

## Developing Redemptive Messages

### I. Review of Redemptive Principles for Christ-centered Preaching:

#### A. The necessity of a redemptive focus in all "Christian" preaching:

Expository preaching is committed to revealing what the Word says, and Jesus says the whole Word presents his person *and* work (by revealing the grace that becomes most fully revealed in him).

#### B. Identification marks of non-redemptive preaching:

1. Sola Bootstrapsa messages

2. The Deadly Be's ("by themselves")

- a. Be like . . .    b. Be good . . .    c. Be disciplined . . .

Such messages "by themselves" inadvertently imply acceptance with God depends on our \_\_\_\_\_.

But this is contrary to:

-Is. 64: 6 All our righteousness acts are like filthy rags.

-Lk. 17: 10 When we have done all we were commanded, we are still unworthy servants.

Compare: Westminster Confession XVI. 2, 3, 5, 6: Our best works cannot merit pardon for sin, but are actually reprobable by God. Nonetheless he is pleased to receive them in Christ.

Compare: Luther's "Sum of the Christian Life" (see last page)

#### C. Distinctives of Christ-centered Preaching (cf., Greidanus, Sola Scriptura)

1. What Christ-centered Preaching is not:

- a. Not \_\_\_\_\_ Preaching.

Christ-centered preaching does not attempt to make the person of Christ appear in every Old Testament mud puddle and camel track by allegory or analogy – through *paralleling* OT accounts and NT experiences of Jesus (as w/ Rahab's cloth or Moses w/ women at well) or "leapfrogging to Golgotha." Christ-centered preaching shows how God's grace operates throughout history to enable God's people to understand and depend upon his provision alone for their salvation.

- b. Not \_\_\_\_\_ Preaching.

Christ-centered preaching does not negate the necessity of law in believers' lives, but teaches that our obedience has no power to redeem or grant merit before God. Christ-centered preaching reveals the grace in all Scripture to motivate his people according to Christ's precept: "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 12:14; cf. Titus 2:11-12).

2. What Redemptive Preaching Is:

- a. Recognition of all of Scripture as one \_\_\_\_\_ history of God's redeeming work (i.e., the revelation of his grace)
  
- b. Relation of all persons, events and teaching to the revelation of \_\_\_\_\_ as it is ultimately made known in Christ.

In opposing the fragmentary interpretation which reads the Bible as a collection of biographies, the redemptive-historical side stresses the hermeneutical significance of the unity of redemptive history.... The unity of redemptive history implies the Christocentric nature of every historical text. Redemptive history is the history of Christ: He stands at its center but no less at its beginning and end.... Scripture discloses its historiography right at the beginning. "Gen. 3:15 ... places all subsequent events in the light of the tremendous battle between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between Christ coming into the world and Satan the ruler of this world, and it places all events in the light of the complete victory which the Seed of woman shall attain. In view of this, it is imperative that not one single person be isolated from this history and set apart from this great battle. The place of both opponents and 'co-workers' can only be determined Christologically." (Greidanus, p.135)

[Our goal is not to make every passage mention Christ, but to show where every passage stands in relation to the grace ultimately revealed in Christ.]

### Genesis 3:15 Interpretive Perspective

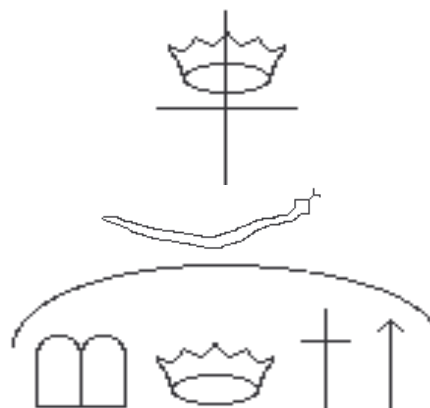
**Not This:**

reminds me of:



Leapfrogging to the Cross

**But This:**



Where does this specific passage fit in redemptive history/teaching?

<> "Christian Preaching is simply the proclamation of the Divine crusade of redemption, of God's way out of our human predicament [sic F.C.F]." -Simon Blocker, The Secret of Pulpit Power, 1955.

## II. A Basic Process for Christ-centered Preaching

### 3-Step Process for Preaching “Christ” (God’s redeeming work) from every text

1. What is the \_\_\_\_\_ (the “burden of the text”) that requires God’s intervention and rescue? A true FCF requires a divine solution, and thus exposes the inadequacies of legalistic/moralistic messages.
2. What \_\_\_\_\_ principles are evident in the text?  
Examine historical context, genre, narrative features, doctrinal statements, divine actions, surrounding passages, etc. that underscore the necessity and presence of God’s redemptive work (i.e., grace) on behalf of his people.  
*The nature of God \_\_\_\_\_ redemption*  
*and/or*  
*The nature of man \_\_\_\_\_ redemption*  
[Remember: "Context is part of text." Be expository not fanciful. Grace principles may be found before, after or throughout the immediate text.]
2. In the light of how these principles fit into the overall plan of redemption, how should we \_\_\_\_\_ to these principles in our lives?  
[Take truth to struggle.]

## III. Interpretive Approaches for Christ-centered Preaching

### A. Less Authoritative Alternatives:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Approaches: Creatively adding redemptive truth to the topic at hand (e.g., said of Spurgeon, "No matter where he began in Scripture, he always took a shortcut to the Cross.")
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Approaches: Including redemptive truth by analogy, illustration or addition (e.g., altar call following “don't procrastinate” sermon)

**B. The \_\_\_\_\_ Approach:** finding the actual redemptive focus of a passage in . . .

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., the text actually mentions Christ or his messianic work. E.g., Gospel account, messianic Psalm, epistolary reference, etc.)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., Christ's redemptive work is represented in an Old Testament type. E.g., David, Joseph, the Temple, etc.)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., identifying where this passage's events/persons/instruction fit in the overall revelation of God's redemptive plan; or, where this passage's imperatives stand in relation to the grace principles evident in its context.)

In its context every passage either is (see next page for examples):

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Work of Christ
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ for the Work of Christ
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Work of Christ
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Work of Christ

### **C. Macro and Micro Redemptive Interpretative Approaches:**

1. Redemptive-historical: what is the place or function of the text in redemptive history [Macro].
2. Doctrinal-instruction: what redemptive doctrine (understanding of grace) is exemplified, stated or taught [Micro].
3. Relational-interaction: what redemptive truth (grace principle) does God demonstrate toward his people or in their dealings with each other [Micro].  
(e.g., strength in weakness, faithfulness despite unfaithfulness, provision for need, forgiveness for sin, protection in danger, discipline for correction)

### **D. Redemptive “Lenses” to Use in Approaching all Texts:**

**(Two key questions that are always applicable *and* fair):**

What does this text reveal about ...

1. God's nature or attributes which \_\_\_\_\_ the work of Christ
2. Our nature or attributes which \_\_\_\_\_ the work of Christ

Note: Revealing aspects of the *necessity and provision* of grace, rather than \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus (or some account from his incarnation) is what makes a sermon redemptive. The term “Christ-centered” is synecdoche for all of God’s redeeming work that makes us know and depend upon his grace ultimately provided in Christ. A Christ-centered sermon does not attempt to make Jesus appear where the text does not speak of him, but

rather demonstrates the \_\_\_\_\_ of the text to his person and/or work. Often biblical texts are not directly revealing the person of Jesus, but are revealing a dimension of God's gracious nature that will be most fully revealed in Christ, and must be grasped by us to know him and to reflect him.

#### IV. Expounding Historical Narratives with Christ-centered Lenses

##### A. How to Use Redemptive "Lenses" to Identify Grace Principles

- Ask, "What does this text reveal about ...?"
  1. God's nature or attributes which \_\_\_\_\_ the work of Christ?
  2. Our nature or attributes which \_\_\_\_\_ the work of Christ?
- Identify the Grace Principles (or Patterns) Evident in *this* Text  
(God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the text. Unfold the story of his rescue.)
  1. Deliverance before obedience (indicative before imperative)
  2. Covenant made before conditions met
  3. Love before and beyond performance
  4. Mercy for the Guilty
  5. Strength for the Weak
  6. Love for the Unlovely
  7. Provision for the Needy
  8. Rescue for the Helpless
  9. Justice for the Oppressed
  10. Punishment for Enemies
  11. Discipline (Redeeming) for the Wayward
  12. Warning for the Negligent
  13. Faithfulness toward the Unfaithful
  14. Other?
- Motivate Obedience Required by this Text with its \_\_\_\_\_ Principles  
Remember: Application's Four Questions: What, Where, *Why* and *How*

##### B. What to Examine in Narratives with Redemptive Lenses

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Interaction (the personal and plot elements)

Show how the relationships and developments in the story reveal or reflect the grace of God either by his interactions with his people or by the interactions of the people or events that represent him.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Statement  
Show how the statements (narrator or dialogue) of the story reveal or reflect enduring grace principles.
3. \_\_\_\_\_/ Historical Method(s)  
Use the distinctions and contributions of each biblical genre or era to identify grace principles unfolding historically and/or in context.

For example, show how the Text is:

- Predictive of the person/work of Christ
- Preparatory of the person/work of Christ
- Reflective of the person/work of Christ
- Resultant of the person/work of Christ

◆ Remembers texts may function as dead-\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.  
(e.g., the Eastern way of making a point by circular rather than linear definition. Not this, not this, not this ... but this.)

### C. How to Organize a Narrative for a Sermon

1. Remember exploding a verse or \_\_\_\_\_ a passage are both legitimate homiletical movements that may affect how an outline is formed. Christ, in the Lord's Prayer, explodes the implications of Prov. 30:8-9 but, in Matt. 12:38-41, he summarizes four chapters of Jonah in four verses.
2. Principle-ize main points and subpoints (i.e. identify the truth principles that are supported by the text's features and facts. Do not state text facts as main points or subpoints that will leave you with no truth to illustrate or apply.)

Not this (restatement of text facts = merely describing the text):

1. Israel Confronted Jericho
2. Israel Marched Around Jericho
3. The Walls of Jericho Tumbled Down

But this (formulation of biblical principles = actually developing the truth):

1. Faithfulness Requires Facing God's Enemies
2. Faithfulness Requires Obeying God's Word
3. Faithfulness Results in Seeing God's Hand

3. Use text facts to support (i.e., prove) the main- and sub-point principles.

### DIDACTIC PASSAGES:

The raw material available to support truth claims or applications:

- a. Stated Truths
- b. Propositional Development
- c. Thought flow

<>Here you exegete thought

#### NARRATIVE PASSAGES:

The raw material available to support truth claims or applications:

- a. Stated and Exhibited Truths
- b. Dialogue or Narrator Commentary
- c. Character Development and/or Descriptions
- d. Context, Culture, and Setting
- e. Plot Flow and/or Narrative Actions
- f. Story Patterns

<>Here you exegete actions, events, dialogue, etc.

4. In a narrative passage test whether you are preaching an expository message by examining whether you have:

- a. Proven your sermon's points/principles are in this text.
- b. Covered the scope of the text (viz., narrative unit selected).  
[Note: A common approach is to use the "Scripture Introduction" to prepare for (and summarize) lengthy passages.]
- c. Demonstrated, if necessary, that other features of the text do not undercut your points/principles.

<>Note: There is \_\_\_\_\_ as high an obligation to cite verses, as to cite passage content when preaching from a narrative passage.

5. In Narrative "Miracle" Passages

- a. Show how the event demonstrates God's \_\_\_\_\_ or Christ's \_\_\_\_\_, rather than promising a "repeat."
- b. Remember long periods of no miracles even in Scripture. Thus, if God is not always promising a miracle, should we?

<> By showing demonstrating the truth principles of the narrative, the preacher takes truth to contemporary struggle and, thus, fulfills the joy and purpose of a biblical message.

## Examples:

### **-Predictive of the Work of Christ**

(Prophecies, Messianic Psalms, O.T. sacraments)

### **-Preparatory for the Work of Christ**

Gal. 3:24 - The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Also, Gal. 2:6-9)

Rom. 4:23-25 - Now it was not written for his (Abraham's) sake alone that it (i.e., righteousness) was imputed to him. But for us also, if we believe in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.

### **-Reflective of : (the most common tool of "redemptive" messages)**

#### 1. God's nature, or attributes, which provide the work of Christ \*

Rom. 15:4 - Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Old Testament Narratives reveal God's justice, deliverance, sure promise, mercy, etc. Genealogies show faithfulness and grace.

#### 2. Our nature or attributes which require the work of Christ \*

Mark 7:6 (Jesus said) Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

1 Cor. 10:5,6 (speaking of wilderness wanderings of Israel) Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted . . . (leading to vs. 13).

<> Note the poverty of truly good O.T. Patriarches. Almost every O.T. saint is terribly flawed to show us everyone's need of a Redeemer.

\* May be historical conclusion or logical assumption, stated or implied.

### **-Resultant of the Work of Christ**

Rom. 8:1,2 - There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Phi. 1:12, 13 - Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work (completed action) in you to will and to do his good purpose.

Heb. 4:14-16 - Seeing that we have such a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession . . . Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

# **How to Include Biblical Theology in Preaching:**

**(i.e., How do you get redemptive truth in the sermon?)**

## **A. Topical Approaches:**

## **B. Textual Approaches:**

**analogy**

**illustration**

**or, addition**

## **C. Expository Approaches:**

**1. Text**

**2. Type**

**3. Context**

**-Predictive of the Work of Christ**

**-Preparatory for the Work of Christ**

**-Reflective of the Work of Christ**

**-Resultant of the Work of Christ**