

## WHAT EXPOSITORY PREACHING IS AND IS **Not**

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December 5, 2017

*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: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. – 2 Timothy 4:1-2*

### **What Expository Preaching Is**

**Expository preaching** explains what the text means by what it says, seeking to exhort the hearers to trust and obey the God-intended message of the text.

- The **EXPLANATION** of the Meaning
- The **EXHORTATION** of the Message

*They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. – Nehemiah 8:8*

*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.  
– 1 Timothy 4:13*

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### **What Expository Preaching Is Not**

The following list “exposes” fifteen myths about expository preaching:

1. Expository preaching is **not** whatever someone calls expository preaching.

The only logical response to inerrant Scripture, then, is to preach it *expositionally*. By *expositionally*, I mean preaching in such a way that the meaning of the Bible passage is presented *entirely* and *exactly* as it was intended by God. Expository preaching is the proclamation of the truth of God as mediated through the preacher. – John MacArthur, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, p. 24

2. Expository preaching is **not** merely drawing **OBSERVATIONS** from the text.
3. Expository preaching is **not** a **THEOLOGICAL** lecture.
4. Expository preaching is **not** pulpit **EXEGESIS**

In exegesis, one studies each part of the Greek sentence, doing careful analysis with a view to understanding each truth presented accurately. In large measure this is done line by line. In exposition, on the other hand, the passage is studied as a whole, and with attention to the flow of thought or sequence of events. The function of the passage in its life setting is brought over against the life situation of the congregation. – Walter L. Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition*, p. 20

5. Expository preaching is **not** a running **COMMENTARY** on the text.

But an expository sermon at its very best is based upon thorough exegesis. The message is then built around a central theme that is communicated through well-organized divisions derived from the text. The sermon has good explanation, illustrations, argumentation, and application. Expository preaching is not done adequately unless you prepare in the most comprehensive way possible. – Jerry Vines & Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit*, p. 58

6. Expository preaching is **not** **TEXTUAL** preaching.

- A. A textual sermon focuses on the **WORDING** of the text.

- B. An expository sermon focuses on the **MEANING** of the text.

7. Expository preaching is not **SELECTIVE** exposition of the text.

It is not a topical homily using scattered parts of the passage but omitting discussion of other equally important parts. – Richard Mayhue, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, p. 10

8. Expository preaching is **not** **REDEPTIVE-HISTORICAL** preaching.

Sermons of this sort spend a great deal of time detailing the flow of redemptive history which, on first hearing, can be breathtaking if done well. But what often results from this hermeneutic has a sameness to it (a rehearsal of the history of redemption) that those who have heard it repeated regard as “boring” or “irrelevant.” – Derek Thomas, *Feed My Sheep*, p. 79

9. Expository preaching is **not** a homiletical **SURVEY/REVIEW** of the text.

10. Expository preaching is **not** about the **LENGTH** of the sermon text.

The value of expository preaching is continually pressed on ministers in the present day, and not without reason... The idea, no doubt, like every good theory, may be easily ridden to death; and I believe that with ignorant, semi-heathen congregations, a short, pithy text often does more good than a long passage expounded. – J.C. Ryle

11. Expository preaching is **not** about how many **POINTS** the sermon outline has.

***How many points should a sermon have?***

- A. Outline points should be **NECESSARY**
- B. Outline points should be **NATURAL**

12. Expository preaching is ***not*** a pretext for predetermined **CONCLUSIONS**

Expository preaching at its core is more a philosophy than a method. Whether or not we can be called expositors starts with our purpose and with our honest answer to the question: “Do you, as a preacher, endeavor to bend your thought to the Scriptures, or do you use the Scriptures to support your thought?” – Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, p. 22

13. Expository preaching is ***not*** necessarily **CONSECUTIVE** exposition.

14. Expository preaching is ***not*** truth divorced from **LIFE**

There are three basic elements of an expository sermon:

- A. Biblical **INSTRUCTION**
- B. Homiletical **STRUCTURE**
- C. Pastoral **APPLICATION**

15. Expository preaching is ***not*** **BORING** preaching.

Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of those can it spare and still be preaching. – Phillips Brooks

You should have three goals for every sermon:

- A. **FAITHFULNESS** to the Text
- B. **CLARITY** of the Message
- C. **PASSION** in the Presentation