
The Pulpit Ministry at the Chapel

Colossians 1:21-27

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God has ordained preaching the Word as an important means for Christians to grow...

There are many different philosophies as to how to preach and how to prepare for preaching...

Christendom today is overtaken with three approaches to preaching that have gutted it of its spiritual power:

Sentimentality

This is a kind of preaching that focuses on the emotions and affections. It is driven by "how do you feel..." content and communication. It makes all preaching about affirming and encouraging. It relies heavily on emotionally loaded stories. It aims to give a sense of hope, yet based in truth believed, that is, in faith. It will almost never correct, challenge, or condemn.

Self-Help

This is a kind of preaching that focuses on the perceived needs of people. It is driven by an advice model that relies heavily on how to do. It may be based in Scripture but usually is trying to fill the gaps in the Scripture that is intended to be filled by discipleship.

Social Agendas

There is a kind of preaching that focuses on transforming politics, society, and culture. It is driven by theological frameworks that believe that the role of Christians is to change the world. It uses preaching to try to transform the culture. It often is utopian in its perspective. It is trying to return to Eden or bring about the new creation now.

The answer to this is beyond what we can expound on now. But let me summarize

There are three primary aims of preaching: evangelism, edification and exaltation.

It is the Bible that is to be preached so that the message of the Bible is proclaimed.

The preacher and the congregation are to be in submission to the Bible.

God intends to save and transform His people through the preaching of the Word.

God's Word and God's people, in the world of society, culture, arts, politics act as salt and light for the sake of the gospel.

God's Word is designed and sent by God to extend God's kingdom in the world through the church.

Guided by these principles and others as well, this is how we preach at the Chapel.

An Overview

The Pulpit Ministry is assigned to one or more of the Elders who serves as Pastor for Preaching. The Pastor for Preaching is not the Senior Pastor or the Lead Pastor. In our Eldership, we are all equal. Sometimes this is hard for people to get their heads around, but I am simply one among equals who has been appointed by the Elders to serve as Pastor for Preaching as well as for Global Ministry Development. As with all Elders who oversee a ministry, they are accountable to the Elders and are responsible to execute the ministry within the framework of the MOD. The Pastor for Preaching is responsible:

- To execute the Chapel Pulpit Ministry as framed and directed by the Pulpit Ministry Organizing Document.
- To plan the preaching strategies, series, and schedule. He sets the preaching agenda usually looking out about 3 years in general and 6 months to 1 year in detail.
- To primarily but not exclusively do the preaching. In my case that is about 40 weeks a year due to the 12 weeks a year I am traveling for Global Ministry Development.
- To teach and train the elders and teachers on how to handle the Bible. This is carried out through one-on-one discipleship and through the Bible Study Workshops conducted at the Chapel and in partner churches.
- To teach and train the elders and others on the art of preaching. This is the sermon preparation and preaching aspect of the Pulpit.

The Chapel Pulpit¹

Since what we do is shaped and structured by the Pulpit Ministry Organizing Document (MOD), it would be helpful to walk through some of it with you.

Statements

Mission - What the Ministry is

The Chapel Pulpit will systematically declare the whole counsel of God through the Bible saturated, Christ centered, Spirit enabled, scripturally expositional preaching by godly men aimed at bringing people to maturity in Christ.

Vision - What the Ministry Becomes

Our vision is to work out both the large picture and the immediate texts in Holy Spirit enabled exposition and application in the public and private ministry of the Word of God.

¹ Slightly edited to make smoother reading and to reflect changes in our terms (“gatherings” instead of “services”).

Purpose - What the Ministry Aims for

This ministry exists and aims to:

- To exalt Christ in the preaching of the Scriptures.
- To exposit the Scriptures regularly and systematically.
- To edify and encourage believers by the teaching the Scriptures.
- To evangelize the lost by preaching the gospel through the Scriptures.
- To enable ministry through modeling the use of the Scriptures.

Shape

Beliefs - What Beliefs Organize the Ministry

This ministry is grounded in the following Scriptures and beliefs:

Colossians 1:21–27

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

2 Timothy 3:10–4:8

¹⁰ You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

4 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves

teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Values - What Treasures Orient the Ministry

This ministry is guided by the following values and treasures:

- We value preaching that is expositional of the text.
- We value preaching that is Christ centered.
- We value preaching through the whole Bible.
- We value preaching that is passionate.
- We value preaching that transforms lives.

Strategies

We implement the ministry in the following ways:

Engage - Do the Ministry

We will do the work of the ministry by:

- Primarily expositing through books of the Bible in the AM gatherings.
- Primarily expositing texts selected by topic in the PM gatherings.
- Careful planning of the pulpit ministry to meet the objectives.
- Giving an Elder designated as Pastor for Preaching the primary responsibility
- Allowing all Elders to preach according to their gifts and abilities

Enlist - People for the Ministry

We will seek to recruit people to serve in the ministry by:

- One on one discipleship seeking to identify men who are able to teach.
- Encouraging men to consider pulpit ministry.
- Inviting qualified and able men to speak as guests in our pulpit.

Equip - Train for the Ministry

We will equip and prepare people for ministry by:

- Observing preaching in our own pulpit encouraging them to see how the preacher was getting it right and getting it across.
- Instruction in Elder's Meetings as we work through a text in Elder's meetings and by teaching and illustrating hermeneutical principles.
- Critique by others primarily by the Pastor for Preaching.

- Growth through Development by attending the Workshops on Biblical Exposition and other training events.

Evaluate - Sharpen in the Ministry

We will regularly review and evaluate the ministry by:

- Regularly reviewing the scope of preaching in what was being covered.
- Regularly review the depth of preaching in how accessible is what is being taught.
- Evaluating how people are understanding and responding to the preaching through the discussion at Flocks.

Structure

Leadership - Who Oversees the Ministry

The Title of the Elder who oversees this ministry is Pastor for Preaching.

Team - Who Serves in the Ministry

Requirements for the Ministry Members

All members of the ministry must meet the following requirements:

- Be a male who is recognized as spiritually qualified for ministry.
- Be committed to the Mission, Vision and Purposes of the ministry.
- Be committed to exposition.

Organization of the Teams

The ministry is organized along the following lines: None required.

Standards

Objectives - Measurable Goals for the Ministry

We aim to achieve the following goals as God allows and enables:

- To follow the guidelines for exposition in the Supplement.
- To preach the whole Bible in the way taught by Christ and modeled by the apostles.
- To preach with authority, clarity, humility and Spirit enabled passion and power.
- To publish the pulpit ministry as much as possible.
- To be men of the Word as well as men who preach the Word.

Organization - Administrative Procedures for the Ministry

We will establish the following core administrative procedures to organize the ministry:

- The pastor for preaching will be responsible to all pulpit scheduling.
- The pastor for preaching will solicit series from the Elders and others.
- The elders will submit series proposals as requested.
- No less than the present and the next quarter will be fully scheduled.
- The office will maintain the current pulpit schedule.
- Elders unable to meet their obligation will reschedule through the pastor for preaching, and in his absence, the chairman of the elders.

Strategy as a Ministry

How do we execute the Pulpit Ministry as Elders?

- We have a SharePoint site and Teams Unit dedicated to sharing files, templates and discussions. We use this collaborate together.
- We coordinate with Adult Bible Education so that the whole counsel of God in as much of the Scriptures as possible is taught and preached.
- The elders discuss and advise me on topics, needs, gaps and their desires to preach series.
- We generally establish times in the ministry for emphasizes in the pulpit series.
- We generally agree to discuss the Sunday work in the Word in Flock meetings.

Strategy as a Preacher

How do I do ministry as a preacher? Here are some highlights...

In the Preparation

Personal preparation through reading...

Personal development through Bible Study Workshops...

Personal cultivation through prayer and shepherding...

Personal vision through local and global ministry...

In the Planning

We have a record of all sermons preached since 1998.

We track what books of the Bible have been preached or taught in ABE and WBS.

We plan by book for 1 - 2 years, particularly if it is a new book.

There are several books of the Bible that we re-preach every 6-8 years: Genesis, Exodus, Romans, Ephesians, Galatians, and Hebrews as foundational to understanding the Bible.

We plan series and topics based on Elder initiatives, shepherding needs in the congregation and laying expositional foundations for discipleship. We are very careful about being culture or event driven. While we may respond to a major shift in culture, we do so only as we see it actually affecting the congregation.

If we are preaching a book of the Bible for the first time, about 1 year ahead of scheduling it for preaching:

- Begin reading the book through and try to develop a whole book outline.
- Develop the melodic line, main theme, subthemes, and message of the book.
- Break the book down into preaching units trying to follow the natural breaks in the book.
- If it is an Old Testament book, I look for every quote, reference, or allusion to texts in the book. This is usually my first use of outside resources.
- Start to compile a list of resources to use.

In the Studying

Pray asking for wisdom and insight in understanding the text...

Develop the textual outline being true to the genre, the kind of writing the text is.

Write topic sentences for paragraphs to capture the core message of the text.

Read the resources to cross check the flow, the main details, any cultural or language issues.

Read the text in multiple English translations and in the German.

In the Writing

Pray asking for the grace to write well...

| New Book or Series | Repeating a Book or Series |
|--|---|
| Adapt the textual outline from the studying to a preaching outline <i>without</i> losing the original flow or message. | Review and edit the outline to try to be clearer, to recognize changes in congregation and preaching setting. |
| Write the body of the sermon. | Read and edit the body of the sermon. Shorten sentences, define terms, update illustrations. Make it current, |
| Write the reflect and responses. | Adapt, rewrite or expand as needed. |
| Write the introduction. | Often need to freshen or to make the introduction current. |
| Read through multiple times for editing. | Read through seeking to internalize the sermon. |
| Develop the PowerPoint. | Be sure all changes in sermon are reflected in the PowerPoint. |

I keep a master manuscript which is almost always too long to preach. It is copied to the preaching document and start editing for time, simplicity and communication. We usually have 30 - 40 minutes which means 6 to 8 pages of manuscript. Most of us who preach spend some time cutting our sermons. Sometimes I don't. I know it is going to be long and will adapt as seems right in the moment.

In the Preaching

Pray asking for the grace of the Spirit's blessing and exercise of the gift of prophecy in the proclamation of the message.

The tone of the preaching will be first and foremost governed by the tone of the text.

Be aware of events affecting the congregation. What has changed from the time the sermon was written to the time it is preached?

Be aware of the dynamics in the room. What are the distractions? How are people responding? What needs an additional emphasis?

If have added to the written manuscript while preaching, then have to be aware of what to summarize or leave out to honor the time frame for preaching.

Some personal convictions:

Briefly, some things that I have strong convictions about

- I believe that the Spirit is just as enabling in the study as in the preaching, and often more so.
- I do not believe the Spirit "speaks" to us today. I try to be sensitive to impressions and compelling movements in my hearts while being aware that they may driven as much by the flesh and as by the Spirit.
- The ministry of Word in preaching requires rigorous discipline and structure. This does not quench the Spirit; this expresses and releases the power of the Spirit in preaching.
- Write manuscripts. Without a manuscript you are not sure you can actually say what you think you know.
- The message is not to be about me; the message is to be about the Word. However, the messenger is bringing the message and is an instrument of the Spirit's work.
- It is God's work to cause people to hear, believe and then understand what is being preached. Understanding comes after believing, not before.

Reflect and Respond

We are committed to expository preaching. Therefore:

In the preaching of the Word:

We may choose texts by:

Next one in a book of the Bible taking larger sections of the book. We tend to do paragraph by paragraph exposition.

Text or texts on a topic but each one will be expounded and the application will be true to the text(s)...

Text or texts on a canonical (Biblical) theme but each one will be expounded and connected to the theme...

But we will always expound the texts we are preaching no matter how they were chosen.

In the engagement with our people:

We will reject the plea for ease, fads and scratching itching ears...

We will listen to counsel and to needs...

We will connect truth to life Biblically...

We will:

At Paul's solemn urging to us in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: we will preach the word of God. We will be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. We will seek to patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage our people with good teaching.

We know that the time is coming and is already here, when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. Even Christians will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. We see all around us that people will reject the truth and chase after myths.

But we will strive to keep a clear mind and a serious attitude in every situation. We will not be afraid of suffering for the Lord. We will, regardless of our gifts, work at telling others the Good News. We seek God's grace to fully carry out the ministry God has given us.