illustration and application. If you preach regularly, turn the anchor clause into a question. “God is sovereign, therefore we should trust Him with today. God is sovereign, therefore we should trust Him with tomorrow.” What is another implication of God being sovereign? We will do this next semester. We will take the anchor clause and turn it into a transitional question. Then you will feel the flow works better. It will also shorten down that main point. We will not do that yet, though. We will get our habits down, and then we will start varying in many ways.